Chasing Social Cohesion

An Investigation of a Pluralistic Construct

Rebecca Carlander

Master of Applied Cultural Analysis   **Supervisor**

Department of Arts and Cultural Sciences   **Lars-Eric Jönsson**
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Abstract (i)

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In Sweden, discussions of difference and diversity have come to play a bigger role in nation-wide debate on social gaps, integration and welfare issues. As this debate on these adapts to prevailing social currents with strong tendencies of xenophobia and nationalism, so does the terms we use to examine and discuss such questions. Social cohesion is one of these terms. Therefore, this thesis applies an ethnographic approach to investigate how local municipal politicians in Malmö, Sweden, interpret and discuss the social cohesion construct. To oppose sceptics of diversity the political discourse in Europe and Sweden has been influenced by concepts like togetherness, tolerance, diversity and community. In the strive to transform such concepts into reality, the social cohesion concept could be instrumental for the development of strategies and policies.

Social cohesion represents complex sets of issues, and a cluster of terms is connected to the construct by the politicians in this study. This cluster or network of terms associated with the social cohesion are connected to the greater political contexts of Swedish and European politics. Social cohesion needs to be defined by the user (i.e. the politician), since it is a broad concept with definitions varying depending on context. It is of great importance to examine the politicians' definitions and interpretations of the social cohesion concept for they justify their policies and politics through the use of it.

Keywords: Social cohesion, Cultural Analysis, Municipality, Culture, Politics, Ethnography

Abstract (ii)

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Diskussioner gällande olikheter har kommit att spela en allt större roll i den svenska debatten om frågor såsom sociala klyftor, integration och välfärd. I takt med att denna debatt anpassas sig till samtidens sociala strömningar av xenofobi och nationalism, skiftar även dess begrepp form. Social sammanhållning är ett av dessa begrepp. Denna uppsats anlägger ett etnologiskt angreppssätt för att undersöka hur kommunpolitiker i Malmö tolkar och diskuterar begreppet. För att bemöta skeptiker till mångfald har den politiska diskursen i Europa och Sverige blivit influerade av koncept som gemenskap, tolerans och mångfald. För att förverkliga begrepp som dessa kan arbetet för att stärka den sociala sammanhållningen ses som ett steg på vägen.

Komplexa uppsättningar av problem och nätverk av begrepp är kopplade till begreppet social sammanhållning av politikerna i denna studie. Detta nätverk, eller kluster, av termer förbundna med begreppet är även kopplade till den vidare politiska diskussionen i Europa. Sammanhållningsbegreppet är både brett och kontextbundet, vilket medför att användaren det måste definiera det. Därmed är det av vikt att undersöka och analysera hur politikerna uppfattar och tolkar begreppet, då de berättigar sin politik genom användandet av det.

Nyckelord: Social Sammanhållning, Kulturanalys, Kommunpolitik, Kultur, Politik, Etnografi

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Introduction

There are two main reasons to investigate the meaning of social cohesion today. The first is to gain a better understanding of the contemporary forms of cohesion, and the second is to identify the prerequisites for including and inclusive solidarity in democratic and pluralistic societies. What does the notion of social cohesion mean in a time of inequality, economic globalization, emerging nationalism and growing social gaps? The concept is used differently in different contexts, and it is therefore important to study as differences in definitions have consequences for our understanding and utilising of the concept. Furthermore, the social cohesion notion is pluralistic which makes for both broad methodological and theoretical application. Thus, many different meanings have been attached to the concept, which makes the context where it is used utterly important.

Social cohesion is oftentimes invoked to explain the willingness of members of a society to cooperate in order to survive and prosper (Stanley, 2003, p. 8). Willingness to cooperate implies that individuals can freely choose to form partnerships and have a reasonable chance of realizing goals, because others are "willing to cooperate and share the fruits of their endeavours equitably" according to sociologist Dick Stanley (2003, p. 15).[1] Intuitively, social cohesion can be related to social solidarity, civic engagement, social exclusion and the like. Social cohesion "is a characteristic of the social unit; a macro-level concept that refers to the overall state of social bonds within any society – small, medium or large" (Toye 2007, p. 2). It is a "framing construct", an overarching notion that links different policy areas together and help make sense of issues as diverse as income security, neighbourhood safety and housing.

In Sweden, discourses of difference and diversity have come to play a bigger role in nation-wide discussions about social gaps, integration and welfare issues. Political parties with neo-Nazi or fascist ideological roots have been elected into the legislative assemblies of a number of European countries, for example Jobbik in Hungary, National Front in France, Golden Dawn in Greece and the Swedish Democrats in Sweden (Harrell & Stolle, 2014, p. 294). As these parties take on new forms to adapt to the prevailing social currents, so does international debate

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[1] This is in line with political philosopher John Rawls's view of society. Rawls understands society as a structured system of social cooperation that is mutually beneficial since it provides each participant with better conditions of life than would otherwise have been possible (Rawls, 1999, p. 4).

on issues of social gaps, social well-fare, immigration and integration. Sceptics of diversity seem to believe that diverse societies create problems.

Discussing multiculturalism gained popularity in public discourses from the 1980s and onwards, especially in relation to issues such as education, health and social services. The view of diverse values as threats to national identity and social cohesion is no longer only put forth by far-right parties but has been accepted into mainstream European political discourse (Cheong, Edwards, Goulbourne & Solomos, 2006, p. 26). To oppose xenophobic and nationalistic values the political discourse in Europe has been influenced by concepts as togetherness, tolerance, diversity and community (Jönsson, 2016, p. 59). Transforming such concepts into reality, institutions like European Union, national governments and local municipalities have been known to use constructs of culture and heritage to strive for a society characterized by the values connected to the terms (Jönsson, 2016, p. 59). Culture is not neutral or without political purpose. The term has been viewed as stable categories which both suit the common political goals of the European context and as a term for identify and understand either individuals or groups of people (Jönsson, 2016; Appadurai, 2006). Therefore, culture is an associate term to social cohesion which demands to be a part of this thesis.

Aim and Research Questions
The aim of this thesis is to describe and analyse how the social cohesion concept is perceived and employed in a context of local politics by politicians on the municipality board in Malmö, Sweden. In addition, I will examine the consequences and causes of the politicians' perceptions of social cohesion. In so doing, this thesis contributes to research on how the concept is understood in a Swedish municipal context and offers insights on how systems of oppression and privilege shape interpretations of it. Presenting the conditions that shape the interpretations of social cohesion, this thesis strives to better the understanding of how various interpretations of cohesion affect the social, cultural and political processes for more socially cohesive cities.

The following research questions will be guiding in this endeavour:
- How do the politicians define and interpret the construct of social cohesion?
- What practices, values and challenges do the politicians see as connected to social cohesion?
- How is the construct of culture in association to social cohesion discussed by the politicians?

Background

Historically, French sociologists and political philosophers were big influencers on the social cohesion topic. One of the most reputable was Émile Durkheim, who promoted the idea of society as an integrated system with shared principles and values emphasizing the role of solidarity (Schiefer & van der Noll, 2017, p. 584). In the late eighteenth-century Germany another school of thought, described as romantic conservatism, can be located. According to this tradition, cohesive societies are long lasting social hierarchies that are bound together by cultural traditions and by respect of the individual to the social order and acceptance of their position (Green, Cheng & Janmaat, 2011). There were no distinctions between individuals and society as the two are merged into one organic entity, bound together by a common language, culture and traditions (Schiefer & van der Noll, 2017, p. 584). Twentieth century sociology addresses – inter alia – the topic of social integration as a dimension to social cohesion. Social cohesion is present when individuals and groups with different cultures, values, beliefs, lifestyles, and socio-economic resources have equal access to all domains of societal life and live together without conflict. The role of social networks for the functionality and problem-solving capability of societies is further emphasized by the social capital approach. This approach is utilized by some researchers for researching how theories on social capital is relevant for social cohesion (Bourdieu 1986; Putnam 2000; Coleman 1988; Schiefer & van der Noll, 2017). In this thesis however, social capital will not be a dimension for analysis. Rather, it addresses how politicians in Malmö interpret and use social cohesion in a context of local politics, thereby exemplifying how the notion is applied in the twenty-first century.

Despite disputes on how to coherently define and utilize social cohesion, recent decades have seen an inflationary use of it by scientists and policy makers, as an instrument to monitor societal development and to adapt policies to face societal challenges, such as globalization or diversity (Schiefer & van der Noll, 2017, p. 580). Along with multiculturalism, social cohesion has grown to be a topical notion for discussion, especially in relation to issues such as education, health and social services. Discussions with a more critical stance towards multiculturalism have emerged in the past decades, particularly in the context of various events of social change that seem to weaken the social fabric, established authorities and social order e.g., industrialization, emergence of capitalism, or globalization (Schiefer & van der Noll, 2016, p. 583; Novy, Swiatek & Moulaert, 2012, p. 1874). A consequence of these positions is that language has become a key element of public debate, policy discourses and the academic field. How issues are spoken of cause consequences for how they are managed. The notion of social

cohesion symbolically represents complex sets of issues that are shaped by the contemporary and historical socio-economic and political realities (Cheong et al. 2006, p. 28). These sets of issues, relating to humans cooperating for collective well-being, are frequently written about and discussed, using social cohesion as a "framing construct".

To get a sense of the ideological histories of the parties which the politicians are members of, a brief background on the political landscape and an introduction to Swedish politics during the 1900's is needed. Since the late 1800s, the Swedish political landscape has been characterized by the emergence of the labour movement. Until the beginning of the 1930s, the labour movement was largely restricted to fight with the means of strike and other kinds of workplace struggle. Later in the 1900s, this changed as the Social Democrats, leading party of the movement, started winning elections. Since the middle of the 1900s the Social Democrats have ruled, in 1976 Sweden had the first right-wing government since the 1930s (Swedish statistics - Statiska centralbyrån, 2018). At the 1991 election the Christian Democrats and New Democracy made it into parliament, New Democracy being a far-right party with strong ties to nationalist and Nazi movements. The Christian Democrats have managed to remain in the parliament since then, while New Democracy only sat between 1991 and 1994. In the 1994 election, the Green Party made a comeback as a parliamentary party.

Since the 2010 elections, the Swedish Democrats have been elected into the parliament, which now, 2018, consists of a total eight parties. The Swedish Democrats describes themselves as social conservative with a nationalist foundation. However, the party has also been described as far-right, national-conservative, populist and as having its roots in the Swedish white supremacy movement of the late 1980s. The current government in Sweden consist of the Social Democrats and the Green Party. The municipal board in Malmö currently consist of The Social Democrats, the Moderate Party, The Swedish Democrats, The Green Party, the Left party, the Liberal Party and the Feminist Initiative Party[2]. Interviewing politicians about social cohesion is connected to my curiosity about the underlying concern that low degrees of cohesion and

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[2] The Swedish names for the political parties are: the Social Democrats - Socialdemokraterna, The Moderate Party - Moderaterna, the Swedish Democrats - Sverigedemokraterna, the Green Party - Miljöpartiet, the Left Party - Vänsterpartiet, the liberal party - Liberalerna – Feminist Initiative Party - Feministiskt Initiativ.

increasing social exclusion[3] on various levels could become a major threat to social cohesion and economic prosperity for society as a whole.

The political context of this investigation calls not only for examining social cohesion, but the notions around it that affect its definition and practices. The term culture is one of these notions, as briefly introduced. Another notion connected to social cohesion is social sustainability, the two notions are related in their multiple dimensions and use. Social sustainability is about identifying and preventing impacts with focus on environmental and social issues. It is a buzzword among municipalities and governments holding environmental goals in high regard (Littig and Griessler, 2005). Discussing sustainability as a tripartite is common, emphasising economic, environmental and social – sustainability (ibid.). Littig and Griessler (2005, p. 66) further argue that the concept of ecological sustainability "call for a politically induced shift towards a more environmentally friendly way of life (e.g., by means of a socio-ecological tax reform)" and suggest this would also lead to additional positive socio-political effects. Even though positive socio-political effects could be expected, the main focus of working with social sustainability is obtaining the best possible ecological and environmental effects (ibid.).

Situating the Investigation
My study concerns Malmö, the third largest city in Sweden. Malmö is amongst other things known for growing social gaps and vulnerable urban areas. As presented, the research was conducted with politicians from the municipality regarding their view of social cohesion. One of Malmö's greatest challenges are the internal socio-economic differences within the city. To work against these issues Malmö municipal board in 2010 engaged a politically independent commission. This commission was to investigate the social and environmental sustainability with the aim of analysing the causes of growing economic and health differences in the population (Malmö Stad, 2014). The municipal context in Malmö can be described as tightknit with the politicians working closely with each other, not just within the political parties, therefore politicians' answers are dependent on the present municipal rule and leadership and are to be interpreted as bound to the time and context of the research.

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[3] According to a report provided by the World Health Organisation social exclusion consist of "dynamic, multi-dimensional processes driven by unequal power relationships […]. It results in a continuum of inclusion/exclusion characterised by unequal access to resources, capabilities and rights which leads to health inequalities." (Popay, Escorel, Hernández, Johnston, Mathieson & Rispel, 2008, p. 1).

I should clarify how the terms "social cohesion" and "culture" are used in the context of this thesis. The two are to be understood as social constructions. They are both socially constructed and real at the same time. The reality of social cohesion and culture is precisely what makes the investigation of their construction important for this thesis. In his work *The Social Construction of What?*, Ian Hacking argues that concepts, practices and people interact with each other, and goes on to describe that such interaction is often the very point of discussing social constructions (Hacking, 1999, p. 29). The concepts are *given* different meanings, and these different meanings in turn have actual *effects* for our social reality. Because their meanings are in this sense "artificial", the concepts are considered constructs – always value laden in that our interpretations of them are saturated by certain preconceptions. Their effects on individuals and societies nevertheless make them important objects to study. The purpose with interviewing the politicians is to investigate this process of creating meaning for a certain concept – that of social cohesion. That the notions of social cohesion and culture appear obvious and natural is an effect of how they are constructed, hence, analysing how they are understood, matter (cf. Hacking, 1999, p. 11). How the politicians construct the terms are what is of importance for this thesis, thus, throughout I will refer to the two concepts as social cohesion and culture with this imply the construction of them.

Previous Research
Studying academic literature on social cohesion is a question of trying to comprehend fields of unresolved issues and conflicting views. As touched upon above, social cohesion is an ambiguous and blurry concept. It is not contemporary, but rooted in a history of theoretical debates on questions of what constitutes social order in a society and how it can be maintained in times of social changes (Green, Cheng & Janmaat, 2011, p. 3). Discussions on the notion have often emerged from events of social change that seemed to weaken the social fabric, established authorities and social order e.g., industrialization, emergence of capitalism, or globalization (Schiefer & van der Noll, 2017, p. 583; Novy, Swiatek & Moulaert, 2012, p. 1874). Research on social cohesion is in largely focused on measurement and applicability, and the issue of measuring cohesion plays an important role in the future of the notion. Since the popularisation of the notion, it has been applied in policy making and in academia, used alongside terms such as social capital, social relations, diversity and community building (Berger-Schmitt, 2000, p. 3).

Stanley (2003, p. 7) describes social cohesion as being the ongoing process of developing a community of shared values, shared challenges and equal opportunity in societies based on a sense of hope, trust, and reciprocity among citizens. He goes on to describe the socially cohesive society as a population with a sufficient degree of social cohesion to sustain complex sets of social relations "beyond at least the average life span of individuals in the population" (Stanley, 2003, p. 9). Political scientists Allison Harrell and Dietlind Stolle (2014, p. 299) suggest that social cohesion should be defined as the "cooperative relations among individuals and groups of individuals that are based on mutual recognition, equality and norms of reciprocity". This resembles the three core dimensions of social cohesion that political scientist Davis Schiefer and physiologist Jolanda van der Noll identify in their article. These are 1) social relations; 2) sense of belonging; and 2) orientation towards the common good (Schiefer & van der Noll, 2017, p. 581). They follow a tradition of viewing social cohesion as a characteristic of a collective, as well as a *gradual* phenomenon: something that can exist in lesser or greater degrees. In more concrete terms, they understand social cohesion "as a descriptive attribute of a collective, indicating the quality of collective togetherness" (Schiefer & van der Noll, 2017, p. 581).

Sociologists Cheong, Edwards, Goulbourne and Solomos (2007, p. 39) state that "in the dominant discourse, social cohesion is taken to mean a common national identity built via the development of common values, shared symbols, shared ceremonies", which further is focusing on the characteristics of a collective. The democratic aspect of social cohesion is to be considered, in a society where social cohesion advise, the aim usually is that it should apply to all. As put by Noyv et al. (2012, p. 1878) "social cohesion comes in to describe a society which offers opportunities to all its members, within a framework of accepted values and institutions".

Social scientist Regina Berger-Schmitt (2000, p. 4) states that social cohesion "represents a construct which focuses on societal qualities such as the extent of inequality or the strength of social relations and ties within a society". Berger-Schmitt concludes that social cohesion is instrumental to achieving two societal goals: firstly, to reduce inequalities and social exclusion, and secondly, to strengthen social relations, interactions and ties. The dimensions of social cohesion cited above are highlights matters that, if attended to, will contribute to the increase of social cohesion in a society. Social cohesion explores dimensions of humanity and what it is to be a human amongst humans, which makes it hard to just introduce to a society or community and make them "be cohesive" (Stanley, 2003, p. 10; Scheifer &van der Noll, 2017, p. 588) It is

also common to emphasize the orientation towards the common good as a constituent of the phenomenon, since it "entails feelings of responsibility for the common good and the compliance to social rules and order" as Schiefer and van der Noll writes (2017, p. 589).

A pluralistic perspective is possible to establish when differentiating between the various possible approaches to the notion of social cohesion. The essence of the pluralistic perspective or approach lies, as political scientists and theorists Chan, To and Chan (2006, p. 286) explain, in its acceptance of multiple possibilities in defining social cohesion. More specifically, they argue that a supporter of the pluralistic approach typically assumes that it is the social issues of the day that shape the content of the notion social cohesion. As mentioned earlier, this is supported by thoughts that the notion can be recognized as depending on context.

> Social cohesion as a state of affairs concerning the interactions among members of society, interactions that, first, are characterized by a set of attitudes and norms, and second, take place inside the different domains of human associate life (Chan, To & Chan. 2006, p .290).

The set of problems that social cohesion raises must be met with a set of explanations to match. Embracing social cohesion as a notion is embracing the fact that there are no simple answers to defining the dimensions of human interaction and trust. This argument is put forth in more detail by urban researchers Novy, Swiatek and Moulaert (2012, p. 1878), who also recognizes the multiple definitions of social cohesion and concludes that "social cohesion comes in to describe a society which offers opportunities to all its members within a framework of accepted values and institutions".

Method & Empiric Material
The material in this study is made up of nine structured interviews conducted in the autumn of November 2017. The interviews were part of a research project initiated by Open Skåne, an organisation working with issues of social cohesion in the region of Skåne, Sweden. I worked with Open Skåne on a project investigating municipality officials' attitudes and thoughts on social cohesion and diversity. The project was part of a group of long-term projects which all revolved around social cohesion. As mentioned, the interviews were structured, which is common in situations where the researcher, or in this case, an organisation, has special or specific information that is expected to be reached (Aull Davies 2008, p. 105). The questionnaire for the interviews was not solely fitted for the group of politicians I interviewed and neither is the interview material collected only for this thesis. The interviews were almost

closer to survey research in style, where the predetermined questions made the interview situation more standardized (cf. ibid., p. 105). The questionnaire was designed so that it could be used by all employees at Open Skåne and on various target groups. The underlying rationale of this was to match the participating individuals with other participators forming think-tank groups, for further discussions on the subject. This was challenging for me in my role as a researcher, when new themes emerged that could have been pursued with follow up questions. However, there was comfort in knowing that one of the strengths of my material was that the structural similarity in the execution of the interviews reduced the various social hurdles occurring. The selection of politicians in this study is based on reaching out to all elected representatives in the municipal board and interviewing everybody willing to participate. I chose to use the nine interviews I conducted for the project as basis for this thesis. The participating politicians were representatives from the following political parties: The Social Democrats, the Left Party, the Green Party and the Swedish Democrats.

Carrying out individual interviews meant a possibility to access information and a kind of "truth" from the informants which helped answering the research questions and give insight into values, personal feelings and opinions on the subject (Aull Davies 2008, p. 107). The informants' narrations and accounts were a way of gaining new insight and broaden the notions of their perception of social reality. Interviewing was a fruitful method for this study, as the interviews gave me deeper knowledge on both the official and personal attitude on social cohesion, meaning that a more comprehensive picture of the actual notion and its usages of it were obtained. Understanding the experiences of the politicians I needed to be as neutral as possible in my position as an interviewer and researcher. Aull Davies (2008) argues that a neutral position is best accomplished by not expressing opinions or giving interpretative suggestions to the questions asked, which was easy to achieve as the questionnaire did not leave room for follow-up questions. The interviews were conducted in locations of the interviewees' choice, most commonly in the Open Skåne office or at the municipal building.

The interviewees in this thesis are:

Ahlberg	Alami	Berglund
Rashid	Sundlöf	Sundkvist
Thulin	Wallström	Örman

I employ pseudonyms for the informants and withhold any personal information which might serve to identify informants. The politicians are public figures in some sense which both allow for and make it relevant using their real names. Nevertheless, the context in which the interviews were conducted does hinder this, the politicians were promised anonymity by Open Skåne in advance when approached for partaking in the interview study from which I obtained the material for this thesis.

Reflections on Transcribing

The interviews were transcribed in their entirety, as requested by Open Skåne, for whom I conducted the interviews. The interviews were done in Swedish, as were the transcriptions. Hence, quotes from interviews that appear in the thesis have been translated from Swedish to English by me. The following quote, by the sociologist Beverley Skeggs, illustrates the challenges of being a researcher and how the subjectivity of the situation might affect the finished work and result:

> So, whilst subjectivity (theirs and mine) is always implicated, it was me who made decisions about what I thought was worth knowing about. I made interpretations and selections from their and my experiences within the research context which best illustrated the research inquiry, namely the production of subjectivity. Also, their accounts are just as partial as my sections. In the process of representing their experiences, encountered as they were lived, I reduced them to written utterances (Skeggs, 1997, p. 28).

"What is transcribed?" and "How is it transcribed?" These questions respond to the contextual conditions and the decisions of the process of transcribing (Bucholtz, 2000, p. 1439). The scholars' awareness of how the interpretative process impacts the text and furthermore the product is not unproblematic. The reflexive implications of the transcription process have demanded my awareness to be aimed at the interpretative work involved in processing the interviews through transcription. As Mary Bucholtz (2000, p 1440), linguistics professor, presents it "ethnographies, the textual products of their disciplinary practice, are not transparent and unproblematic records of scientific research but are instead creative and politicized documents" in which she points out that the researcher as an author is fully implicated.

Categorising and Coding the Material

Before entering the process of analysis, reorganizing the data into themes and categories, breaking the text up into discrete chunks or segments and identifying them in accordance with

a coding system, was executed to identify major themes in the material (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 152). I began by categorizing and thematising the collected data in accordance with how I anticipated that it might be used. The material was not coded according to the methods used when working with content analysis, but rather to an ethnographic coding system. The main difference between the two is that the latter allows for data to be assigned into more than one category (ibid., 2007, p. 153). Using multiple categories for the material was paramount for going through and getting to understand the material, as well as for beginning the analysis. Identifying the categories for occurring themes to place the material into was a rather time-consuming process. After consideration some categories were made into sub-categories, split into two, or changed altogether during the work. Finding themes was a way to go deep into the material and get an initial sense of the main themes.

Through the process of thematising patterns, the following reoccurring themes appeared the most clearly: power, culture and identity. The three overlap and are not completely isolated from each other, but nor do they only exist in relation to each other. The method used for finding the already existing themes was to colour code the material, using different colours for various words and themes expected to be reoccurring. For example, the word "segregation" light green, the word "culture" turquoise and talk of "the importance of bringing the city together" was pink and talk of "equality" was red. Applying ethnographic coding helped to extract information which otherwise have been overlooked after several re-reads of the transcripts. Furthermore, it was a fruitful process for collecting and initially identifying the various themes and sub-themes. Having categorised and thematised the material, I proceeded to extract the most common themes and words used by the politicians in the interviews. The three main themes, identity, power and culture, served as bases for the analytical chapters.

Theoretical Framework
This section outlines the theoretical framework which makes up the backbone of the analysis. Theories of identity, power and culture constitute the main framework for my investigation of social cohesion. The concept of social cohesion, as utilized by the politicians, has been analysed and understood through the profound theoretical frameworks of Bourdieu and Foucault. Furthermore, this thesis sets out to investigate how social cohesion is linked and employed in connection to culture. The notion of culture as variously defined by Burmann (1999), Öhlander (2005), Gupta and Ferguson (1992) are my theoretical points of departure.

The Relation Between Foucault and Bourdieu

Briefly addressing the relationship between Foucault and Bourdieu is necessary, even though they never publicly debated scientific matters (Callewaert, 2006, p. 75). Michel Foucault and Pierre Bourdieu are often presented as belonging to the same cluster of sociologists in the so-called French historical epistemology, structuralism and post-modernism, even if aspects of their work are different. The French theorists had much in common belonging to the same intellectual, political and academic field in France in the middle of twentieth century (Callewaert, 2006, p. 73). Both Foucault (1980; 1991) and Bourdieu view all human beings as historically structured agents. The two (Bourdieu 2000, p. 176; Foucault 1980); notice that, by living in the world, people are also actively structuring it. One of the differences between them is that Foucault focuses on the *historical* processes that produce certain modes of thinking, whereas Bourdieu focuses on how certain modes of thinking are generated in a particular *social* context. In this thesis, the two perspectives serve separate purposes. Their philosophies contribute in different ways to my understanding of social cohesion as interpreted by the politicians. Bourdieu's line of theorising gives insight into how the social context of the political sphere in Malmö influences the production of values and definition of the concept. Foucault's body of work highlight how the understanding of the politicians' interpretation can be viewed in a larger historical context.

Bourdieu, Identity and Fields

Social cohesion revolves around themes of collective identities we share and depend on, when living together in societies (Berger-Schmitt, 2000, p. 4). Bourdieu (1999, p. 18) claims that one's identity forms and develops in relation to other human beings, social situations and material surroundings we encounter – all which from the very beginning are set in relation to ourselves and who we think we are. In general, social positions are expressed in a space of positions or statements through the various dispositions (or habitus) within this space. This means that a system of differential distances which define the different positions in the main dimensions of the social space, is relational to a system of differential distances between the properties of the agents (Bourdieu, 1999, p. 18). According to Bourdieu (2010, p. 399), human behaviour always takes place within the relationships of different fields. Moreover, fields can range from fields of classes, the field of politics or the field of art or academic field (ibid). Utilizing Bourdieu's theory on fields I will examine the political field in Malmö. According to Bourdieu a field is:

> A network, or a configuration, of objective relations between positions objectively defined, in their existence and in the determinations upon their occupants, agents or institutions, by their present and potential situation in the structure of the distribution of species of power (or capital) whose possession commands access to the specific profits that are at stake in the field as well as their objective relation to other positions (domination, subordination, homology, etc.)(Wacquant, 1989, p. 39).

Analysing what practices and values that the politicians attach to social cohesion by the politicians calls for examining how (or if) and if their individual positions affect their perceptions. Investigating this means analysing *difference*, which in turn is a fundamental element of Bourdieu's theoretical framework. The politicians occupy various distinct and simultaneously existing positions that are external to each other and which are defined in relation to each other through their mutual exteriority and through proximity and spacing relationships as well as through order relationships (Bourdieu, 1999, p. 17).

Foucault, Truth and Power

While the human subject is placed in relations of production and of signification, we are equally placed in various power relations (Foucault, 1982, p. 778). The various positions the politicians occupy and practices they establish are results of how the positions and practices relate to another, these power relations are complex. All social practices can be said to entail meaning or a set of certain values – which, following Foucault's theoretical framework, implies that all practices have a discursive aspect. Investigating the politicians' interpretations of social cohesion, a theoretical base is needed for examining power structures connected to said concept. To Foucault, power is exercised or applied, not something that one either have or do not have (Foucault 1977, p. 26f). Without resistance, power cannot be exercised because resistance is part of the power relationship. Thus, power is relational. This exertion of power is to be analysed in assistance of Foucault.

Foucault (1977, p. 27), argues that "knowledge linked to power, not only assumes the authority of 'the truth' but has the power to make itself true". All knowledge has real effects once out and applied in the real world, which also makes it become true in a sense (Hall, 2001, p. 76). Examining and gaining an understanding of the politicians' perceptions of the social cohesion concept elucidate how their knowledge about it affect the values attached to it and their practices connected to it. This insight is an important point of departure for this thesis, as the

politicians have various employments of social cohesion and different perspectives on society. Using the understanding of power as something which does not belong to any specific person or practice but is spread across various social practitioners furthers the understanding of power as relational (Foucault 1980, p. 119). Although Foucault argues that power is relational, he believes that power cannot be reduced to oppression which he believes is only one of many effects of power (Foucault 1977, p. 23). Foucault considers the construct of oppression insufficient for capturing the productive aspects of power. The determination of the effects of power as oppression is to assume view of power as something primarily expressed in prohibitions and laws. According to Foucault, this is a negative and narrow perception of power, he disregards that power in itself would only be limiting and inhibiting (Foucault, 1982, p. 788). If power is merely repressive, if it never does anything but say "no", he argues there should be no reason to exercise it (Foucault 1980, p. 119). What makes power accepted is simply the fact that power is not only presented as a capacity that is negative, but that it generates pleasure, creates knowledge and produces discourse (ibid., p. 119).

Culture, Difference and Identity

I adopt a definition of culture that is based on ethnologist Christoph Burmanns' (1999, p. 6) interpretation of the phenomenon as that set of specific learned routines which is characteristic of any limited group of people. To Burmann, the existence of any such culture "presupposes that of other sets of routines shared by other groups of people, thus constituting cultures that vary from each other" (ibid.). I examine culture and its connection the social cohesion as employed by the politicians in Malmö, where culture has been adopted into many fields of practices and is utilized differently depending on context.

According to Swedish ethnologist Mangus Öhlander (2005), the word "culture" is essential for describing the common practices humanity share, and do not share. The term exists both within academia and in different distinct traditions of thought, the understandings of the various definitions exist in relation to each other (ibid., p. 11). The term culture as used by the politicians in this thesis have several, partially divergent, potentials and meanings. The use of the concept of culture contributes with the required understanding and respect of the variety of humankind, the use of culture also include power processes in which humans are categorized, assigned attributes, reduced acting spaces and integrated into social hierarchies. As a parallel, culture is used in processes where people claim their own individuality and identities. Where standing

out and claiming action space, recognition or political influence is done with the help or practice of culture (ibid., p. 12).

To understand the application of culture in relation to social cohesion, one must keep in mind that notions of locality or community are dimensions which affect the perception of culture. The identity of a place emerges through the intersection of its specific involvement in a system of hierarchically organized spaces with its cultural construction as a community or locality (Gupta & Ferguson 1992, p. 8). In Malmö, the organized spaces are based upon a seemingly unproblematic division of space, on the fact that they occupy "naturally" discontinuous space (ibid., p. 6). Discussing the culture term using anthropologists Gupta and Fergusons text *Beyond Culture* gives insight and tools for examining the unity of the "us" and the otherness of the "other" and question the radical separation between the two that makes the opposition possible in the first place (ibid., 1992, p. 14). The social cohesion concept departures from the perspective of unity and solidarity (Green & Janmaat, 2011; Schiefer & van der Noll, 2017). I analyse how the politicians' dialogues regarding social cohesion address processes of difference production in a "world culturally, socially, and economically interconnected and interdependent" (Gupta & Ferguson 1992, p. 14).

Disposition
Four analytical chapters will follow. The first chapter focuses on how the notion of social cohesion is interpreted and how identity is connected to it. The second chapter analyses how politics and power structures are discussed and related to social cohesion. The third chapter investigates what the term culture entails and how it is discussed as a companion to social cohesion. Lastly the fourth chapter on applicability concludes how some of the findings may be applied in further work and research, before an overall conclusion completes the thesis.

Chapter 1: The Interpretation

This chapter examines how the politicians discussed and perceived societal challenges as connected to social cohesion. Examining how the politicians discuss personal interpretations, expressions of identity and positionings are therefore the key to understand their perceptions. Bourdieu argues that identity forms and develops in relation to other human beings, social situations and material surroundings we encounter, all which from the very beginning are set in relation to ourselves (cf. 1999, p. 18). Social cohesion is multifaceted and the definitions of it are dependent on what values are attached to it and how it is utilized, meaning that it is a pluralistic concept. The plurality of it has been regarded both as a strength and a weakness. Being versatile and adaptable to various contexts the notion has been claimed to be advantageous to consult when facing multifaceted challenges and issues concerning. The weakness of it is found in the fact that too many definitions and dimensions can make the concept appear unclear and vague. Bearing this in mind, the main questions for this chapter are: (1) How do the politicians define social cohesion? (2) What challenges do they see as connected to it? (3) What does the perceived challenges described tell us about the politicians' view of social cohesion?

Charting Social Cohesion

The notion of social cohesion was not used on its own but rather as an alternative or synonym to similar notions topical in the political sphere by the politicians. They cited it when discussing social challenges and strategies for municipal planning. Social cohesion was discussed in combination with different kinds of sustainability, namely: economic, environmental and social sustainability. Social cohesion was applied differently depending on context, which further increased the variety of what was seen as included in the notion by the politicians, in general the politicians expressed their social positions as Bourdieu writes through statements differentiating or interconnecting them to others in the system of social spaces (Bourdieu, 1999, p. 17). The quote below shows how one of the politicians used social cohesion and social sustainability as interchangeable concepts:

> So, it almost doesn't matter which issue we're talking about, most of them are linked to Malmö's social cohesion. It's common to divide sustainability into social, economic and ecological sustainability, in Malmö, work for economic and ecological sustainability is in fact tools for managing the social sustainability. So, it's not correct to describe it as being

different goals, in fact, I would say that the economic and ecological are the conditions for managing social sustainability. (Wallström)

The politicians had in various degrees taken the notion of social cohesion into use in their politics, values and parlance. They concept was part of their political vocabulary, used alongside terms like equality, diversity and social sustainability. The social sustainability term was more normalized in the Malmö municipality than that of social cohesion. I took the frequent use of the former to be an outcome of the work done by the Malmö commission, formed in 2010 by the municipality and appointed to work towards a more economically and socially sustainable Malmö. The commission developed policy documents, practical solutions and improvements regarding issues and questions connected to social sustainability. The mission was to develop scientifically-based strategies to reduce health differences between social groups in Malmö, following concerns of increasing social gaps and segregation in Malmö. The focus on improving social sustainability resulted in work regarding increased participation and the city's ability to handle changes that occur between social groups as well as constructing and building in a manner to reduce segregation and the housing shortage. Appointed to develop strategies for these directives were researchers, experts and representatives from – among others – Malmö City, Region Skåne, civil society and the business sector (Malmö Stad, 2014). I perceived the politicians to discuss the notion of social sustainability and the Malmö Commission as catalysts for the notion of social cohesion. The work connected to social sustainability formed a breeding ground for social cohesion to grow and take hold. Below, Sundlöf and Berglund discuss the two terms referencing the Malmö Commission:

When the Malmö Commission looked at Malmö, they said Malmö had extreme social differences, but still found that there was a distinct Malmö cohesion. (Sundlöf)

In Malmö, a few years back, there was an extensive work written by the Malmö Commission, which partly addresses these issues [related to social cohesion] and makes it so much easier for us to know how to think about these issues, and to know what we need to work with. (Berglund)

The politicians did not seem to have their own definition of the notion of social cohesion but interchangeably used social sustainability or similar concepts. Social cohesion was a more recent addition to the policy documents and language within the municipality than social

sustainability. The fields to which social cohesion belonged according to the politicians differed greatly from one and another. According to Bourdieu (1999, p. 47) fields can be more or less impactful or governing depending the influence of the field. The politicians did not have a specific field to which social cohesion was confined but they discussed the concept as belonging to multiple fields. How the concept was used, as well what it encompassed, depended on who was using it. The politicians who cited the Malmö Commission's final report delivered in 2012[4] when asked what strategies existed to work practically with challenges regarding social cohesion. As mentioned, the policies and guidelines for working towards increased social sustainability affected the view and definition of what social cohesion was and how the politicians thought about working with it. Consequently, this could be a contributing factor for the politicians viewing it as an issue that concerned the municipality.

Furthermore, equality was also a word that a majority of the politicians talked about at some point during their interviews. Like social cohesion, the term has multiple definitions and dimensions, what was seen as a right was for the politicians' dependent on personal interpretation and ideology. Belonging and identifying oneself with various ideologies made for different outlooks on issues such as how a society should be governed or what economic system was preferred. Ideology affected the view on what equality entails and what definitions were available for interpretation. The politicians were situated within social positionings due to their positions within their respective political parties, these were during the interviews constant source for repositioning. The social artefact that a social group constitutes provides a more likely opportunity to exist and last if the agents within the group at the starting point already are tightknit (Bourdieu 1999, p. 46). The politicians associated social cohesion to be a kind of right. Below three of the politicians speak of equality or justice in connection to the concept:

> All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights, no matter where I'm from and who I happen to have as a parent, I am equally important. It's about seeing everyone, regardless of whether you come from small means or a more prosperous home, everyone should have equal rights (Sundkvist).

> Basic values need to exist, you should be able to do what you want, as long it doesn't hurt others. It's also important to recognize each other's various skills (Örman).

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[4]https://malmo.se/download/18.3108a6ec1445513e589b92/1491299321604/malmo%CC%88kommissionen_slutrapport_201 4.pdf

> In the end, it is about creating some kind of an equal society, where everyone has similar
> opportunities (Berglund).

The use of equality as a term connected to the notion of social cohesion could be related to how the politicians perceived themselves in their roles as politicians, as bearers of change. The discussions about social cohesion as associated with the word equality could stem from the fact that the opposite is had in mind, that dividing people into certain groups or communities based on perceived belonging could be possible to argue in the name of social cohesion. Ethnographer Lars-Eric Jönsson writes that the larger European political discourses on equality and cohesion need to be examined in relation to historical experiences of conflict and unrest (Jönsson, 2016, p. 67). Associating social cohesion with equality, social sustainability, cultural heritage and other common buzzwords within the political discourse of the European Union is educed to the strong political connotation. Among the politicians the ideological spread was restricted to the left side of the political spectrum, with the exception of one right-wing party. The ideologies of the parties on the left side of the political spectrum are both similar and dissimilar. This connects them to each other but also exacerbates the differences between them, the connection and relationship between the parties are part of how the political field is made up of various positions. The positionings is argued by Bourdieu (1999, p. 17) to be essential for understanding relations between agents. The politicians mentioned the work on the city council board and the identity of the politician's political party became a canvas of sort for contrasting what they did not identify as.

Ahlberg who represents the Left Party, demanded the municipality to "stop selling our collective assets". The politicians representing the various parties, for example Wallström from the Social Democrats, Alami from the Swedish democrats or Rashid from the Green Party, did not highlight this dimension in connection to social cohesion. In the quote below, social cohesion is described as an ideal – an image to strive towards – where the improvement is not only needed for the citizens of Malmö today but was argued to affect coming generations.

> We need to be aware that inclusion, in the first stage, means that those with positions of
> power and mandate need to change their perspective of their fellow citizens. So, I would
> say that this is Malmö's challenge. To heal Malmö, we need to mend together our different

> city districts. Then housing is important, everyone is entitled to roof over their head. And
> stop selling our collective assets! We need to be able to hand something over to the next
> generations. (Ahlberg)

The quote gave insight into Ahlberg's perception of Malmö's current state as something
"broken", she discussed what needed to be done to interfere with current tendencies and prevent
situations from becoming worse and more "broken". Mending the "broken" Malmö she meant
would further improve social cohesion and that revoking privileges of people in positions of
power Malmö was necessary. Noteworthy is how she discussed waiving privileges and mandate
of those in positions of exercising power but expressed duality about who is responsible for the
change.

Challenges Connected to Social Cohesion

The examples below show what issues that the politicians perceived as connected to social
cohesion by the politicians. Political identity is shaped by positioning oneself in relation to the
other politician and the ideologies and the strategic solutions that the different positions offer.
Identity was regulated in relation to other political parties or the general political spectra
available, which is connected to how Bourdieu views identity creation as always being situated
and contextual (Bourdieu, 1999, p. 19). Political identity is relational to the world and to the
party. The relational stance taken by the individual affect their language concerning social
cohesion and the related issues housing, equal access to quality education and health challenges.
I asked the politicians what they considered to be the greatest challenges connected to social
cohesion in Skåne and one answer was:

> The first challenge is the economic benefits, and the second challenge is the difference
> between the students performing best in school and students who perform worst. (Alami)

Depending on who was asked social cohesion entailed different things. The challenges brought
up by the politicians were topical in respective party, which could follow from the fact that the
politicians were interviewed as representatives of their parties, and not in a private capacity.
For example, the representatives for the Swedish Democrats were worried about too many
people getting financial support, which could mean smaller incentive to work, while the
representatives for the Left party were worried that the selling of collective assets could increase
inequalities. Another example regarding the labour market:

I would say that it is about exclusion, which is linked to the labour market, and secondly, I would say the social communities that are more of ethnic nature. Perhaps not strictly ethnic, but the groups who have their roots elsewhere and have a harder time entering the labour market. (Rashid)

As Bourdieu (1999, p. 44) writes, the politicians' identities, opinions, and ideologies are relational – as are the existence of left and right. How the parties on the left of the political spectrum are perceived will always be in relation to how the right-wing parties are. Social cohesion was described by the politicians as worked with according to plans already set in motion by the various parties. Consider, for example the following statement:

It's a such a vastly segregated city, just by riding your bike a few kilometres you'll notice such huge socio-economical differences, it's the same if you look at Skåne at large. The economic differences between people's living standards are probably the absolute greatest challenge. (Sundlöf)

The issues of socio-economic gaps were not exactly new on the political agenda. The challenges perceived as connected to the notion of social cohesion shifted from concerning health care to how the construction of the city. An example from Ahlberg, who worked with sustainable development:

Malmö's challenge is, if you look at sustainable development, the soft values; the people; the souls of the city; those who carry sustainable development. How do we create a social structure that facilitates inclusion? […] Those who are excluded don't get anywhere by just digging where they stand, but it's those who are in power who need to renounce their mandate. (Ahlberg)

The issues connected to social cohesion gave some insight into what the politicians saw as consequences of poor cohesion. The common challenges brought up by the politicians consisted of various issues regarding welfare. The reference to the common welfare indicated that the politicians viewed social cohesion as something which the state and municipality should be invested in and aim to strengthen. I perceived the politicians to view themselves as kind of vessels for improvement of the city. This can be connected to the responsibility one has as an elected politician but also how one might identify oneself. How are politicians affected by

working with an immeasurable concept as social cohesion? Sundlöf tackled the political project he stands in the presence of by rationalizing the issues and the possible solutions:

> The major inequalities in Sweden have been created by political decisions, it is not something that has just happened, there has been government policy that has affected the distribution of income in society. It's political decisions that have led to this, so how to handle these issues is to work and strive for another distribution policy. (Sundlöf)

Sundlöf talked about how political decisions were the root for many of the problems and challenges regarding the increase in social gaps and the lack of social cohesion. Sundlöf, was very clear with how he thought we got into today's social situation, by political decision-making. Adding such importance to political decisions can be a way to emphasize one's own significance in the democratic process. The possibilities of radical change regarding individuals' feelings, perceptions or opinions accounted to political decision-making might not be as distinct or grave as he makes it sound. Changing societal relationships and social structures might be done with the help and guidance of political decisions but are not solely dependent on them.

A few questions in the questionnaire concerned more personal aspects of the politicians' thoughts regarding social cohesion. For example, one of the questions were if they personally felt affected by the challenges they previously mentioned as connected to the concept. Feelings of not belonging or feeling excluded from certain contexts were not brought up or discussed, they distanced themselves from the lack of cohesion which was rationally said to exist. Consider, the two following quotes:

> It affects me in various ways [social cohesion], as a politician, I sometimes have to pick a fight as to why we should build good and architecturally innovative in the exposed/underprivileged areas. (Sundkvist)

> Personally, I'm in the system, I have good housing which I own, I have a college degree, employment and political assignments. So personally, it doesn't affect me, but in my role as a parent I recognize that my children will have to manage in this society, and be a part of the housing market, so I do notice that there are challenges. (Thulin)

The politicians agreed on the fact that poor cohesion was a problem and challenge for Malmö city which needs to be solved, or that increased social cohesion in society would probably help and be a step in the right direction for solving or reducing other societal issues. The politicians acknowledged that the degree of social cohesion in a society would affect them structurally, even if they might not notice it in their daily life. The politicians were individuals who seemed to have succeeded in most visible parts of their lives, an increase in cohesion would likely not affect the citizens in a city who already have a high social standing but for those who do not. The interviews have shown that the work to create higher degrees of social cohesion in a society is furthered by an equitable distribution of social outcomes, how this should be achieved is viewed differently by the politicians participating in this study, moreover the social outcomes are argued to be improved by increased degrees of social cohesion. The conclusion which can be drawn is neatly formulated by Stanley (2003, p. 11) "social cohesion derives basically from equity in the distribution of the very social outcomes that it contributes to" and if society fails to distribute the social outcomes equitably, social cohesion deteriorates and social outcomes suffer.

Constructing Social Cohesion
Another term which two of the politicians referred to was densification. This term was used when they debated how to tackle the issue of segregation in Malmö. Densification is described by Malmö housing and urban development office (Malmö Stadsbyggnadskontor) in the report "This is how we densify Malmö!" (Så förtätar vi Malmö!) (Malmö stadsbyggnadskontor, 2010, p. 2) as a means to an end for "creating a more mixed society"[5] which is planned to be achieved by building more expensive and attractive housing in more neglected areas. Below, Berglund introduces densification as a tool for increasing cohesion:

> Politically, this [social cohesion] is a highly relevant question for us. We are working hard talking about trying to see how we can tie the city together, tie up pedestrian areas and we discuss densification a lot. Densification is the tool we'll use to get to these knots. (Berglund)

According to the housing and urban development office, densifying Malmö implies increasing the level of exploitation in the built environment in urbanized areas (Malmö

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[5] The consolidation/densifying as Malmö city described as a means to an end for "creating a more mixed society.

stadsbyggnadskontor, 2010). This can be done in various ways, for example, through extensions or demolition. Conversion of older industrial and port areas into denser urban districts are common examples. 2017 the housing and urban development office had projects ongoing in the urban districts of Västra Hamnen, Norra Sorgenfri, Rosengård, Fosiestråket, Ön and Limhamn's industrial area. The quote shows what Sundkvist thinks of as practical solutions to challenges regarding the notion of social cohesion and how to improve it. Sundkvist comments on how planning and building for improved cohesion in the city can be hard:

> Sometimes I have to pick a fight as to why we should build good and architecturally innovative housing in the exposed/underprivileged areas, such as Holma, Lindängen, Augustenborg. We've got a greenhouse in Augustenborg now, and we are starting to clean up and getting it better in Lindängen. In my experience, they're happy to build smart and elegant in our wealthy areas, as the western harbour, Limhamn's Sjöstad and so on, but we must show those who live there [in Holma, Lindängen, and Augustenborg] that we care. We must be responsive as politicians and actively be out in the city. We have to be perceptive and dare to think innovatively. (Sundkvist)

Building a greenhouse[6], an environmentally friendly and sustainable house was according to her a step towards improved cohesion. The house was built in Augustenborg, an area which has not gotten much attention from the municipality until recent years, where the housing does not generally have an environmental or sustainable focus. Both Berglund and Sundkvist talked about densification and construction as steps towards a bigger goal, which can be connected to the work of the Malmö Commission, which emphasized the importance of sustainable living and construction as one of the answers for a city with better living conditions for many of its citizens (Malmö Stad, 2014).

How, then, is densification different from gentrification? Although this might seem self-explanatory, this briefly needs to be addressed. Drawing upon research conducted in the neighbourhood of Harlem, New York City, ethnographer Melissa Checker (2011, p. 210)

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[6] The greenhouse at Augustenborg is described as "smart, simple, green and sustainable" and as "one of Sweden's most sustainable building projects". It is accommodation that aims to makes it easy to live in a sustainable manner in the centre of the city. According to MKB the greenhouse provides "amazing opportunities for cultivation, in combination with the fact that it is possible to highlight and, in various ways, to visualize households' impact on the environment, gives the gives the house its unique character" (MKB, Fact Sheet, 2015 https://www.mkbfastighet.se/nyproduktion/greenhouse/in-english/)

describes a process "environmental gentrification" which exposes the discursive successes of the environmental justice movement to appear as politically-neutral, consensus-based when planning ecologically and socially sensitive. Further, Checker (ibid., p. 212) describes environmental gentrification as "the efforts of environmental justice activists to improve their neighborhoods (i.e. the removal of environmental burdens and the installation of environmental benefits) now help those neighborhoods attract an influx of affluent residents". This very similar to what Malmö Housing and Urban Development Office proposes be implemented in the "neglected" areas of Malmö (Malmö Stadsbyggnadskontor, 2010). Checker (ibid., p. 212) argues that a discourse of sustainability is making it possible for the sympathizers of environmental gentrification to simultaneously describe a vision of ecologically and socially responsible urban planning, "green" lifestyles appealing to eco-conscious residents and a technocratic, politically neutral approach to solving environmental problems[7]. Building sustainable housing is due to a municipal government which has identified the sustainability tripartite, economic, environmental and social, as goals to work toward. Among these goals social cohesion "fits" very well. Berglund and Sundkvist, who work with questions regarding physical and material issues in Malmö, believe that building strategically and innovatively in all of Malmö will improve social cohesion.

Chapter Summary

The identity creation of the politicians was shaped by positioning themselves in relation to the other politicians or ideologies and strategic solutions that the various positions offered. Thus, issues that were topical, as social cohesion, would be defined in such fashion to fit the ideology of the specific party and the individual representing that party.

Social cohesion was not used by the politicians on its own but was conceived as tightly intertwined with concepts such as social sustainability and densification (which could be interpreted as environmental gentrification). The environmental gentrification is a vision where building sustainably is thought to appeal to eco-conscious residents through a technocratic, politically neutral approach to solving environmental problems

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[7] This could further be discussed as a new form of "post political" politics. According to Slavoj Žižek, this mode of governance shies away from traditional, conflictual politics in favour of policies set forth by "enlightened technocrats (economists, public opinion specialists...) via the process of negotiation of interests, a compromise is reached in the guise of a more or less universal consensus." (1999, p. 198).

The challenges described by the politicians indicated that they interpreted social cohesion as an important goal to work towards, and that it furthermore (although differently defined by each politicians), was a concept that could be used as a key word or main point in discussion to give them additional weight to their arguments. The values attached to social cohesion were closely related to equality.

Chapter 2: The Politics

In this chapter I examine how the politicians discussed dilemmas and dimensions of social cohesion associated to exercise of power. The use of the social cohesion concept was a somewhat new device for Malmö municipality and as noted the interpretation by politicians influenced their practices and communication. The variety of interpretations available to be made of social cohesion made it a concept which could belong in multiple discourses. To Foucault, discourses are groups of statements that provide a language for talking about and representing knowledge on a particular topic at a particular time in history (Foucault, 1980, p. 131). Social cohesion is a concept that can be found in political discourses, health discourses, discourses on ethnicity, et cetera. The context of my study, I argue, is placed within the discourse of politics and more specifically in a discourse connected to the improvement of social structures within a society, in this case the city of Malmö. The power structures that affect members of a society relate to each other and are connected to how power is distributed or experienced in that time and place in history (Foucault, 1980, p. 18). Specific questions I aim to answer in this chapter are: (1) How did the political context of Malmö affect the politicians' interpretation of social cohesion and (2) How did the politicians discuss themes of power?

Ideological Considerations

The politicians had, as concluded, different understandings of the notion of social cohesion. Their interpretations of the concept were shown to be contingent on what political party they were affiliated to and which questions are perceived as important by that political party. The human subject is placed in relations of production and of signification and we are equally placed in various power relations (Foucault, 1982, p. 778). These power relations are complex and all social practices entail meaning or a set of certain values which, following Foucault's theoretical framework, implies that all practices have a discursive aspect (Hall, 2001, p. 73). The politicians are positioned in these power relations which are affected by the values within the political discourse. The same discourse or characteristic way of thinking can appear across a range of conducts, practices and institutions, which also can be argued to be a characteristic of social cohesion (Hall, 2001, p. 73).

The choice of political affiliation in the political field and context is a marker of how one want to portray oneself and one's values. In addition, it states what you are not. Wallström made statements by incorporating his political affiliation a number of times during the interview,

suggesting the importance of his ideological affirmation for the future of work reaching higher degrees of social cohesion:

> I am democratic socialist, this is my political background. I believe in equality and in a society without social divides, and I believe it is a great advantage not to be caught in dogmas and such. In my view of this [social cohesion and challenges connected to it], I have my social-democratic perspective. (Wallström)

Discussing challenges connected to social cohesion the answers were affiliated to the politicians' area of expertise and activities within respective party. As discussed in the previous chapter, the politicians were working with different societal dimensions which entailed various areas of knowledge and control. Above, Wallström told me his ideological conviction was an advantage in the pursuit of increased social cohesion. During the interview, Wallström told me how the ideological stance of the Social Democrats has historically rested on a strong foundation of positioning themselves with the "people". In the quote he singled out his party, the social democrats, suggesting they have an ideological advantage for working with social cohesion. In doing so, he positioned himself and the Social Democratic party in relation to the other parties and their systems of values. Which I saw as an expression of power and way to demonstrate how his party had control over the issue of poor social cohesion better than any other party, which no other politician suggested.

The politician in the quote below, Berglund, put herself in relation to the citizens, like she herself was not affected by the "us and them" problematics she described. I perceived her as conceiving several pairs of different "us and them", There were the "us and them" positions occupied by various citizens of Malmö and then were "us", the politicians and "them", the citizens. These distinctions enabled her to speak of herself in relation to both other politicians, either distancing herself or not and it enabled her to speak of the citizens of Malmö either including herself or not. The exercise of power Berglund had access to in her position as an elected politician and employee at the municipality perhaps made it necessary to situate herself outside or beside the problem or issue to try and solve them?

> We talk a lot about the barriers the city already has, that is roads, which create barriers, and some of the more psychological aspects, we know that there are residential areas adjacent

to each other, but there's still talk about the others. It's a challenge to get a bigger 'we'
rather than we and them. So, our focus is on the physical space. (Berglund)

Both politicians, Wallström and Berglund, situated themselves in relation to something else in
order to discuss what social cohesion was and what the challenges connected to it were. They
were aware of the various fields which they positioned themselves either in or outside. I took
this to be a way for them to navigate the various discourses of the political field of Malmö.
Below, Berglund discussed how working the with physical space could be a way to increase
cohesion in the city. She further discussed social cohesion from a practical perspective:

> If you view it in a larger perspective, some groups have an easier time to help themselves
> than others. They might have more money, power or resources, and that has profound
> consequences. The reason we are trying to mend the city by constructing it in a new and
> better way, is so that less advantaged groups can have better opportunities, because they
> are the ones who are most affected by the current state of Malmö (Berglund)

The question Berglund answered in the quote was regarding her own values and how they were
important for confronting the challenges she connected with social cohesion. It appeared as she
was focused on working with objects affiliated to social cohesion rather than on discussing the
processes. Berglund used social cohesion as a notion which embraced the aspect of equality as
a cornerstone of its definition, which further acknowledges how the concept interlaced with the
theme of power. What equality is, is closely connected to what it is not. Further, she discussed
that what was perceived as a challenge could vary depending on whose perspective was chosen
to adapt. To find out what is meant by equality in our society it could be of importance to
investigate what the prevailing hegemonic definition is. As Foucault (Foucault, 1982, p. 780)
"in order to understand what power relations are about, perhaps we should investigate the forms
of resistance and attempts made to dissociate these relations". According to my interpretation,
her aim was to work for a city helping less advantaged and that partaking in the democratic
process was her way of making that happen. She spoke of how the most important thing was to
construct a city accessible and inclusive for as many of its inhabitants as possible. Berglund
refers to Malmö as broken and discusses how construction was a process that the she views as
a way to "heal" or "mend" the city. Constructing the city so vulnerable societal groups could
benefit from it was her way to address the challenges she described but the democratic process

which elected her a representative of the citizens she speaks of as not always an easy position to be in. Berglund spoke of her position in as difficult at times:

> At the same time, it is enormously challenging, for even the civil servants aren't too sure about how to work with it [social cohesion] either. It takes time and we're almost breaking new ground with how to think about this. But its exiting to try and find new perspectives and mind-sets. (Berglund)

Berglund suggested that working with social cohesion was not easy. The civil servants who were assigned the question were not in agreement of how to practically work with it or even how to interpret the notion. This showed how the different municipal organs were not communicating even though many of the various operations had the question of how to incorporate the notion of social cohesion in their activities. How to apply the notion did not seem to be clearly communicated throughout the organisation. There was no one speaking of a common plan for how to approach social cohesion. As power circulated through the various organisations in the municipality, it affected how power could be exercised, the different functions and competencies within the large spider web that is the Swedish municipality system inheres various forms of power, which are always in circulation according to Foucault (1991). The functions within the municipality organization were not always unanimous in regards to what was seen as "right" or "equal" and this affected the politicians view of the terms. Berglund is explicit in the quote on how her view of social cohesion could be worked with, but as the municipal organization is a net-like bureaucratic organization the possible practical solutions and ideas will have to pass through the municipal process before applied. Power does not reside within but circulates through the exercise of it, as Berglund created these various positionings for herself she could follow the exercise of power as it circulated (Foucault 1980, p. 98).

In the previous chapter, I showed how Sundlöf connected basic societal change to political decisions. He discussed how social cohesion could be improved by simply voting for the desired change. This made me think of his usage and perception of politics as rather paradoxical, both insufficient and a tool for change at the same time. Instead of feeling without capacity to inflict change he put all his conviction into the democratic process. Some perceived challenges were: growing segregation, unequal education and economic benefits. These challenges were seen as connected to the municipal institutions exercise power by Sundlöf, which was not only to be thought of as negative control over the individual but as a force aimed to also reduce inequalities

and even out living standards (Foucault, 1991). The quote below by Ahlberg is an example of how she felt powerless:

> It depends on what mood I am, sometimes I feel hopeless about humanity, why do we exist, why do we do as we do, what is good in mankind? An example: environmental issues, why do we continue to use the earth as we do?! We have to wake up! Sometimes I can be pissed off and think, 'For fuck's sake, I need to make things happen and make a difference!' (Ahlberg)

Ahlbergs' expression of powerlessness was an example of how power can be exercised but cannot be held (Foucault 1980, p. 98). She was in a position where the exercise of power was available, both individually and as a representative for the people who elected her, this accessible power however not available for all that was desired by her. Ahlberg was in a position of being a part of the deciding organ in the municipality, but still expressed she felt "powerless". She expressed frustration that changes could be made but simultaneously were out of reach. She perceived herself to be a part of a system intended to change (not always for the better) certain issues but could not affect which ones herself. When the politicians spoke of challenges and improvements needed in Malmö, they did not speak in practical terms of how it would be done, but in terms of what "might" be considered. This suggests that feelings of hopelessness were connected to the difficulty of altering problems in society at the rate which might be desirable are expressed, as well as social cohesion.

Fostering Cohesion

Foucault argues that power does not "function in the form of a chain" - but that it circulates and can never be monopolized by one centre but is deployed and exercised through a net-like organization (Foucault, 1980, p. 98). The circulation of power was by the politicians discussed in connection to social cohesion as they used power as an explanatory force for what could be needed for increasing the social cohesion. Ahlberg spoke of how excluded people would not gain much from "digging" where they currently stand:

> How do we get the people who are in positions of power to waive their authority? Those who are excluded don't get too much out of just digging where they stand, it is those with power who need to take a few steps back. (Ahlberg)

She interpreted the power factor to not only be something which is exercised but also as something which could be renounced or sacrificed at the expenses of others. Power could be seen as exercised and expressed in the suggestions of who to contact for further interviews on the social cohesion subject. The politicians recognized that people in high positions exercise power in the social cohesion discourse. Examples of this were who the politicians recommended for me to interview further material. The question asked was: Who is important to contact for further discussions on social cohesion in Skåne? Here are three answers:

> My old boss, Anders, he is so unprejudiced. He has worked at different levels, both internationally and nationally. He's an entrepreneur. (Ahlberg)

> Nils, who is a contractor building at Lindängen for the first time in 30 years. In addition, he bought Rosengård Centrum, he is an inspiration. And then there's probably people at the environmental department. (Sundkvist)

> Difficult question, I think politics and the commercial and industrial worlds have interest in it. And the different religions and their representatives. I don't have anybody specific. (Thulin)

These examples spoke of *where* the politicians perceived social cohesion to belong – to some extent the business sector. The connection to the business sector showed how they thought it important not to keep the concept only in the municipal field. Both Sundkvist and Ahlberg expressed how inspirational it was for the persons they suggested to be entrepreneurs, suggesting they find it important for the notion of social cohesion to spread from the municipal sector.

Berglund discussed the importance examining of one's own perspective in relation to others for insight into what could have been forgotten to take into consideration. There is privilege in forgetting instead of being forgotten, she suggested that the politicians have the responsibility to listen to what the people have to say about current issues, especially those in less advantaged positions.

> If the aim is to build a city for everyone then space must be created for everyone. It is so easy to think that your own perspective is omnipotent, it's easy not to forget the people you shut out. Consequently, it is important that as many people as possible be heard, in as many

ways as possible. After that it is the politicians task of expropriating it, you don't have to create unnecessary barriers. (Berglund)

That power circulates and cannot be monopolized means that everybody is touched and effected by it, the ruling politicians, the citizens and the people who feel they stand outside it all, oppressors and oppressed – all the same (Foucault, 1980, p. 98; Hall, 2001, p. 77). The politicians express not feeling affected by the lack of cohesion seems to be less accurate for circulating power, is as stated, something that affect all. The work for increasing social cohesion is not solely needed form the institutions and the government, moving the analysis one step beyond viewing power as the plain oppression of the powerless by the powerful and aiming to examine how it operates in day to day interactions between people and institutions is be needed.

The Political Landscape of Malmö

Stanley argues that the axes of community identification: citizen participation, national identity, faith in collective action that have kept us together past decades are weakening (2003, p. 11). Or at least changing under the pressures of the growing social and economic cleavages and globalization. In order to secure social well-being, various truths of how to tackle the challenges have been popular throughout the decades. Social cohesion is one of them. It is said that the notion could be a contributing factor for positive economic and social outcomes (ibid.). How the politicians interpreted the notion of social cohesion and how they communicated their perceptions of it was directly relevant for what perspective was passed on to the population of Malmö. Beverley Skeggs (1997, p. 22) states that "the questions we ask, the problems which challenge us and the answers we find are always historically contingent and located". This applies to the discussion on social cohesion and how it is used and defined by the politicians. The municipality is a part of a bigger picture and the politicians elected to run it can be seen as producers of knowledge, because they are in many ways seen as legitimate knowers[8] (ibid., p. 18).

The term social cohesion was not yet widely recognized and this yielded opportunities to fill the concept with meaning, which opened up for the politicians to interpret the notion to their

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[8] On the subject of legitimate knowers Bourdieu (2010, p. 401) writes: "Everything takes place as if the most 'legitimate' agents, that is, those most competent in both senses, were and felt that much more legitimated - i.e., inclined and called upon to express an opinion - the more 'legitimate' the problem posed. Thus, one finds that those who cannot reply to the question of their political allegiance or preference (indicating the party to which they feel closest) are those who are also most inclined to leave the other questions unanswered - especially when the question posed is clearly located in the register of professional politics".

convenience. The notion of social cohesion could therefore be called an empty vessel. The politicians used social cohesion to speak of citizens as equal and with equal opportunities. This did not fit the reality, a fact which the politicians expressed awareness of. As established, the challenges recognized by the politicians were widely connected to the theme of equality which indicated that the city was not an equal city for all citizens. The politicians were aware of this and discussed what *could* and *should* be done. In addition, they talked about Malmö as a segregated city, although the challenges were not connected to class distinctions. Rather, the politicians used segregation as a kind of a bridge for discussing themes such as bad housing markets, unequal education and other injustices – but seldom the topic of how segregation had become one of the most discussed and debated issues in the municipality. However, one politician did discuss class as a dimension to consider in connection to social cohesion:

> Class differences have increased enormously in society. Until the mid 80's we had a development in Sweden of becoming more equal and more coequal but since the mid 80's that development has been going in the opposite direction. (Sundlöf)

Sundlöf had a perception of what the segregation was based upon and talked about the huge class distinctions which – according to him – were the root of the problems. It seems that segregation and integration were two words which had almost lost their strength for some of the politicians. Might there be a subtle change taking place in Swedish municipal politics as to what terms are used to talk about the social challenges as integration and segregation? Were broad terms as social sustainability and social cohesion taking a bigger part in the public debate because we find it so hard to "fix", "mend" or "heal" the challenges of the "new" or "modern" political landscape?

The General Politics of Truth
As argued by Foucault each society has its regime of truth, and "general politics" of truth, this according to him is the various types of discourse which the regime accepts as true (Foucault, 1980, p. 131). One general truth discovered with a majority of the politicians is the belief that building, expanding and entrepreneurship are important factors for working to increase cohesion[9]. The different mechanisms and various instances which enable us to distinguish true and false statements are dependent on the relations between the discourses and the relations of

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[9] See page 36 for additional empirical examples.

power connected to them (Foucault, 1991). Sundkvist discussed Malmö as a city with great potential and emphasized the diversity as a factor for companies and organisations to increase the production of profit. Her stance on how increased social cohesion might affect the city of Malmö was connected to how a greater diversity would influence the business sector. She discussed diversity as economic and political incentives to increase profit and could be interpreted as a wish for political control and power:

> The entrepreneur, property owner or hotel contractor who does not understand the importance and profit of this (social cohesion) to make a city grow has not thought it all the way through. Because Malmö is multicultural, multi-religious, multilingual and we have every opportunity of making a business global. (Sundkvist)

The perspective of "value-in-diversity" argues that a diverse workforce, in contrast to a more homogeneous one, would be generally more beneficial for business, this in contrast to other accounts that view diversity as "either nonconsequential to business success or actually detrimental by creating conflict, undermining cohesion, and thus decreasing productivity" (Herring, 2009). That diversity could be a chance to increase profit is a part of a wider discussion connected to the belief that companies with high gender and ethnic diversity are more likely to produce better returns than their local peers (Ralph & Noonan, 2017). According to Foucault (1991), capitalist truth regimes identify and justifying themselves as objective and scientific. The "value-in-diversity" perspective could be interpreted as a truth regime for it fits in with the two immediate functions of the objectivity: 1) it procures normative status for the view of diversity as an economical factor. Truth claims become claims not only about what "is" but about what should be; and 2) it conceals and constantly camouflages the context of the value-in-diversity' truth regime (Foucault, 1991, p. 78; Foucault, 1980, p. 131).

Chapter Summary
This chapter have investigated how expressions of power are perceived by the politicians and furthermore, how the politics of social cohesion affected the politicians' interpretation of it. The politicians had individual interpretations of social cohesion and varying opinions concerning how to tackle challenges associated with it. Challenges articulated by the politicians were for the most part connected to the various issues regarding exclusion and how the surroundings affect citizens chances to develop as individuals. It became apparent that the concept was not a

legitimate problem in the same way as the lack of housing was but that discussions about e.g. housing issues could be granted more weight by incorporating social cohesion.

The values attached to social cohesion were affected by the political discourse of Malmö. The concept was generally viewed as associated with equality, but understandings of the latter varied. Foucault argues that a discourse never consists of one statement (Foucault 1977, p. 26), therefore, examining how social cohesion was perceived through a discursive lens was fruitful, for the discourses surrounding it did clearly not belong to only one context. The politicians were aware of different discourses associated with social cohesion and saw the concept from their point of view, which placed it in different discourses, e.g. welfare discourse, entrepreneurial discourse or discourse of identity.

Social cohesion was not widely recognized as having a coherent definition, which gave the politicians opportunity to fill it with meaning themselves and opened up for them to interpret the notion to their convenience. This is an aspect where the various ideological and political backgrounds are important to take note of as this affected their perspective on social cohesion.

Chapter 3: The Culture

The word and concept "culture" is important for describing the common practices humanity or societies share or do not share (Öhlander, 2005, p. 11). The politicians made frequent use of the term, and in this chapter I investigate how they did so in discussions about social cohesion. Similarly to social cohesion, culture has been adopted into many fields of practices and is utilized differently depending on context and interpretation. According to Burmann (1999, p. 6) "a culture" is the set of specific learned routines that are characteristic of a limited group of people, and the existence of any such culture "presupposes that of other sets of routines shared by other groups of people, thus constituting cultures that vary from each other". This definition of culture will be my point of departure.

In addition, culture is said to "consists of the total sum of ideas, conditioned emotional responses and patterns of habitual behaviour which the members of that society have acquired through instruction or imitation and which they share to a greater or less degree" (ibid., p. 4), which I view as an argument for how the various cultures of Malmö cannot be boiled down to one consistent "culture" which people "should" belong to. The word culture was frequently brought up in most different fashions by the politicians and it is a necessary dimension for analysing the practices, values and challenges they see as connected to the notion of social cohesion. The questions I intend to answer in this chapter are: (1) How is culture connected to social cohesion according to the politicians? (2) How do the politicians define the concept of culture?

The Perception of Culture

The concept of culture was employed by the politicians most commonly in combination with other words, such as were multi-culture, benefit-culture, Malmö culture and Swedish culture. This, culture and social cohesion had in common. Understanding culture as "something" that both united and divided people within Malmö seemed to make culture a word which was used with a kind of caution or multiple ways at the same time, as to not define it to precisely. The understanding of culture shifted depending on who I interviewed, some used culture as a description of something "possessed" by individuals or groups of people, or as something shared throughout cities or nations. Wallström used the culture term when discussing cultural policies and the effects of it on social cohesion in Malmö.

> If I were to discuss the city's cultural policies I would talk about the differences in the
> construction of culture, and about culture as an expression for a possible way to solve some
> of those differences and negative effects. So, it almost doesn't matter what question we're
> talking about, most of them are linked to Malmö's social cohesion. (Wallström)

He acknowledged that there were multiple ways to interpret culture and expressed that almost
no matter which perspectives that were employed, connections could be found to social
cohesion. Wallström further argued that "using" culture could be a way to improve the degree
of cohesion in Malmö, but he also suggested that almost all issues could be connected to social
cohesion. Suggesting culture could be used as a problem-solving tool, this interpretation of
culture as a tool can be problematic for the interpretation of culture is deeply political (cf.
Jönsson, 2016). He presented his interpretation of culture as connected to the perspective that
was brought up in the municipality's cultural policies. Like social cohesion the concept of
culture has multiple uses. The use of them could therefore expose the values that are seen as
connected to them. By referencing the municipal cultural policies, Wallström chose not to give
his personal description of how social cohesion and culture were connected, but rather stated
that the culture – as a term – is connected to social cohesion, without going further into how
and why.

The perception of culture as a term which describes something inherent in people is problematic
as it either turns culture into sort of an "essence" with life of its own or brings the concept
uncomfortably close to ideas such as race that it originally set out to transcend (cf. Burmann,
1999). Throughout the interviews, I noticed that the politicians perceived culture as something
that could be possessed, expressed and lived by others, but not by oneself to the same extent.
The "possession of culture" seemed to be both positive and negative, depending on who
"possessed it" and what "kind" of culture that the politicians referred to. Consider, for example
the following statement:

> For me, it's about being clear that I don't want to change people but unite them. So, no
> matter what religion you have, we must be able to meet. Same with cultural differences,
> and I can understand that if I would come to a new country or a city, like Malmö, to feel
> safe, I would want to be among those who speak my language and share my values, I can
> really emphasize with that. For me, it's about being really clear with that you don't have to
> sacrifice your religion or values, as long as they do not hurt anyone else. (Sundkvist)

Hence, culture does not only describe a process but also a *result* of a process. As a noun, culture assumes the form of an object, a phenomenon that can be separated from other phenomena. In this form, culture can be made into an entity with clear boundaries and a social/geographical location (cf. Öhlander, 2005, p. 15). The quote above is an example of how Sundkvist perceived culture as something which was possessed and brought to Sweden. These "others" with "inherent culture" connected to their origins or ways of life were contrasted against "our mundane and ordinary way of life", which I interpret as a sign of the politicians' blindness to their own routines, values and power structures. The lives of the politicians in Malmö are as filled with recurring behaviours, patterns and rituals as someone's everyday life across the world. Important to note is that diversity is not experienced in a vacuum, there are political discourses and nation-wide, region-wide or local value systems that influence and shape if and *how* diversity might affect social cohesion (Harrell & Stolle, 2014, p. 296). The perception of a group of people as diversifying Malmö is based on biases and stereotypes of who is different and who is not. One approach to unify and embrace diversity in Malmö was discussed by Sundlöf:

> When the Malmö Commission had looked at Malmö, they said Malmö had extreme social differences, but still found that there is a distinct Malmö cohesion. Their conclusion was that it was due to Malmö's strong cultural life, which meant that despite the tensions in the city, there are still so many who participate in an active cultural life that it was a bond that held down the actual contradictions that we may have most seen in English cities where it leads to riots and unrest. (Sundlöf)

What does cultural life mean in this quote? The city has a variety of recurrent events aimed at the population but there is a question that needs to be addressed regarding the participation in these events. The city of Malmö has several big cultural events each year, fairs, sports events, music festivals and celebrations of different holidays. He suggested that being a part of the Malmö-culture is an experience of subjective contraction which is one way in which we come to know and be known. It seems the cultural experience, as described by Sundlöf, is not the same as the culture Sundkvist previously discussed. The two differ from each other but share the idea that culture, in various forms, can unite people. The difference lies in the fact that Sundkvist suggests that the experienced or possessed culture unites the people sharing it, whereas Sundlöf argues that shared cultural experiences create common ground.

Experiences enable shifts to be made from experiences as "foundation for knowledge to experience as productive of a knowing subject in which their identities are continually in production rather than being occupied as fixed" (Skeggs, 1997, p. 28). In other words, through our experiences, we change and through change we come to know. Experiences and perceptions of "taking part" and "doing culture" together – be it attending the same cultural events or appreciating the same food – is something which I interpret Sundlöf to take as the foundation for having strong connections within Malmö and laying a stable ground for social cohesion. Sundlöf mentions similarities between Malmö and industrial English cities, but does not bring up the fact that riots and unrest have indeed been a part of Malmö's past and present, i.e.: the image of Malmö he presents is slightly refined. One starting point for the politicians was that the term culture had several, partially divergent, potentials, and the use of the concept of culture contributed to the understanding and respect of the variety of humankind. The following quote exemplifies:

> It's about acknowledging each individual. I think that we should meet and see people where they are, you shouldn't judge or only see the surface, how someone might be dressed but try to see behind that and realise we all have so much in common. (Thulin)

The use of the concept of culture gave perspective on the politicians' view of how structures revolving the term were a part of a categorization system assigning attributes, reducing acting spaces. Thulin spoke of this and shared a view of humans and culture as multifaceted. He spoke of how important it was not to view individuals as stagnant, that change is part of people's lives and affects the perception of things. This is true regarding the culture concept as well, the definitions of it or experiencing it vary depending time, place and context. Ahlberg expresses a similar view:

> You're never just one thing. I think it's easy to put on different glasses and see various perspectives and bring them together. I like to move between borders, rooms and forums, and that's a strength I have. Humans are always more than religious affiliation, political conviction, sexuality or gender. (Ahlberg)

Ahlberg spoke of "boarders" in connection to various attributes connected to identity. She described these boarders one dimensional and emphasized that it is important to see that humans never are just one thing but multifaceted.

Wallström discussed the historical aspect of cohesion in connection to the history of Swedish social democracy and pointed out that "the idea of social democracy was very powerful in a national state with a very uniform population and mono-cultural population". This he explained is one of the reasons for the success of well-fare-system that Swedish social democracy has built. This can be seen as related to the school of thought where a uniform population is believed to have better social cohesion (cf. Green & Janmaat, 2011). Burmann (1990) on the other hand, argues that monocultures never existed – for the very definition of the word culture is different groups with different values, practices, traditions, and norms, who differ from each other. Furthermore, culture within groups is not always homogenous. This is a school of thought which, if not shared, I recognize as present with Alami, who seemed to have a very clear perception of what Swedish culture entailed, which affected his view of "others". The relation between culture and social cohesion shows that notions of locality or community are dimensions which affect the perception of culture. The identity of a place emerges by the intersection of its specific involvement in a system of hierarchically organized spaces with its cultural construction as a community or locality (Gupta & Ferguson 1992, p. 8). In the quote, Alami contrasted culture with the struggle against oppression:

> It is an important part of the Swedish culture to opposition repression of various kinds! Is
> it the fight for culture that is important, or the fight against oppression? This can create
> opposition and conflicts in society. (Alami)

The quote points to how "others" and "otherness" is created by contrasting culture as a broad term with the more specific "Swedish culture". Burmann (1999, p. 12) argues that it is of great importance to show that not all culture is relevant to identity formation and that collective cultural identity need not be ethnic. Alami makes a point of contrasting "Swedish culture" with "culture", which suggests just that: that there is a connection between cultural identity and ethnicity. Further, the argument that "culture" is "something" that we have to choose between having and not having and that this choice would be a factor for societal gaps to grow, I believe to be neither correct or realistic. The social reproduction of culture is not unproblematic and maintaining cultural consensus across time and individuals requires considerable effort, but if the consensus consist of values connected to equality and human rights, shouldn't the effort be considered necessary? Differences between "us" and the otherness of the "other" lies not only

in geographical distance, for there are "others" within cities as well as in communities (Gupta & Ferguson 1992, p. 17).

Who are "We"?

Gupta and Ferguson (1992, p. 16), argues that there is need for examining the way we investigate "others" and how cultural differences are made and reproduced by us as researchers. The cultural differences are not only reinforced by space and distance, but also by historical and political dimensions. Researching "others" is presented as a very hard task, as it is. What makes the difference between "us" and the otherness of the "other"? As debated by Fergusson and Gupta (1992, p. 17), difference can be culturally, socially and economically interconnected and interdependent. Problematizing the "us" could reveal more about how we reproduce and represent the "others" in contrast to the "us". The production of cultural difference, occurs in continuous, connected space, traversed by economic and political relations of inequality. Whereas some take the difference as given and concentrates on listening "across cultures, others perform the more radical operation of interrogating the "otherness" of the other, situating the production of cultural difference within the historical processes of a socially and spatially interconnected world" (ibid., p. 16). Below, Alami presents an example of how he perceives Swedish culture:

> We want to try to build a common platform with Swedish values. There is more freedom
> in Swedish values than in multiculturalism. In a multicultural society, there are various
> cultures that have to be accepted, while Swedish values question culture all the time.
> (Alami)

Alami claimed that freedom was inherent to "Swedish culture" and that "Swedish culture" constantly questioned "culture". This suggests that there was some difference in his use of the term culture. He used the term "Swedish culture" as having positive connotations and "culture" on its own as something which I interpret as having a more negative connotation. Even though societies can be seen as homogenous, this does not mean that culture is. The various cultures of Malmö cannot be boiled down to one consistent culture. As stated, culture can be argued to consist of the total sum of ideas, emotional responses and patterns of behaviour which members of a specific society have acquired through living in it and which they share to a greater or lesser degree (Burmann 1999, p. 4).

It is worth highlighting that culture can be filled or drained of various meaning and value simply by being paired with something. In the previous quote above, Alami does not seem keen on having a multicultural society, which according to his statement would imply that "cultures" would have to be accepted. This he continues to say the "Swedish culture" would challenge. It seems as he took culture to mean different things to different people and communities. He used "Swedish culture" as a point of departure: a norm which all other culture(s) could be valued in the light of. This norm was perceived as regular, safe and harmless, whereas "other" culture was less so. Hall (1990, p. 225) argues that cultural identities come from somewhere and have histories. That they are part of history and like anything historical undergoes constant transformation and that cultural identities are far from being eternally fixed in some essentialized past but are the subject of the continuous play of history, culture, and power (ibid.).

Culture and Identity

Stuart Hall (1990) argues "cultural identity" to be a consequence of belonging to a specific culture. The chapter one concluded that identity is formed and developed in relation to other human beings, social situations and "who we think we are" (Bourdieu, 1999, p. 18). This view on how identities are continually formed throughout an individual's life (Hall, 1999), problematizes the very authority and authenticity to which the term, "cultural identity" lays claim (Hall, 1990, p. 222). Viewing culture and cultural identity as something which can be possessed by an individual has several dimensions. Appadurai (1996) claims that this is negative, for it determines culture as something with an essence. This is regarded problematic for it can reinforce stereotypes based on beliefs that culture equals ethnicity. Disparities between the perceptions seem to lie in the belief whether these identities are constructed and changeable or more set and stable. During our interview, I asked Rashid about how challenges connected to social cohesion affects him personally. This lead him to initiate a discussion about his family and how their situation affected his opportunities and possibilities compared to his friends:

> I have my roots in Palestine and came to Sweden as a child. I have lived in both Seved and Rosengård during my childhood, so of course it [the lack of social cohesion] has affected me, mostly in a negative way. Living in an area that does not have the same natural contacts as other kids have in Swedish society. I had the advantage to grow up with two parents who have always had jobs and started up their own companies, they have been active and

employed during my whole upbringing. I have friends who have not had the same privilege, it has not been as easy for them or their parents economically, socially or health wise. (Rashid)

The weak connection to the city of Malmö and the stronger relation and network in the more neglected urban areas described were a part of how greater social gaps were developed according to him. It seemed that Rashid saw that there existed vast differences in the living conditions of the Malmö population depending on where in the city you lived or grew up. Hall (1990, p. 225) discusses two different ways to think about "cultural identity", the first position defines "cultural identity" in terms of a shared culture, a sort of collective "one true self", hiding inside the many other more superficial or artificially imposed "selves", which people with shared history and ancestry hold in common. The second view of "cultural identity" recognizes that, as well as the many points of similarity, there are also critical points of significant difference which constitutes "what we really are" (ibid.). Below an example of how identity changes over time is presented by Rashid:

We lived in a municipality called Kävlinge, where I was one of few people with immigrant background and previously there had not been too many others coming from other countries. […] I was the only one not originating from Sweden in my class. So, I have grown up hearing racist stuff, 'is it true Muslims beat their wives' and that kind of ignorance. But I've also experienced purely racism with the intent to provoke me. It has been hard. Now I haven't felt it in many years, there have been the occasional instance when I've heard stupid stuff from cops about my background. When I reflect on this I have felt that for several years racism hasn't been something I personally have felt, I could see it if a Somali woman got on the bus, see the looks and comments she got, but me personally as an academic and established in the Swedish society haven't noticed it. (Rashid)

I perceived him to be talking about how a shift from feeling excluded to feeling included took place during his upbringing. As mentioned, identity keeps forming throughout an individual's life, and that sort of "production" is ever ongoing: identity is thus somewhat fluid rather than a cultural essence which is connected to ethnicity (cf. Hall, 1999). Rashid discussed how he perceived racist tendencies to have shifted over the past decades. He did not *use* to perceive himself as exposed, but now he *does*. Is this the consequence of a shift in the social climate (exogenous) or a shift in his identity (endogenous)? "Others" can be constructed as different and other within the categories of knowledge by hegemonic regimes, which can also have the

power to make individuals see and experience themselves as "other". This is one factor for how social gaps are created and perhaps also experienced. When the politicians spoke of the notion of social cohesion, their view of "others" and "otherness" was an aspect which was hoped to be changed and reduced with the degree of social cohesion increasing. As Berglund phrased it in one of the above quotes: "It's a challenge to get a bigger 'we' rather than we and them".

Commodification of Culture

The capitalist world presents us with seemingly infinite choices and commodities to purchase. According to Rutherford (1990, p. 11), this does not only affect our view of what a commodity is but also our perception of ourselves in relation to all the purchasable goods. Rutherford (ibid.) writes that capitalism has fallen in love with difference and argues that when extensive parts of our societies are commodified our experiences and conditions determine how we perceive ourselves and others. This tendency was reflected in one of the politician's argument. Sundkvist spoke of how social cohesion could be increased if citizens of Malmö would travel more frequently to various urban areas (as opposed to the city centre). Sundkvist spoke of the notion of as a way to make neglected urban areas more attractive for people to visit. The thrill and excitement of "otherness" is also a way to use the hegemonic position, to view the "other" and "otherness" as exciting instead or frightening or different, this does not, however, reduce the power relations but merely disguise them.

> We talked about the Malmö commuter train previously, it's not about getting people to go 'someplace', it's about getting people to travel towards 'something'. The best middle eastern restaurant should not lie on Drottningtorget, but maybe in Rosengård. The best pizza restaurant [pizzeria] should lie in Kirseberg, and because of that, I want to go there. Like the nice construction in Augustenborg I talked about, I don't think that many people who already live there want to move to that house instead, but above all, maybe people from elsewhere will want to move there. That way the neighbourhood will be more mixed. (Sundkvist)

The quote by Sundkvist made me question if culture, in her view, was location dependent. Different parts of the city seemed to evoke different expectations (or perceptions) regarding their respective selection of foods, events, inhabitants, etcetera. The aim to have a "more mixed" city might be hard to reach if expectations on city districts continue to have these very

set and biased perceptions of content connected to culture[10]. Rutherford (1990, p. 11) writes "Otherness is sought after for its exchange value, its exoticism and the pleasures, thrills, and adventures it can offer. The power relation is closer to tourism than imperialism, an expropriation of meaning rather than materials". Why is it that Rosengård should have the best middle eastern restaurant? Rosengård seemed to have a certain image to live up to, and Sundkvist suggested that this was an outcome of the expectation on the persons who live and *would want to live* Rosengård. The greenhouse was taken as an example of how to create new possibilities of living in Augustenborg. At the same time, Sundkvist was direct about how it presumably was not the current residents that would move into the newly built ecologically sustainable houses. But suggested that it was built for possible new residents who would want to move to the area *because of* the new greenhouse.

Chapter Summary

The politicians connected culture to the notion of social cohesion. To them the two were related, and challenges connected to the social cohesion, as segregation and housing were spoken of as "cultural". The politicians did not agree on a specific definition of the culture term. Neither did they have similar outlooks on whether they attached positive or negative connotations to the it.

There were noticeable discrepancies in how they talked about "others" or of "inherent culture". Some seemed to have created a distance between themselves and those who could be perceived as different, or "other" in regards to either origins or ways of life. In the politicians' discussions on social cohesion, their view of how culture was connected to the it became visible. The various cultures of Malmö could not be condensed to one consistent culture, even if there were various perspectives on what culture entailed and who really "had" it. The politicians believed that culture was "something" which in its multiple forms and with various interpretations could be "used" to increase social cohesion, this entailed both culture as shaping identity or as activities viewed as creating culture.

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[10] For a more critical take on the symbolical object of the suburb, and how is has been used in the public political debate, see the latest issue of *Arkiv. Tidskrift för samhällsanalys*, nr 9 (2018).

Chapter 4: Applied Perspectives

The politicians interpreted the social cohesion concept differently depending on the context and therefore the solutions and practical work connected to it might need varying solutions or approaches. There are lessons to be learnt from examples like work carried out by the federal government of Canada in 2001–2002, where a policy research initiative led an interdepartmental Social Cohesion Network to clarify the meaning of social cohesion and identify directions for future policy research (Toye, 2007, p. 3). Moreover, the European union has an objective to promote social cohesion and solidarity among the member states. In short, the Union aims for social progress and cohesion through policies for employment, education and professional training. The field of social cohesion research is in need of new methodological dimensions, this is where the cultural analytical perspective would contribute with a hands-on-approach, especially in the search for practical solutions. The variety of methodological approaches available to the cultural analyst can be a source for investigating social cohesion. Establishing what knowledge and interpretations of social cohesion were important for the politicians hold relevance not only for the field of research on social cohesion but for the organizations looking to improve social cohesion in the long run. Open Skåne is one of these organisations,

Further researching politicians, not only in Malmö, and their interpretations of social cohesion would be fruitful, the research regarding it benefit from being investigated and understood through the multiple perspectives of interdisciplinary research. To further continue this investigation, it would be relevant to interview people affected by various degrees of social cohesion politics as well as people in high positions within the European Union, the World Bank and within the Canadian government or other distinguished organizations or institutions working with the concept of social cohesion. The local politicians of Malmö had taken the social cohesion into use along with the social sustainability which some of them used almost synonymously. The politicians perceived social cohesion as concerning the social well-being of the population and viewed it in particular connected to issues regarding segregation and equality. They spoke of the concept with some moderation and rather used it to speak broadly of questions relevant in the political landscape of Malmö. The discussions seemed to actualize the politicians' desire for practical solutions, an example of this is found in the next section.

Commanded Cohesion

Factors connected to the complexity of change encompass great forces like national political debate; the governments involvement at various levels; policy-development; the municipalities reception of the latter governments work and last but certainly not least, the citizens which these changes and consequences of the changes apply to and affect. Social relations and relations of power encompass relations between various groups within a society, may it be cultural, ethnic, economical or groups with a certain lifestyle or sexual orientation. These aspects which emerge in debates concerning social cohesion requires mutual tolerance between groups and especially groups of minorities need to be included (Schiefer & van der Noll, 2017, p. 588). They are to be taken into consideration when discussing possible solutions and actions for improving the degree of social cohesion in a society. Yet another perspective to discuss is how social cohesion cannot be ordered, a society cannot be commanded into being cohesive. Stanley (2003, p. 10) argues that the difference between the solidarity of authoritarian regimes and the social cohesion of societies which follow and adopt liberal values, is that the solidarity is based on hate and fear of some common enemy, and not on free choice or willingness to engage in joint activities that characterize those connected to social cohesion.

> Regarding economic benefits and support, we need to have more controls and ensure that those who receive this kind of assistance have an incentive to still look for employment. Currently this isn't really the case, for it's possible for them to live on economic support a long time without even meeting their case workers, as we have a shortage of social welfare officers. We have reviewed various models and looked into a solution for this. One way could be to control who get to come to Malmö, and for example, not accept or take in more people who receive economic support. There is a model in Landskrona [a nearby town], that they tried, where you have to work to be able to get a tenancy agreement on housing. If we had that we could focus on those who already live here in Malmö, who live on economic support and help them find work. (Alami)

The process working for increased social cohesion in Malmö I have found to be dependent on more than the politicians or the municipality institutions or governments. The aim for cohesion discussed by the politicians is connected to the decision-making dimension of the municipal work and is at times beyond their control and influence. Alami spoke of establishing more forceful institutional regulations for improving social cohesion in Malmö. When asking what constructive ways exist to assume the challenges regarding social cohesion, he answered that one way could be to exercise more control over people who get financial support from the state

and even thinking about not restricting people who need economic support move to Malmö. I found this to be an extreme proposal, which probably would not improve social cohesion if implemented as Stanley (2003, p. 10) argued, cohesion cannot be demanded. The majority of the politicians' suggested that one of the most important conditions to consider in discussions connected to social cohesion was the tangible equality aspect tied to it. According to many scholars, Berger-Schmitt (2000), Harrell and Stolle (2014) and Novy et. al (2012), Alami's opinion of restricting citizenships based on economic factors would not be possible in a cohesive society without contradicting the foundation in many definitions of social cohesion. In a cohesive society a certain degree of trust towards both people and institutions is needed (Chan, To & Chan, 2006). The greater context of social cohesion must be viewed in connection to the European institutions, i.e. European Union and the Council of Europe, which emphasise the importance of social cohesion. In the European Union the process of building a democratic and secure Europe is based on a cultural heritage of differences (Jönsson, 2016, p. 65). Social cohesion is used as a step in this direction, as it is a notion which is value laden and therefore, can be used in the political debate.

Ethical Considerations in Application

As noted, commanded cohesion is not possible, if a municipality or institution working for increased cohesion would implement orders and policies concerning behaviour or living areas, this would not result in higher degrees of social cohesion (Schiefer & van der Noll 2017, p. 588; Stanley, 2003). Important to clarify is that the notion of social cohesion does not depend on social sameness, everyone conforming to the same values, beliefs or lifestyle. These things might help or hinder, or in extreme forms could even be an indicator of the degree of social cohesion but are not part of the definition of the notion. Socially cohesive societies incorporate diversity and use it, not exclude it (Stanley, 2003, p. 9).

Knowledge of social cohesion would need to be developed and individualized by the politicians and organizations working with the issues connected to the concept. The application of this investigation presents real opportunities, it offers the prospect of using the extensive ethnographic corpus for retrieving and interpreting possible solutions coming up with strategies for practical choices to be made for furthering the social cohesion as a valuable framework to consult. Below, Sundkvist discusses how entrepreneurs could consider social cohesion in their businesses:

> The entrepreneur, property owner or hotel contractor who does not understand the importance and profit of this [social cohesion] to make a city grow has not thought it all the way through. Because Malmö is multicultural, multi-religious, multilingual and we have every opportunity of making a business global. (Sundkvist)

The politicians spoke of how extending individuals' social networks was desired. Extending social networks was thought to be done by changing the present structures of well-fare institutions. Improving the school system where they hoped that a more equal education could result in less segregated schools, better health care which could improve the equality in who receives good quality health care or improve the housing segregation and shortage which could result in a less segregated city[11]. By improving linked parts of people's lives, the thought is that by having a bigger social network finding a job might be easier or it might feel safer to move to another are. Improving the networks is a step towards a less segregated city where natural meeting point are more common and invite people to meet new individuals outside their usual networks. By working with improving social cohesion I perceive the hopes to be that other issues could be influenced by the potential positive effects of having a higher degree of social cohesion in the city. According to Putnam (2000, p. 21) networks and norms of mutuality are generally good for those inside the network or community, but the external effects are by no means always positive.

As Stanley (2003, p. 13) argues "everything can affect everything else. A trend which affects a social outcome or its distribution will affect overall social cohesion, and so eventually influence the other social outcomes". A holistic approach to social cohesion is needed. As the politicians have argued and is supported by research, there is not only one practical way to work towards increased cohesion or only one solution to the issued poor cohesion generates.

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[11] See page 48 for an empirical example.

Concluding remarks

The subject for this thesis, the concept of social cohesion as perceived by municipal politicians in Malmö, has been analysed from a cultural analytical perspective. The thesis set out to contribute to the pool of knowledge of social cohesion and in a municipal context of Sweden. The challenges connected to the concept described by the politicians indicated that they interpreted social cohesion as an important ideal, and that it furthermore (although differently defined by each politicians), was a concept that could be used as a key word or main point in discussion to give them additional weight to their arguments. The values attached to the social cohesion construct were affected by the political discourses of Malmö. The politicians were aware of different discourses associated with social cohesion and saw the concept from their respective point of view. By doing so; each politician which placed within different broader discourses, e.g. welfare discourse, entrepreneurial discourse or discourse of identity.

This investigation has shown that social cohesion is associated with a number of positive social characteristics and that social equality underpins well-being – both of individuals and communities. A cluster of terms – overlapping in definition and use – exists in association to the social cohesion concept. The terms most frequently employed by the politicians along with social cohesion were social sustainability, densification, equality and culture. This cluster of terms associated with the concept is connected to the greater political context of Swedish and European politics. Challenges articulated by the politicians were for the most part connected to the various issues regarding exclusion and how the surroundings affect citizens chances to develop as individuals. It became apparent that the notion was not a legitimate problem in the same way as the lack of housing was but that discussions about, for example, housing issues could be granted more weight by incorporating social cohesion.

Politicians justify their policies and politics through the concept of social cohesion, therefore it is of importance to examine their definition and interpretation of it. I have found that the politicians agree on that strong social cohesion is important and desirable, and that the achievement of it requires joint efforts to tackle the wide range of issues understood to be associated with it. At the centre of the social cohesion concept lies the hope of engaging individuals and change their perceptions of themselves and others. If this is to be done, issues as growing inequalities of the world must be addressed. Any organisation or practice working towards increasing social cohesion should bear in mind it should be done with equality and human rights on the agenda.

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