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**Segregation and territorial stigmatisation  
in Western European Cities under  
an identity perspective**

**Comparative study between the neighbourhoods of  
Rosengård, Malmö (Sweden) and  
Vaulx-en-Velin, Lyon (France)**

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis aims to explore and compare the segregation and the stigmatisation of inhabitants living in so-called ‘disadvantaged neighbourhoods’ through an identity perspective in the two cities Malmö (Sweden) and Lyon (France). I demonstrate that in addition to income factor, identity participates in territorial stigmatisation and reinforces urban segregation, that is the progressive clustering of certain populations in specific neighbourhoods. Using identity strategies theory, I analyse how urban actors interact with each other regarding the disadvantaged neighbourhoods by comparing two districts, Rosengård in Malmö and Vaulx-en-Velin in Lyon. After analysing how these two neighbourhoods are depicted in official documents, mass-media outputs and by inhabitants themselves, I conclude that the media foster the segregation of disadvantaged neighbourhoods and their inhabitants by broadcasting stigmatising discourse. Nevertheless the stigmatised image on disadvantaged neighbourhoods can also be reinforced by inhabitants themselves through the identity strategies they adopt and through the narratives they identify to and display to the society. City authorities tend to emphasise more the segregation aspect rather than the ‘violence’ of disadvantaged neighbourhoods. I understand their discourse as a way to justify the implementation of urban renewal projects and attract middle-classes towards stigmatised neighbourhoods.

**Key words:** urban segregation, territorial stigmatisation, identity, identity strategies theory, suburbs, Rosengård, Vaulx-en-Velin, Zlatan Ibrahimović

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## INTRODUCTION

The rapid pace of urbanisation during the last decades represents numerous opportunities and challenges for Western European cities and results in complex socio-geographical tendencies. This study is grounded on the urban tendencies of gentrification, social polarisation and residualisation. Gentrification refers to the process of inner-city areas being reinvested by higher-income middle class, resulting in the ‘upward shift in socioeconomic status through mobility and associated flows of capital into reinvestment in the built environment’ (Hedin *et. al.* 2012:452). Progressively, the gentrification process relegates lower-income classes towards more affordable suburban areas. Social polarisation designs the growth of inequalities between classes and residualisation refers to phenomenon of outer-city public housing becoming poorer over time and clustering more immigrant background populations (Andersson and Turner 2014). These processes have been reinforced as states have gradually implemented a neo-liberal ideology in their urban policies (Hedin *et. al.* 2012).

The academic research on segregation of urban poverty is extensive. Lately, scholars have particularly focused on the stigmatisation of disadvantaged areas. Indeed, during the past three decades, socio-economic deprivation has become progressively ‘demonised’ in media and political discourses (Wacquant 2007; Wacquant *et.al.* 2014; Slater and Andersson 2011; Tissot 2018).

This thesis contributes to research on urban segregation by expanding the idea that in addition to income indicators, identity and cultural capital are also key factors in explaining the segregation of cities. In times of rising political extremism combined with important migration flows throughout the world and in Europe, I aim at outlining how discourses can lead urban actors to interact with each other either in an inclusive or hostile way. I also aim at highlighting the importance of maintaining a critical perspective on the discourses displayed by

both the media and the authorities, since discourses and data in general are always constructed in a specific context and with a specific purpose (Cloke *et.al.* 2004).

Among the various labels to designate suburban areas such as ‘poor’, ‘relegated’ or ‘marginal’, I will prefer the term of ‘disadvantaged neighbourhood’ as it is the most commonly used in the academic literature. It should be kept in mind that poor neighbourhoods are not the reason for disadvantage but rather that the ‘disadvantaged are concentrated in poor neighbourhoods’ (Cheshire 2006:1236). The term of ‘segregation’ is also commonly negatively conceived: often understood as a synonym to ‘exclusion’ (Tissot 2008), its geographical meaning primarily refers to an unequal representation of socio-economic, demographic and ethnic categories across space. Urban segregation phenomenon also reflects that the stratification of population is made by occupation and income (Massey 1985 in Li Zhang 2008). However, in Western European cities, segregation tends to be increasingly social as urban populations progressively differentiate and divide themselves, not only regarding their income but also regarding their education level and ethnic backgrounds (Andersson and Turner 2014; Li Zhang 2008). This growing socio-economic categorisation of the urban landscape can also be combined with the stigmatisation of areas where a significant share of the poor and/or of a particular socio-ethnic background population cluster. This tendency is conceptualised as ‘territorial stigmatisation’ by Loïc Wacquant (2007) and will constitute one the central concepts in this research thesis.

This paper aims to examine the phenomenon of urban segregation and territorial stigmatisation by analysing the representation of disadvantaged neighbourhoods through an identity perspective. In order to do so, I apply the theory of identity strategies (retreatism, essentialism and engagement) as conceptualised by Catarina Kinnvall and Paul Nesbitt-Larking (2011) to analyse how urban actors – city authorities, the media, inhabitants – define themselves and interact with each other regarding disadvantaged neighbourhoods within the

urban context. Briefly outlined, a retreatist strategy consists in avoiding any contact with the majority community, an essentialist strategy leads to the securitisation of subjectivities whereas an engagement strategy promotes dialogue.

I will approach this research thesis through a comparative study between Malmö (Sweden) and Lyon (France), two Western European cities presenting similar characteristics of segregation and discourses of stigmatisation on their respective districts of Rosengård and Vaulx-en-Velin.

Throughout the paper, the key questions will be:

- *To what extent does identity shape the interactions between urban actors with regard to disadvantaged neighbourhoods?*
- *In what ways do the media participate and reinforce stigmatisation and segregation of disadvantaged neighbourhoods in the cities of Malmö and Lyon?*

This paper is based on the following background process: gentrification has gradually categorised and segregated urban populations regarding their economic resources. This urban segregation tendency may also be reinforced to some extent by households themselves because of identity and cultural factors. Thus, urban populations cluster in neighbourhoods which are more suitable to their economic resources and social background. This mechanism also leads to the constitution of areas where deprivation is predominant since lower-income and similar socio-ethnic background populations cluster in more affordable suburbs. In this study I particularly set the focus on the growing stigmatisation characterising these disadvantaged districts.

When implementing policies to deal with urban segregation, the authorities have been increasingly taking into account identity and social capital.



Indeed, in order to deal with the growing concentration of socio-economic issue in marginalised neighbourhoods, European city authorities have for the past decades been promoting significantly social mix as a tool to promote integration. However, given the mitigated outcome, such policies have been often debated. It is now increasingly acknowledged that the social capital of people *i.e.* resources available to people through their social relationships (Messer and Kecskes 2009 cited in Dujon, Dillard and Brennan 2013) is a crucial element for the social sustainability of urban policies. According to Mario Polese and Richard Stren (2000), social sustainability is promoted by improving ‘the quality of life for all people and foster an environment that promote integration while allowing for culturally and socially diverse groups to cohabit’ (cited in Weingaertner and Moberg 2014).

This paper will be organised as follows: the first section outlines the shift towards the ideology of Neoliberalism and its wide impact on Western European Cities. In this section, the key processes of gentrification and segregation will be presented in the perspective of their economic and spatial impacts on the city. I introduce one of the main arguments in this paper, that is, identity as a complementary driver of urban segregation in addition to the economic factor. Our case studies, the cities of Malmö and Lyon, will also be briefly presented. The core theory of this paper, the identity strategies theory, is outlined in the second section. In the third section I display some methodological aspects and in the fourth section I will do the proper analysis of segregation and territorial stigmatisation in the neighbourhoods of Rosengård in Malmö and Vaulx-en-Velin in Lyon by means of the Discourse Analysis method and in the light of the identity strategies theory, applied to official documents, mass-media outputs and inhabitants’ perspectives.

# **I. Background: The impact of Neoliberalism on Western European cities: ‘restructuring’ cities and reinforcing segregation**

In this first section I outline how the ideological shift impacts urban policies in European cities, sharpens economic inequalities in the population and leads to increased segregation of the urban landscape. I argue that the urban segregation process is further reinforced by the identity factor.

Analysing cities and how urban actors elaborate their policies requires taking into account the broader ideological and international circumstances in which they evolve (MacLeod and Goodwin 1999 cited in Uitermark 2003). When it comes to Western European societies, one might consider the gradual shift toward Neoliberalism. This ideology initially refers to the economic doctrine of Liberalism, which promotes market-friendly policies such as labour deregulation, capital mobility, privatisation, competition and trade liberalisation and last but not least a reduction of taxation and public expenditures (Wacquant 2010). Engaging in this ideology since the mid-1970's, Western welfare states have been deeply restructured in the way they were designed under the Fordist-Keynesian era in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century (Knox and Pinch 2000; Hedin *et. al.* 2012; Wacquant 2010; Harvey 1989). Western neoliberal states now aim at increasing their competitiveness on the global stage, at the expense of more vulnerable populations strongly affected by labour deregulation and cuts on state subsidies.

The academic literature widely acknowledges that this ideological shift has significantly impacted European cities and their urban governance (Hochstenbach 2017; Kadi and Musterd 2014; Uitermark 2003). This change in urban governance has been conceptualised as ‘entrepreneurialism’ by David Harvey (1989) who outlines how Western cities have become increasingly preoccupied with fostering local development and employment growth thus leading to greater inter-urban competition.

The restructuring of urban policies and space will be the object of the first subsection. In the second one I will present some arguments in support to the idea that identity is another driver of urban segregation while the third subsection will give an overview on our case studies, Malmö and Lyon, and on their similar urban segregation challenges.

## **I. 1. Restructuring urban policies and space**

### **I.1.1. Tenure restructuring: the powerful tool of housing policies**

Since the 1990's, the housing sector in European cities has been deeply restructured in accordance to the ideology of Neoliberalism. Often acknowledged as a key to steer urban development (Hochstenbach 2017), the reforms in housing policies consist in gradually converting public housing into market-based housing, promoting homeownership and drastically reducing the social rental housing (Andersson and Turner 2014; Kadi and Musterd 2014; Uitermark 2003; Hedin *et. al.* 2012). Such policies aim at attracting higher-income households portrayed as an active and responsible population with greater probability to be owner-occupants, in contrast to renting occupants and lower-income populations perceived as marginal, anti-community and dependent on state-subsidies (Lees 2008). To sum up this process of gentrification promoted from the top: social rental housing and low-income tenants have to make way for more expensive owner-occupied dwellings and higher income clientele' (Hochstenbach 2017). In other words, it is about attracting 'desirable elements' –rich households– while removing and excluding undesirable elements – poor population (Uitermark 2003). Progressively the outer city becomes 'residualised', meaning that over time these neighbourhoods neglected by higher income households are mainly inhabited by low-resources residents in terms of income and education (Andersson and Turner 2014).

### **I.1.2. Clustering and segregation of poverty in disadvantaged neighbourhoods**

The previously outlined changes in European cities have resulted in an advanced urban marginalisation of neighbourhoods labelled as ‘disadvantaged’ and often associated with poverty, criminality, apathy, unemployment, rebellion and deviant norms and values (Uitermark 2014). These urban residential areas tend to be homogenous in terms of type and tenure of the housing: they cluster a population characterised by low income, weak social position and foreign background in large-scale post-war estates (Musterd and Andersson 2005). Ron Johnston, Michael Poulsen and James Forrest analyse this process as ethnic residential segregation (2007), which results from 3 factors: discrimination, disadvantage and individual choice:

First, ethnic groups can be segregated in the urban residential space because of a discrimination factor, which entails members of a specific group being denied access to particular areas, either by law or by institutionalised residential sorting mechanisms.

Secondly, residential segregation can also result from disadvantage. The authors define the ‘cycle of disadvantage’ as follows: disadvantaged neighbourhoods are often characterised by poorer quality schools and consequently less chances of success in the labour markets for the children, thus resulting in disadvantage in the housing market. Therefore, the labour and housing markets as well as the school systems are unequal regarding members of the society. Those unable to compete in neoliberalist capitalist society are relegated to urban areas with similar ‘disadvantaged’ populations.

Thirdly, in order to face difficulties in labour and housing markets, some ethnic minority groups often choose to cluster together as language and cultural values provide some sense of security and support. Ethnic residential segregation can thus result from the fact that disadvantaged population gather in order to

better face economic disadvantage, discrimination from the society and because of personal preferences. This tendency will be further analysed below.

Segregation in cities results from a wide range of social, economic and cultural factors. Yet, it is worth reminding that urban segregation in European cities is still less pronounced than in American cities, beside the fact that populations with higher-social class position are also often the most geographically concentrated population (Musterd 2005; Andersson 2000 in Musterd and Andersson 2005). Gradually, disadvantaged populations gather into 'neighbourhoods of relegation' (Wacquant 2007:67) further increasing their marginalisation from the rest of the city. In order to (re)integrate these neighbourhoods to the city and reinforce social control, urban authorities have been implementing different strategies (Uitermark 2014). Integration strategies led by city authorities are often associated with the idea of enhancement, renewal and progress. These 'regeneration strategies' will constitute the object of this last sub-section on the restructuration of urban policies and space.

### **I.1.3. Regeneration strategies : enhancing the image of the 'liveable city'**

The image of being a 'liveable city' has become a key in the inter-urban competition for investments and for attracting new consumers. City authorities seek to promote their city as innovative, exciting, creative and safe (Harvey 1989). However, as previously analysed, the restructuration of cities to match with this attractive and 'liveable' image have also rendered more obvious inequalities between populations in the urban landscapes. Indeed the more vulnerable population in terms of income and often with foreign background<sup>1</sup> has been gradually clustering in more affordable and large housing estates, built in the post-war period. In this way, these districts are at the core of many restructuring policies since they concentrate poverty and embody the 'most extreme and visible form of socio-spatial polarisation' and thus undermine the city's liveability image

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<sup>1</sup> See (Kinnvall and Nesbitt-Larking 2011:82) and part II

(Amin *et.al* 2000 and Schill *et.al.* 2001 in Rose 2004:281; Musterd and Andersson 2005).

I refer to these urban restructuring plans as ‘regeneration strategies’ as conceptualised by Peter Parker and Ana Madureira’s study on the transformation of stigmatised estates (2014). They outline five different regeneration strategies employed by city authorities to address deprivation, socio-economic problems and low-attractiveness of segregated and stigmatised large housing estates (Parker and Madureira 2015).

### ***Restructuring***

Along with the general ‘revitalisation’ of European cities, the first regeneration strategy consists in restructuring significantly targeted neighbourhoods by means of demolition, reconstruction or renewal of the housing, as well as transforming the forms of tenure (Parker and Madureira 2015; Lees 2008). The restructuring policies in the disadvantaged neighbourhoods also encompass social mixing policies. This urban policy consists in mixing households according to their income, socio-economic group and sometimes ethnic and racial characteristics (Rose 2004) and has been greatly in vogue among European city authorities. It rests on the assumption that a socially mixed environment can support individuals in their efforts to improve their life chances and realise upward mobility (Musterd and Andersson 2005). The main arguments in policy debates for social mixing are that attracting middle-classes to disadvantaged neighbourhoods will enhance its peaceful liveability and support the local economy thanks to higher-income households thus allowing more tax revenue for the municipalities. Affluent households can also participate in developing social interaction and socio-economic opportunities as to their networks and contacts they hold (see Schoon 2001 in Lees 2008) and the ‘role model’ they can exert. Social mixing policies are therefore promoted as an integration tool by city authorities (Uitermark 2014).

### ***Upgrading***

Another regeneration strategy, the upgrading approaches, entails all kinds of landscaping projects, the creation of amenities and public spaces in order to enhance the attractiveness of areas for middle-class populations (Parker and Madureira 2015). This encompasses the development of more extensive public transport system to cope with the marginality of disadvantaged neighbourhoods and provide better access to employment (Musterd 2005).

### ***Service-partnering***

This regeneration strategy is about further involving citizens in housing estates. This aims at promoting the partnership with local communities, businesses and governmental departments, as well as valuing the expertise of local communities.

### ***Socio-economic empowerment***

This regenerating strategy consists in empowering of people in low-status areas in order for them to take part in the wider society. The sustainability effects of such policies are also controversial as social mix, since households achieving more secure and higher incomes tend to move from the stigmatised area (Bråma and Andersson 2005 cited in Parker and Madureira 2015).

### ***Image building***

This regeneration strategy is particularly noteworthy as it relates to the representation, the image and the identification to a specific neighbourhood that is built and perpetuated by the city's inhabitants, hence relating to the aspect we want to focus on. Indeed, to improve the image of a stigmatised area different actors such as the media, developers, real-estate agents and residents elaborate and foster positive and alternate images of the neighbourhoods, in contrast to its former prejudiced representation in the wider society. As a matter of fact, the representations of these specific neighbourhoods as 'problem' or 'deprived' areas can reinforce the potential stigmatisation of its inhabitants by the wider society, which may impact negatively individuals' chances on the labour market (Musterd

and Andersson 2005) and may durably affect the self-esteem of residents, thus nurturing the ‘cycle of disadvantage’ earlier outlined by Johnston, Poulsen and Forrest (2007).

To sum up, strategies for regenerating stigmatised and segregated areas and on a broader scale urban restructuring policies, all encompass the underlying idea that there is a need to increase the attractiveness of the city, particularly by improving the physical aspect of some specific neighbourhoods that might challenge the image of the city on global stage. In this way there has been a wide range of urban policies to restructure the urban landscapes, in its social composition and physical aspects. The image and representation of urban residential space is also a decisive element for households: indeed, when it comes to choosing their living area, individuals take into account their financial means but also identify themselves with the neighbourhood they plan to move to in accordance to their personal preferences, interests and cultural background. Thus the organisation of the urban space is not only determined by an economic factor but is also linked to an identity dimension.

## **I.2. Identity as the other driver of segregation in cities**

The segregation of cities is usually explained by income: it constitutes a good indicator by providing the most adequate, coherent and precise measure of socioeconomic change (Hedin *et. al.* 2012). However cultural, ethnic and personal backgrounds also have a meaningful influence on the spatial distribution of households. In this paper I use the term of ‘identity’ as it gathers the multiple aspects characterising a person. Identity is about ‘how one defines oneself, one’s core membership and reference groups’ (Kinnvall and Nesbitt-Larking 2011:56). Identity is always an incomplete and mutually constitutive process, it cannot exist outside its context, as underlined by Ernesto Laclau (1990 in Keith and Pile 1993).



### **I.2.1 Identification and self-segregation**

This section focuses on the tendency of people to associate with ‘like-minded people’ (Uitermark 2003:534). By doing so, people identify themselves with others, a process conceptualized by Bo Petersson and Eric Clark (2003) as ‘*defining* oneself, commonly as one among a group or set with common characteristics, tastes, styles, preferences, beliefs or the like, in contradiction to others who do not share these characteristics’ (Petersson and Clark 2003:12, emphasis in original).

Individuals create and cluster into collective identities communities because being part of a larger body and context provide greater security and emotional satisfaction. In an urban context, we can relate this to the idea of ‘good’ segregation developed by Peach (1996). Indeed, he argues that segregation may be of benefit to individuals in weaker situation such as newly-arrived immigrants. As a matter of fact ethnically-segregated neighbourhoods or ‘urban villages’ can provide mutual support, networks, and cultural preservation through ethnic shops, religious institutions, languages, norms and values that the group has developed or maintained (Knox and Pinch 2000:234; Peach 1996). In this way, newly-arrived individuals may find some support in home-like environment in the aftermath of their settlement in the host society (Johnston, Poulsen and Forrest 2007). Furthermore, segregated residential areas also fulfil a defensive and protective role: in these residential areas where the minority population is often more concentrated than in the rest of the society, it reverses the power structure (Peach 1996).

Therefore individuals tend to self-segregate spatially and socially from the native majority, either because of socio-economic factors or by preferential choice (Knox and Pinch 2000 cited in Li Zhang 2008). There are thus advantages in segregating for social groups (Peach 1996; Knox and Pinch 2000).

### **I.2.2. Self-segregation tendency and controversial social mixing policies**

Recent studies about social mixing policies have challenged the assumption that it is a tool to support the integration of disadvantaged populations. Indeed social mixing policies are increasingly criticised for their artificial implementation and uncertainty in the long run (Lees 2008; Rose 2004). They are regarded as ‘cosmetics policies’ by Loretta Lees (2008:2453) as it turns out that in the end, the gentrification process results more in the ‘tectonic juxtaposition of polarised socio-economic groups rather than in socially cohesive communities’ (Lees 2008:2457).

Restructuring policies such as social mixing policies are also criticised for only addressing the outcome of poverty instead of the underlying causes and may result in adverse effects (Cheshire 2006). For instance, improving neighbourhoods in order to render them more attractive to middle class households and foster social mix in the population can increase the housing prices and consequently lead to the displacement of the poorer to ‘even less attractive areas’ (Cheshire 2006:1236). Restructuring policies aiming at social mixing are therefore at risk of relegating even more the poor to ‘stigmatised last resort’ housing options (Kadi and Musterd 2014:249).

Furthermore, social mixing policies ignore the tendency of social groups to cluster together according to cultural and identity preferences (Parker and Madureira 2014; Uitermark 2003; Butler 1997 cited in Lees 2008; Cheshire 2006). In this way, enforcing the settlement of populations with important disparities in lifestyles or cultural backgrounds can create tensions between residents and may be more pervasive for social interaction (Rose 2004; Lees 2008). Consequently, the sustainability of social mixing policies is also challenged by individuals’ lifestyle preferences and cultural background which constitute their social capital, *i.e.* all other resources available to people through social relationships (Messer and Kecskes 2009 cited in Dujon, Dillard and Brennan 2013). There is an increasing acknowledgment among scholars on the

necessity to respect and increase the social capital developed by individuals in their living environment as it enhances social cohesion, facilitates collective action and regulates the interactions among people and institutions (Uitermak 2014; Weingaertner and Moberg 2014).

Urban authorities now seek to implement more sustainability in their policies, not only with regard to environmental concerns but also increasingly with regard to social aspects. It is about seeking to enhance the well-being of individuals in the overall, not only improving the buildings (Cheshire 2006). Thus, from the doctrine of social mix there is a shift towards more socially sustainable practices such as social inclusion policies which take into consideration the opportunities and resources necessary to participate in economic, social and cultural activities that are considered the social norms as individuals, communities and or societies respond to environmental, economic and social changes (Abrahms, Hogg and Marques 2004, cited in Dujon, Dillard and Brennan 2013). Nowadays the label of ‘sustainable city’ is a much-coveted title for many European cities but this also requires implementing a ‘new urbanism’, more holistic and sustainable in its economic and environmental as well as social dimensions<sup>2</sup> (Cheshire 2006; Dujon, Dillard and Brennan 2013; Malmö Commission, Annex 4 ‘*Bygga om Dialogen*’ 2014).

### **I. 3. Malmö and Lyon: two Western European cities with similar challenges regarding segregation**

This last sub-section briefly introduces some background to the two cities of Malmö (Sweden) and Lyon (France) constituting the case studies of this paper. The cities’ urban politics are examined through the following official documents: ‘Malmö’s path towards a sustainable future’ (2013) by the Commission for a Socially Sustainable Malmö – thereafter ‘Malmö Commission’– and ‘*Contrat de*

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<sup>2</sup> Read further about socially sustainable neighbourhoods in Dujon, Dillard and Brennan (2013).

*ville 2015-2020*’ produced by the Metropolis of Lyon. From this comparison, I demonstrate how these cities have similar challenges and adopt similar policies regarding segregated and disadvantaged neighbourhoods. The challenges of qualitative comparison are further discussed in the method part.

### **I.3.1 Malmö: from industrial to knowledge-based city**

Malmö is located in the far-south of Sweden in the Öresund region, a prosperous and fast-developing cross-border area encompassing the Danish capital of Copenhagen, Malmö and Lund as well as their surroundings. Malmö has become one of the fastest growing cities in Europe (Malmö City 2018) but also experienced periods of crisis throughout its history, particularly during its transition from an industrial to a post-industrial era during the 1980’s-1990’s. However, since the turning point of the millennium, the city of Malmö initiated a shift towards a finance-driven growth and now aims to become a knowledge-based city. Malmö’s demographic growth results mostly from birth and an important immigration. Indeed, the city of Malmö is attractive for populations coming from the rest of Sweden but also neighbouring and non-European countries, which led Malmö to be particularly renowned to be a cosmopolite city: in 2017 in total, 182 different countries are represented in the city and one third of its inhabitants are foreign born (*Ibid.*). The international image of Malmö’s population also results from an important reception of asylum seekers during the last three decades and especially in the recent years: it is estimated that since 2005 Malmö has received more asylum seekers in relation to its population size than Gothenburg and Stockholm, the two other main cities in Sweden (*Ibid.*).

Yet, in parallel to the prosperous growth of Malmö and the Öresund region there is also an increasing polarisation tendency in the population: the most disadvantaged social groups gradually cluster in poorer residential areas of the city (Malmö Commission Report 2013). Among these neighbourhoods, Rosengård stands as an emblematic district in Malmö as it embodies much of

what characterises a segregated and disadvantaged neighbourhood. It is first distinguished by a specific architecture, that is, large-building estates built during the ‘*One Million Dwellings Programme*’ in the 1960’s and 1970’s in order to support the growing working population. These buildings are commonly referred as the ‘*Miljonprogram*’ districts’. Nowadays the large-building estates of Rosengård are mainly providing housing for vulnerable groups struggling on the labour and housing markets, namely foreigners, low-income and unemployed populations (Salonen 2010 cited in Parker and Madureira 2015), and are characterised by poor housing conditions (Oudin *et.al.* 2015).

The Rosengård district experienced social riots during December 2008 which gave more regional and international media attention to the precarious living conditions and poverty of this neighbourhood (Parker and Madureira 2015; Polisen Metodhandbok 2018). Rosengård constitutes an area increasingly stigmatised as the embodiment of the ‘dark image’ of Malmö which involves images of poverty, lawless territories, alienation and tensions between social groups (Malmö Commission 2014).

### **I.3.2. Lyon, from silk industry to ‘*ville lumière*’**

The Metropolis of Lyon is one of the most dynamic and attractive in France, from regional to international levels, as demonstrated by its continuous growth for almost two decades despite the international crisis context. Benefitting from a certain global acknowledgment, Lyon is often also entitled ‘*ville lumière*’ (‘city of light’) with reference to the Lumière Brothers and their innovation of the cinematograph in 1895 (Le Lyonniste 2012).

Similarly to other French and European Metropolis, Lyon went through profound industrial change, shifting from industrial activities in silk, petrochemicals and textiles towards tertiary activities since the 1980’s (Metropolis of Lyon, *Contrat de ville*, 2015-2020) including dynamic sectors such as banking,

high- and bio-technologies. However this industrial transformation also entailed important downsizing in factories, impacting those at the bottom of the class structure such as unskilled workers and foreigners. Both unskilled and immigrant background populations working in the industrial sector were mainly living in public housing in suburban areas, also referred to as ‘*banlieues*’. Due to the difficult economic conditions since the late 1970’s, French suburban areas experienced a growing unemployment which contributed to the categorisation of these districts as ‘difficult areas’, ‘sensitive neighbourhoods’ and to the conceptualisation of the “problem of the *banlieues*” (Tissot 2008:3; Slater and Andersson 2014; Metropolis of Lyon, *Contrat de ville*, 2015-2020). Because of its colonial past, France developed tight relationships with French-speaking countries from its former empire in North and Western Africa. More specifically, during the 1960’s, the great need for unskilled labour of the French industry was met by importing labour force from Maghreb countries, a population which gathered near industrial areas in suburban districts (Tissot 2008). It is estimated that one out of two households comes from a Maghreb country in French ‘sensitive neighbourhoods’ (Metropolis of Lyon, *Contrat de ville*, 2015-2020).

Vaulx-en-Velin is a commune in the Metropolis of Lyon which concentrates one of the highest rates of poverty. Similar to Rosengård, the commune is mainly characterised by large-housing estates built during the 1960’s as part of a national urbanisation programme to support the growing population. These large-housing estates were progressively left behind by middle classes and are now predominantly characterised by low-income households, an overrepresentation of immigrants, workers and employees, three times more state-subsidies beneficiaries than in other urban spaces and a limited mobility (Metropolis of Lyon, *Contrat de ville* 2015-2020; INSEE 2015: ‘Precariat in the Grand Lyon: Towards Reduction but Greater Concentration’<sup>3</sup>; INSEE 2010: ‘Grand Lyon: Precariat Still Concentrated in the East of the Metropolis’<sup>4</sup>).

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<sup>3</sup> ‘*Précarité dans le Grand Lyon: vers une réduction mais plus de concentration*’

<sup>4</sup> ‘*Grand Lyon: la précarité reste concentrée à l’est de l’agglomération*’

Vaulx-en-Velin experienced social unrest in one of its districts, the ‘*Mas du Taureau*’ in 1990. Starting from an incident involving the death of a young man, allegedly caused by the police, the particularly violent protests that followed entailed the burning of local shops, facilities and cars, as well as some altercations with the police. In the following years, similar patterns of collective violence burst periodically in disadvantaged neighbourhoods in France (Tissot 2013). These episodes of social unrest have gradually reinforced the stigmatisation of disadvantaged neighbourhoods as nest for social disorder because of their wide media and political coverage (*Ibid.*). This stigmatisation process by the media will be analysed later on.

### **I.3.3. Two cities with similar challenges regarding the segregation and territorial stigmatisation of disadvantaged neighbourhoods**

Malmö and Lyon, both ranked as the third biggest city with respect to their country, have experienced substantial demographic growth for two decades. This is due to an important Western and non-Western immigration attracted by the significant economic dynamism of these urban regions. Among this important influx of population, the most disadvantaged ones often gather in more affordable suburban areas. In this way, the suburban neighbourhoods of Rosengård and Vaulx-en-Velin are both characterised by large-building estates which house a lower-educated, low-income and welfare-recipient population, as well as a significant share of immigrant-background population and where the unemployment rate is high (Parker and Madureira 2015; INSEE 2015; Metropolis of Lyon, *Contrat de ville* 2015). Both districts experienced social unrest which attracted significantly media’s attention.

#### ***Similar urban restructuring programmes***

Among the urban restructuring policies implemented these last decades in Europe, several have a special emphasis on these ageing large-housing estates. In their urban restructuring programmes, both Malmö and Lyon target specifically

disadvantaged neighbourhoods and their large buildings estates. These programmes have moreover similar objectives and emphasise sustainability (environmentally, socially, economically). For instance, they aim at diversifying housing types and tenure as part of a strategy to stimulate attractiveness, reducing social disparities, promoting employment and good quality schools, enhancing healthcare access, increasing safety, equality and public participation, and reducing isolation from the rest of the city by developing the transport infrastructure (Comprehensive Plan for Malmö 2014; Metropolis of Lyon, *Contrat de ville*, 2015-2020).

### ***Similarly challenging the image of the ‘liveable city’***

The implementation of such significant renewal programmes can be explained by the fact that these neighbourhoods reveal the growing social inequalities characterising European cities and as demonstrated above, this might represent a challenge for the image of a ‘liveable city’ promoted by city authorities (Malmö Commission 2014; Metropolis of Lyon, *Contrat de ville*, 2015-2020; Musterd 2005). Moreover, both these neighbourhoods have a widespread reputation of ‘dangerous’, ‘criminal’ and ‘marginal’ areas, a stigmatisation further fuelled by the media when reporting on incidents and social unrest occurring in these districts.

## **II. Theoretical framework: explaining the segregation and territorial stigmatisation in European cities through the identity strategies theory**

In this theoretical part, I will first briefly outline the identity strategies theory as conceptualised by Kinnvall and Nesbitt-Larking (2011) and then analyse what identity strategies can be highlighted in the interactions between the city’s society,



entailing both city's authorities and the media, and inhabitants of disadvantaged neighbourhoods. I assume that the population from the 'city's society' does not live in disadvantaged neighbourhoods. In their study, Kinnvall and Nesbitt-Larking focus on the Muslim community in the West and its interaction with the majority community in different Western countries. I consider that their findings are also relevant for this study, which focuses on the interactions between the city's society and inhabitants of disadvantaged neighbourhoods, since 'many of the areas densely populated by migrant minorities are also affected by high levels of social deprivation and low educational levels' (Kinnvall and Nesbitt-Larking 2011:82).

## **II. 1. Defining identity strategies**

Identity strategies refer to practices of personal and social categorisation, identification, comparison and establishment of distinctiveness. These practices are conditioned yet open and changeable, with regard to which people "come to define themselves and their social groups in contradistinction to others" (Kinnvall and Nesbitt-Larking 2011:21). Resulting from identity strategies, different forms of identity emerge. This echoes to Laclau's definition of identity (*op.cit.*) as an 'incomplete' and co-constituted 'process', meaning that it is shaped during the whole life of an individual in his/her interactions with other individuals and in relation to the context in which he/she evolves. Thus identities are not only outcomes but also determinants of human practices (Kinnvall and Nesbitt-Larking 2011). Three kinds of identity strategies are identified:

Retreatism consists in an identity strategy adopted 'by default' by individuals who 'wish to stay under the definitional radar and do not want to be noticed' (Kinnvall and Nesbitt-Larking 2011:100). Individuals may adopt this distancing and 'no-contact' behaviour by experiences of isolation, displacement and fear (*Ibid.*).

Essentialism is more aggressive and assertive than retreatism: it entails the invocation of a reconstructed and imagined past in the name of an assertive confrontation with the present. This identity strategy is about ‘securitizing the subjectivities of agents who are experiencing ontological doubt and existential anxiety’ in reaction to global processes such as modernization, secularization, alienation and marginalisation (Kinnvall and Nesbitt-Larking 2011:123). It is a comforting strategy for community members who seek to make sense of themselves (*Ibid.*). A common outcome resulting from an essentialist strategy is the ‘homesteading’ process which refers to the process of ‘making and shaping a political space for oneself in order to go beyond and surpass a complex life of contradictions as well as anxieties of homelessness’ (Kronsell 2002 cited in Kinnvall and Nesbitt-Larking 2011:58).

Engagement is an ‘assertive identity strategy centred on the motivation towards collective problem solving in society’; it values the conciliation and compromise and, despite its idealistic aspects, it is an emerging trend (Kinnvall and Nesbitt-Larking 2011:75). It is about promoting dialogue and openness especially by engaging with other people’s narratives which ‘generates means to overcome fears and uncertainties of securitization of subjectivities’ and the foundation for a critical and deep multiculturalism (*Ibid.*:81-82).

## **II. 2. Identity strategies adopted by the city’s society and inhabitants of disadvantaged neighbourhoods**

In this second theoretical subsection, drawing from my literature review, I apply the identity strategies to an urban context, regarding how I assume the city authorities, the media and inhabitants of disadvantaged neighbourhoods to define themselves in relation to each other.

### **II.2.1. City's authorities and the media: territorial stigmatisation of inhabitants living in disadvantaged neighbourhoods**

Conceptualised by Wacquant (2007), territorial stigmatisation is built on the notion of 'stigma' by Erwin Goffman (1963) which refers to a discrediting attribute which alters how individuals interact and are socially perceived 'from a whole and usual person to a tainted discounted one' (Goffman 1963:3) and on Pierre Bourdieu's theory of the 'symbolic power' which entails a 'performative nomination delineated by an authority capable of making its representation 'real'' (Bourdieu 1991 in Wacquant *et.al.* 2014:1272). I understand 'stigmatisation' as the process of designating a specific individual or group of individuals with a stigma. Territorial stigmatisation can be linked to the tendency of the media and political elites across Europe to improperly associate any poor and segregated neighbourhood characterised by higher criminality rates as a 'ghetto' (Slater and Andersson 2011, Wacquant 2007). Briefly defined, territorial stigmatisation is the 'superposition of existing stigmata traditionally associated with poverty and ethnic origin or post colonial immigrant status' with the blemish of the residential place (Wacquant 2007:67). Moreover, similarly to the stigmatisation process, the process of territorial stigmatisation involves a negative designation or 'discourses of vilification' both from 'below' in ordinary interactions of daily life and from 'above' by journalistic, political and bureaucratic spheres (*Ibid.*).

#### ***Essentialism and retreatism***

Essentialism and retreatism are often mutually-reinforcing strategies. People often tend to base their fears on the media and metanarratives rather than real encounters, leading to a division of 'worlds and peoples into neat categorizations (often in terms of civilizations)' (Kinnvall and Nesbitt-Larking 2011:82). The crucial role of categorisation of the social reality by contemporary urban segregation is also analysed by Sylvie Tissot. According to her, the label of disadvantaged neighbourhoods in France as 'sensitive areas' contributes to the stigmatisation of their inhabitants as 'people who create social ills rather than as people who face social ills' (Tissot 2018:153). Consequently, metanarratives

broadcasted by the media on disadvantaged areas and their internalization by the city's society can further nurture the fear and avoidance of contacts between urban populations.

Similarly, Wacquant underlines a growing social anxiety among the middle and lower classes who readily associate marginalised population with crime, social and moral disorder. This phenomenon is further nurtured by the proliferation of 'crime and punishment reality shows and TV series' and leads to what the author conceptualises as a 'popular animus toward welfare recipients and street criminals' (Wacquant 2010:204). Similarly, his research article with Tom Slater and Virgílio Pereira (2014) outlines how disadvantaged neighbourhoods in post-industrial societies are stigmatised as nests for social disorder, vice and violence. This negative connotation is further increased by an accentuation of cultural differences, fictive projection on demographic reality, as well as an exaggeration of incidents by the media (Wacquant, Slater and Pereira 2014). In this way, stigmatized districts are perceived as vectors of social disintegration (*Ibid.*), a sufficient reason to legitimise greater repression and control over these areas from where the 'threat' and trouble are allegedly generated (Uitermark 2014).

The marginalised urban areas are thus the object of both an essentialist and retreatist identity strategies from the city's society: because of an exaggerated threat depicted in disadvantaged neighbourhoods by the media, the city's society avoids contacts with these urban areas which further nurtures a fictive interpretation of inhabitants living in disadvantaged neighbourhoods. Despite the great variety of urban poverty nowadays (Wacquant 2007) lower-hierarchical groups (specifically non-Western) tend to be 'subject to interpretation by the surrounding community' as a homogenous group whose members have culture-bound behaviours (Kalm in Peterson and Clark 2003:81-82). Put simply: "the less the 'other' is known, the greater the negative prejudices and dehumanisations" (Kinnvall and Nesbitt-Larking 2011:55).

### ***Engagement***

Nevertheless I identify in social mixing policies, promoted by the city authorities, an engagement strategy. Indeed, they constitute an effort from the city's society to promote openness and dialogue with the 'Other' by means of mixed residential areas in terms of ethnic and/or socio-economic backgrounds. Yet, these policies have been controversial for the various reasons mentioned above and some authors question whether they might constitute just another tool for social control (Uitermark 2014; Parker and Madureira 2014). Furthermore, discursive recognition of minorities claims and promoting the local social cohesion are insufficient for greater social peace if not accompanied with redistribution and less economic inequality (Kinnvall and Nesbitt-Larking 2011, Tissot 2018).

### **II.2.2. Inhabitants of stigmatised neighbourhoods: different attitudes in response to the stigma**

Because of this hostile attitude adopted by the society both from 'above' and from 'below', residents of stigmatised neighbourhoods adopt a wide range of attitude and behaviours to cope with territorial stigmatisation as outlined by Loïc Wacquant (2011 in Wacquant *et. al.* 2014). Some of these behaviours are discussed in the light of the three identity strategies.

A first example outlining a retreatist strategy is the self-segregation phenomenon analysed above: how ethnic and/or socio-economic minorities often segregate by choice in residential areas in order to preserve the group identity, values or networks (Peach 1996; Johnston *et. al.* 2007). I see in this phenomenon a retreatist identity strategy as these already marginalised populations further exclude themselves from society and prefer instead to rely on their own minority networks for housing and employment opportunities. Inhabitants of disadvantaged areas can also retreat into their private (family) sphere or avoid others to learn about their living place because of the perceived social indignity they might feel

for living in an infamous district that might stain their image (Wacquant 2007; Wacquant *et.al.* 2014).

A second example for a retreatist strategy is the homesteading phenomenon, which refers to the spatial extension of homebuilding by minority communities who seek to demarcate themselves from the majority population. This entails for example signs, shops and restaurants to delineate the community's boundaries from the majority population (Kinnvall and Nesbitt-Larking 2011). In disadvantaged neighbourhoods where minority communities share an important part of the population (*Ibid.*), the homesteading phenomenon may reflect personal preferences or identification to a specific culture. However it can also underline a search for security by reproducing an environment similar to 'home' in which they feel more familiar with. In this way, I regard that the homesteading phenomenon also presents some attributes of an essentialist strategy.

Then, because territorial stigmatisation affects their identity, inhabitants of disadvantaged neighbourhoods might experience a feeling of existential anxiety and adopt a more assertive and aggressive attitude towards the rest of the society, what is specific to the essentialist identity strategy. This can be associated to the 'stigma inversion' and 'defence of neighbourhood' outlined by Wacquant *et.al.* (2014:1276): they give the example of a young son of immigrant parents, recently settled in a suburban area, who is likely to celebrate and flaunt the 'badness' of his neighbourhood with his 'teenage peers' in a 'collective effort to invert the stigma', whereas his parents might rather adopt an indifferent front attitude or choose to leave the area whenever possible.

This behaviour is similar to the 'open position for challenge' adopted by some young Muslims in Europe, in response to the constant probing, discrimination or stigmatisation they experience everyday (Kinnvall and Nesbitt-Larking 2011). This attitude of stigma inversion is in other words a 'hyperbolic claiming' (Wacquant 2011 in Wacquant *et.al.* 2014:1276): instead of being a

shameful characteristic, leaving in a disadvantaged neighbourhood, being a Muslim or belonging to a minority community may become a flaunted feature. It can emphasise an underlying need to be socially acknowledged (Kinnvall and Nesbitt-Larking 2011). This tendency of stigma inversion has become particularly notable among the Muslim diaspora in the West and their significant concern for religion. Indeed, when settling in a new society and transitioning from majority to minority community, religion may become a ‘memory aid for recalling who one is’ (*Ibid.*:27), it offers existential responses to individuals seeking security by ‘painting a picture of totality, unity and wholeness’, especially for those experiencing ‘exclusion from the host majority culture’ and suffering from distance from the homeland (*Ibid.*:65). Kinnvall and Nesbitt-Larking outline that religion has become a ‘more assertive tool’, ‘a powerful and available identity signifier’ and a means to ‘construct and build distinctive and demanding identity in public and private spaces’ (*Ibid.*:65).

Similarly, many inhabitants from disadvantaged neighbourhoods adopt an essentialist strategy in response to territorial stigmatisation. Some of them invert the stigma and forge their identity on the defamed image of their living area. By doing so, territorial stigmatisation of the neighbourhood is turned into a positive feature and segregation can become ‘positive’ in the sense of Peach as it provides a defensive protection against the majority population (1996).

Nevertheless, inhabitants of disadvantaged neighbourhoods do not all isolate themselves or react in an aggressive way towards the society. In fact, the tendency is rather towards less segregation and increasing ethnic mixing with the society (Peach 2009 cited in Slater and Andersson 2011) In this way, I identify an engagement strategy from inhabitants of disadvantaged neighbourhoods in their actions involving openness and interaction with the city’s society. As discussed above and despite potential adverse effects, social mixing policies constitute in principle an opportunity for inhabitants of stigmatised neighbourhoods to encounter and interact with inhabitants coming from other neighbourhoods and

socio-economical backgrounds, share their ‘lived experience’ and provide ‘tools, knowledge and resources’ (Kinnvall and Lindén 2010 cited in Kinnvall and Nesbitt-Larking 2011:84) that marginalised groups can lack. In their study on the integration of Muslims into European societies, Kinnvall and Nesbitt-Larking display various examples of young Muslims who adopt an engagement strategy through mixed marriages, education, the implementation of public discussion meetings to raise awareness about stigma and prejudices, and through accessing the labour market with the community support (Kinnvall and Nesbitt-Larking 2011).

Therefore, despite the exclusion they can experience from the society, some young Muslims adopt an engagement strategy. Likewise, education and the labour market in a socially-mixed environment constitute important tool for interaction with the society for inhabitants of disadvantaged neighbourhoods. Indeed, social mixing leads theoretically to more diversified networks and contacts, and generates social cohesion and economic opportunity (Schoon 2011 cited in Lees 2008). In this way, social mixing fosters opportunity for dialogue between inhabitants from disadvantaged neighbourhoods and inhabitants from the rest of the society.

Drawing from the literature review, the following conclusions can thus be outlined: on one side, the city society, entailing city’s authorities and the media, tend to stigmatise territorially the population living in disadvantaged neighbourhoods. On the other side, in response to this stigmatisation, inhabitants of disadvantaged districts tend to adopt a various set of attitudes: the stigma can be either perceived in a hostile way, being inverted as a means to recognition in society, or be more passively accepted by individuals who choose to retreat from the society with individuals from similar ethnic-background.



### **III. METHOD**

In order to conduct successfully this thesis and answer in an appropriate way to the research questions, I have selected the following methodological steps:

#### **III. 1. Research approach and strategy**

In this paper I use a qualitative approach and put the emphasis on how individuals interpret their social world (Bryman 2012). In order to answer my research questions i.e. *‘to what extent does identity contribute to and reinforce segregation in European cities?’*, I carry out a comparative case study of two neighbourhoods Rosengård, Malmö (Sweden) and Vaulx-en-Velin, Lyon (France), both particularly renowned for the stigmatized representation of their population as ‘poor’, ‘immigrant’, ‘criminal’ and ‘marginal’ (Sandström 2004 in Bruschi Ures 2009; Gandonnière 2000; Tissot 2018).

Such comparison can be challenged by the vastness of the Metropolis of Lyon in comparison to Malmö but I take into account the size of the cities with regard to their national ranking scale. In this way, in this study I analyse the commune of Vaulx-en-Velin as a district to Lyon. Through this comparison, I aim to assess how city’s society interacts with disadvantaged neighbourhoods. This study constitutes a cross-national research as conceptualised by Linda Hantrais: it examines the urban segregation in two different countries and seek to gain a greater understanding of this phenomenon while using the same research instruments (Hantrais 1996 in Bryman 2012).

My analysis is built on both extensive and intensive research as defined by Paul Cloke *et. al.* (2004): an extensive research analyzes the extent of a certain phenomenon and focuses on groups whose members share similar formal attributes and patterns of regularity and distribution. In contrast, an intensive research seeks which processes are most relevant in a limited number of cases and within a particular event. It identifies causal relations and connections between

groups and their members, which are specifically studied in their characteristics and relations to each others, by means of interactive methods such as in-depth interviews and participant observation (Cloke *et. al.* 2004). The combination of the two research methods is relevant for this study since it allows both an overall and accurate comprehension on how identity is linked to the phenomenon of segregation in cities.

The comparative case study is however a limited research strategy because contexts and backgrounds are always different in qualitative terms (Musterd 2005). This is echoed by Alan Bryman when he states that in a qualitative research, ‘no case can be representative in the statistical sense’ (2012:550). Comparison can also be difficult since definitions and data collection systems vary among national census bureaus (Johnson, *et. al.* 2007). Furthermore, the focus on the neighbourhood scale can be misleading since it reflects only a part of the multiple interactions in which the neighbourhood is intertwined in the city (Musterd and Andersson 2005).

### **III. 2. Research design and material**

#### ***Research design***

In this study I investigate the particular depiction of reality propounded by the members of the society as well as how these representations influence their interactions. More specifically, it is about analysing both the ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ discourses produced on disadvantaged neighbourhoods. The identity strategies theory is used as a filter to categorize these discourses. Due to time, financial and practical reasons, I chose the Discourse Analysis as the most suitable and efficient methodology to this research thesis.

I understand the term ‘discourse’ as Nelson Phillips and Cynthia Hardy’s interpretation, that is, an ‘interrelated set of texts and the practices of their production, dissemination and reception that brings an object into being’ and that

produces reality. Discourse Analysis is moreover suitable to study the interactions between individuals since understanding social interactions requires understanding the ‘discourses that give them meaning’ (Phillips and Hardy 2003:3 in Bryman 2012:536).

There are many approaches to Discourse Analysis. According to Jonathan Potter (1997) Discourse Analysis consists in analysing ‘the way versions of the world, of society, events and inner psychological worlds are produced in discourse’. It is a constructionist methodology since it emphasises a particular versions of reality built by members of society through discourses (Potter 1997:146 in Bryman 2012:528-529). As for James Gee (1999), Discourse Analysis is about focusing on how language is used in enacting activities, perspectives and identities (1999); it is everywhere and ‘always political’ (Gee 1999 cited in Hogan 2013:2). Through discourse, one creates ‘specific identities, activities, ways of acting, interacting (...) together with other people and with objects, symbols, tools and technologies to recognize yourself and others as meaning and meaningful (...)’. (Gee 1999:7, cited in Hogan 2013:3).

I will refer to Potter’s questions as a guideline for my analysis (Potter 1997:609 cited in Bryman 2012:529):

- What is this discourse doing?
- How is it constructed to make it happen?
- What resources are available to perform this activity?

However I am aware of some weaknesses entailed in the Discourse Analysis research method, such as the risk of decontextualising the talk or misinterpreting the text (Cameron 1991 cited in Hogan 2013).

### ***Research material***

The perspective of city authorities is analysed through official documents produced by the cities of Malmö and Lyon. The media's point of view is examined through the work of the following academic scholars: Dzafic and Huseinovic 2010; Bruschi Ures 2009; Perssons 2011 and Gandonnière 2000. The perspectives of inhabitants from disadvantaged neighbourhoods are examined through interviews collected by Azzam 2013; Dzafic and Huseinovic 2010 and Gandonnière 2000. I also use the autobiography of Zlatan Ibrahimović, the famous Swedish footballer, as a testimony from a former inhabitant of Rosengård.

This material consists essentially in secondary sources. It was chosen with regard to its relevance to this thesis in terms of topics i.e. *the stigmatisation of Rosengård and Vaulx-en-Velin by the media* and time frame. According to Bryman, secondary sources present several advantages among which offering greater time for the actual analysis of existing data (2012) which is in general 'high quality data sets that are based on large reasonably representative samples' (*Ibid.*:327). When it comes to official documents produced by the state, it offers for the researcher a great deal of information, including statistical and textual material (*Ibid.*). I will carefully review this data using Scott's four criteria for assessing the quality of documents: authenticity, credibility, representativeness and meaning (Scott 1990 cited in Bryman 2012:544). Applying Scott's assessment criteria to official documents, I see the authenticity and meaning of this material as often acknowledged while its credibility should be more carefully analysed. Indeed official sources can be biased, what might also influence their representativeness and depiction of reality (Bryman 2012) but this is also what I especially aim at outlining and analysing in this research thesis.

Among the data produced by the city of Malmö, I selected the document entitled 'Malmö's path towards a sustainable future' (2014) produced by the Commission for a Socially Sustainable Malmö, – thereafter 'Malmö Commission' and 'Malmö Commission Report' –. This official report is relevant to this study

because it describes extensively the city's objectives and strategies for a sustainable urban development for the next decades. Moreover, the Malmö Commission Report displays renewal projects for improving the attractiveness of 'Miljonprogram' housing and breaking segregation characterising districts such as Rosengård (Malmö Commission Report 2013). When it comes to the Metropolis of Lyon, I chose the 'Nouveau Programme de Renouveau Urbain' produced by the Metropolis of Lyon<sup>5</sup> (2016), and 'Plan Local d'Urbanisme pour Vaulx-en-Velin'<sup>6</sup> (2015). These official documents have an adequate time framework and outline the main objectives of the two cities regarding their urban restructuring projects for the next decades, in addition to reflect the city authorities' discourses and representations of disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

This material entails some limitations: as highlighted by Cloke *et. al.*, the researcher needs to be sceptical towards official documents. Despite the assumed reliability and accuracy associated with official data, governments are never neutral and when they produce data, it is always with a specific aim. In this way data are produced in particular cultural, political and economic contexts, which affects their character and content (Cloke *et. al.* 2014).

### **III. 3. Reflexive considerations**

In my analysis I examine the discourses produced on disadvantaged neighbourhoods by the city authorities, the media and inhabitants of disadvantaged neighbourhoods. The city authorities are understood as a political entity deciding on urban planning and the city's society is interpreted as the broad ensemble of inhabitants who do not live in disadvantaged neighbourhood. During the research process, I became aware of my own prejudices that I had about disadvantaged neighbourhoods and learned to be more critical towards official documents. From initially using the term 'disadvantage' and 'marginal' to

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<sup>5</sup> [New Urban Renewal Plan for the Metropolis of Lyon]

<sup>6</sup> [Urban Planning for Vaulx-en-Velin]

characterise suburban areas, I changed my terminology to ‘deprived’ as a more neutral adjective.

I understand this study in a humanistic geographic perspective, meaning that I do not aim at imposing my own external frame of reference on the world but rather at investigating and understanding the frames of references drawn by the social actors themselves (Cloke *et.al.*2014). More specifically, I aim to outline the similarities and differences of the territorial stigmatisation in two different national contexts, beside explaining the stigmatisation process by understanding the meaning, perception and motives of the social actors (*Ibid.*).

Whereas I am aware of the fact that the researcher is influenced by experiences, personal interests and values (Bryman 2012), I aim to be as objective as possible in my analysis. I selected the case studies with regard to personal interests for my current living place in Rosengård, Malmö, combined with my everyday experience in this city as well as with previous experience in the city of Lyon.

Finally, my limited knowledge of Swedish restricted the extent of my research thesis, particularly regarding Malmö City’s official website and Swedish master thesis. I regard the documents in English on Malmö as relevant to this study since they have the underlying aim to reach the international audience. It should be noted that the French sources quoted in this study are from my own translation.

## **IV. Discourse analysis on the segregation and territorial stigmatisation in Malmö and Lyon through the identity strategies theory**

This part constitutes the actual analysis of this thesis: I examine the discourses of city authorities, the media and inhabitants of disadvantaged neighbourhoods, in the contexts of Malmö and Lyon and in the light of the identity strategies, in order to demonstrate that these discourses can result in the segregation and stigmatisation of disadvantaged neighbourhoods. The guideline for the analysis is based on Potter's questions for Discourse Analysis, *i.e.* 'what is this discourse doing?', 'how is it constructed to make it happen?' and 'what resources are available to perform this action?' (Potter 1997:609 cited in Bryman 2012:529).

### **IV. 1. Discourse analysis on Rosengård, Malmö**

Three perspectives on Rosengård are examined through discourse analysis: the perspective of city authorities will be examined throughout the selected official document 'Malmö Commission Report'. Then, the perspective of the media is investigated by referring to previous research on that matter. The perspective of inhabitants from Rosengård is analysed through the narratives of Zlatan Ibrahimović, the famous footballer formerly inhabitant of this neighbourhood, and of other more 'ordinary' inhabitants of the district.

#### **IV.1.1. Discourse from the city authorities: promoting Malmö and the legitimacy of the restructuring programmes**

The official document 'Malmö Commission Report' was produced by the Malmö Commission, an independent commission set up in 2010 by politicians of Malmö. It aims to provide a 'qualified basis and scientifically based proposals for strategies to reduce health inequities in Malmö' (Malmö Commission Report

2013:3) and has a particular focus on the ‘*Miljonprogram*’ districts. On the overall, the Malmö Commission gives in its report an ambitious and promoting tone regarding the ‘*Miljonprogram*’ districts. I outlined in the Malmö Commission Report a double-discourse that can be related to retreatist and engagement identity strategies.

### ***Retreatist discourse***

The Malmö Commission assesses the existence of ‘two parallel societies’ in Malmö between the official established system and what is conceptualised as the ‘hidden Malmö’. I argue that, by representing a divided urban reality and in great need for improvements, the Malmö Commission seeks to justify and legitimate the city’s restructuring programmes. The ‘hidden Malmö’ is defined as the people living on the sidelines of the established system, what constitutes a ‘special set of problems in Malmö population structure’ (*Ibid:45*). The Malmö Commission refers to urban tendencies acknowledged in the academic research on urbanisation, including rising inequalities, economic and socio-ethnic segregation among urban populations:

*“Income poverty (...) has increased and currently includes three out of ten Malmö residents (...) People tend to live in increasingly socio-economically homogenous areas” (Ibid:46-47) Individuals tend to a greater extent to live with people who are similar to themselves” (Ibid:71).*

The segregation in Malmö is further explicitly acknowledged:

*“Malmö is a highly segregated city. There are large differences between different city districts when it comes to access to green spaces, inviting outdoor environments, trust and well-being, and problems with overcrowding, homelessness and housing supply” (Ibid:67).*

The Malmö Commission argues that this urban segregation contributes to the widespread contrasted images of Malmö, namely a ‘bright and a ‘dark’ images:



*“The image of Malmö also contributes to strengthening the segregation between inclusion and exclusion (...). The bright image present Malmö as a party city (...) with innovative, cultural values that attract entrepreneurs, young and creative people (...) The dark image includes tales of poverty, alienation and growing tensions between groups. At worst streets and certain residential areas are described as a lawless territories where the authorities have lost control”*  
(Ibid:47).

On this ‘dark’ representation of the city, the Malmö Commission states that it ‘reflects only a small part of the reality’ but has been so generalised that it has reinforced the stigmatisation of “the other”. Yet, drawing on research outcomes, the report underlines that the growing exclusion characterising segregated and poor areas can create frustration, feelings of unfairness, individual guilt and shame, and also be expressed by violence (Ibid:72). In this way, the Malmö Commission Report does not display violence as a main characteristic of the suburbs in Malmö, but rather as one of the potential outcomes of exclusion. The reality depicted in this report is more likely to be accepted as ‘objective’ and ‘neutral’ since this official document is elaborated by a commission mandated by the city authorities. It enjoys therefore a certain legitimacy which eases its depicted reality to be acknowledged as trustful and genuine by the reader.

### ***Engagement discourse***

The Malmö Commission aims at promoting the city of Malmö and the efficiency of the city authorities’ policies. The Commission first puts the emphasis on segregation and inequities in Malmö which contribute to the negative prejudices on the city and then displays several ‘actions’ and two overarching recommendations: 1) “Establish a social investment policy that can reduce inequities in living conditions and make societal systems more equitable” and 2) “Change processes by creating knowledge alliances and democratised management” (Malmö Commission 2013:49). The Malmö Commission underlines in its report the dynamism and commitment of the city authorities to enhance the living conditions of Malmö’s inhabitants and reduce inequities. These recommendations have an overall inclusive and positive tone. For instance, the

Commission highlights how culture is a vital driver for the ‘city’s social integration and cohesion’ and sees schools as a ‘cultural platforms’ (*Ibid*:48). Thus, I conclude that Malmö city’s authorities hold both a retreatist and engagement discourse in this official document since the Commission also promotes dialogue and inclusiveness between urban actors in its report.

#### **IV.1.2. Discourse from mass-media on Rosengård**

The district of Rosengård has often been the object of biased depiction in the media, especially when reporting on incidents. In this way, many researchers acknowledge the fact that media create and consolidate stereotypes on ethnic groups and foreign background populations (Dzafic and Huseinovic 2010; Bruschi Ures 2009; Perssons 2011). In their work, Mauricio Bruschi Ures (2009) and Gustav Perssons (2011) examine reports of Swedish newspapers on the 2008 violent events in Rosengård. I will first outline how the media depict Rosengård as a ‘special’ neighbourhood and then relate these discourses to the identity strategies that I have identified, retreatism and essentialism.

##### ***The particular case of Rosengård***

The media portray Rosengård as a ‘special’ neighbourhood which breaks with the Swedish society in their reports on the 2008 events. They use a dichotomous description of the protagonists: on one side, the protesters in Rosengård are described in blurred terms, according to the deeds they perform: they are ‘thugs’, ‘criminals’ (Perssons 2011:25), wild and unorganised (*Ibid*.:23) and appear as dangerous societal enemies who are constantly lurking and waiting for the emergency vehicles with their stones and rockets (Bruschi Ures 2009). On the other side, the police’s actions are rather portrayed as strategic and well-thought (Perssons 2011) beside the firemen who are shaped and constructed in the media reports as the ‘brave patrol’ who dares to enter and ‘operate’ in this ‘dangerous’ area by risking their life (Bruschi Ures 2009:27).

The contrast between the protesters in Rosengård and the rest of the Swedish society is reasserted by the media who emphasise the exceptionality of the situation: *'the enacted rule to have police escort in the whole neighbourhood is very unusual'* (Sydsvenskan 2008/10/04 in Bruschi Ures 2009:28). However, the police is well-prepared and have special forces suited for this district: *'but the police have prepared to stop new violence with a specially-trained police from Göteborg and Stockholm'* (Sydsvenskan 2008/12/20 in Perssons 2010:29). Another article states that *'the fact that the fire brigade must have police protection to extinguish fires is a sign that the society is about to surrender'* (Kvällposten, 2008/08/20 in Bruschi Ures 2009:28): this statement is interpreted as another depiction of conflict between 'evil and goods forces' and further consolidates a discourse which generates a demonized image of Rosengård and its inhabitants as dangerous and threatening 'outsiders' (Bruschi Ures 2009:28-29), a district whose violent protesters deviate from the 'normal', 'modern' and 'well-functioning' Sweden (Perssons 2011:33).

### ***Relating the discourses to retreatist identity strategy***

By depicting Rosengård as an isolated and poor district whose physical aspect, population composition and socio-economic problems contrast with the rest of the city, the media reinforce the idea of a parallel society. Consequently, these discourses distance Rosengård and its inhabitants from Malmö and the rest of Sweden.

A first retreatist element in the media discourse is the idea that Rosengård is a 'concrete suburb', outlined by Bruschi Ures (2009) in reference to the 'concrete metaphor' conceptualised by (Ristilammi 2003). Indeed, the concrete building material symbolizes the immobility of suburban inhabitants, stuck in social problems and concentrating all the negatives consequences of modern social development (Ristilammi 2003 in Bruschi Ures 2009). The analysis focuses on some reports from the newspapers 'Aftonbladet': the suburbs of the Rosengård are depicted as 'concrete islands' similar to 'prison yard' or 'wall-like high

buildings'. The idea of a desolated environment is further reinforced by the description of 'burned stores', 'urine smell', 'graffiti' and the atmosphere of 'hopelessness' and 'misery' that arises from this gloomy area (Bruschi Ures 2009:29-30).

Then, some media emphasise the contrast of Rosengård with the rest of Sweden by associating the neighbourhood with what is conceptualised as the problematic 'immigrant disorder'. Bruschi Ures underlines how the 'concrete suburbs' gradually become 'immigrant suburbs' in the media discourse. This tendency is rooted on the fact that the share of immigrant population is significant in this district, combined with the image of the 'immigrant' constructed by the media as a generic term to designate all people with foreign background. This contributes to create boundaries in the society and to reproduce stereotypes progressively incorporated by large parts of the population (Brune 1998 in Bruschi Ures 2009:21). In particular, the 'immigrant suburbs' become increasingly represented as a marginalised and even dangerous area for the society where lawlessness and deviant behaviours are widespread. Stereotypes of 'immigrants' as violent, criminal and socially marginalised individuals are further consolidated by their representations as what is 'strange' and 'deviant' in the society (Sandström 2004 in Bruschi Ures 2009:21-22). In this way, Rosengård becomes in the media a place where 'non-Swedes' live and in contradiction to 'normal' Swedes these inhabitants are unemployed and dependent on social subsidies (Ristilammi 2003 in Bruschi Ures 2009:30-31).

An article in the newspapers 'Sydsvenskan' particularly emphasises this contrast characterising Rosengård: *'unemployment is the highest in Malmö. Almost nine out of ten inhabitants of Rosengård have a foreign background'* (Sydsvenskan 2008/10/04, cited in Bruschi Ures 2009:30). The idea of a poor and marginal district in significant contrast with the rest of Sweden is further echoed by the newspapers 'Aftonbladet': *'In Rosengård almost all are from foreign descent.*

*Unemployment is high and a few years ago three out of four adult were receiving social subsidies* (Aftonbladet 2008/07/03, cited in Bruschi Ures 2009:31).

### ***Relating the discourses to essentialist identity strategy***

In addition to the retreatist aspect, I also underline in the media discourses analysed by Bruschi Ures (2009) some elements of an essentialist identity strategy, especially in the reports covering the 2008 violent events that took place in Rosengård. As a matter of fact, a large share of the media uses in their reports a discourse that depicts Rosengård as a dangerous threat for the society, what generates fear and insecurity feelings on the reader.

I outline a first essentialist element in media discourses that describe Rosengård and other Swedish suburbs as ‘growing societal threats’ to the established society (Bruschi Ures 2009). Indeed, during the 2008 violent events, some reports state that the ‘escalating problems’ in the suburbs of the cities are ‘creating chaos’ and ‘spread horror in entire residential areas’ to the extent that ‘ambulances and fire department do not dare to go without police escort’ (Expressen 2008/04/26, *Ibid.*:34). In this way, Rosengård and its inhabitants seem to run ‘out of control’ of the city’s authorities what generates feelings of fear and discomfort within the reader. Moreover, the idea that there is a real underlying threat in the suburbs is emphasised by some newspapers who state that the exclusion of Rosengård, among other disadvantaged neighbourhoods, are potential ground for young immigrants to adhere to ‘*outside destructive ideologies*’. This threat is triggered by the ‘*newly discovered jihad ideology broadcasted in attic mosques from the suburbs and further spread on the internet (...)*’ (Sydsvenskan 2008/07/10, *Ibid.*:36) In this way, the media reinforce the stigmatisation of young Muslims: being Muslim and living in the suburbs becomes synonymous with being a potential ‘jihadist’ and being a potential warrior against the Swedish society (Bruschi Ures 2009).

Another element of essentialism in the media reports is the representation of Rosengård as a 'war zone' during the 2008 events. Bruschi Ures (2009) analyses how the newspapers use a dramatic language and different metaphors to designate the 'reality of Rosengård'. Indeed, he identifies in the media the description of Rosengård as a genuine 'war scenario: the district is depicted as a violent and chaotic arena where 'youth walk' are attacking firefighters and ambulance personnel. The words 'fires', 'violence', 'rockets', 'stone-throwing to the police', 'armored vehicles' constitute all the elements present in riots (Bruschi Ures 2009:26) whereas words such as 'breakpoint' and 'escort' arouse associations with war situations (Bruschi Ures 2009:28). Then the statement '*fired fires- a part of everyday life in Rosengård*' contributes to the representation of a chaotic neighbourhood in fire, an alarming situation where hopelessness, apathy and desperation turned to hate and rebellious feelings. Similarly, statements such as '*rescue services refuse to enter the area without police escort*', '*fire trucks are equipped with bulletproof glass*' (Dagens Nyheter 2008/10/05, cited in Bruschi Ures 2009:25), '*numerous meeting points were set up where police meet up and escort fire trucks*' (Dagens Nyheter 2008/07/16 cited in Bruschi Ures 2009:33) raise associations with Rio de Janeiro in Brazil or Cape town in South Africa, two towns usually renowned for their 'dangerous' and 'terrifying' districts where even the police do not dare to enter (Bruschi Ures 2009:27). This 'war scene' representation is even more emphasised in this report stating '*Burned cars- a playground for the children in Rosengård*'. Indeed, the article depicts a ravaged district like a 'war scene' where the children walk around among burned and smoking carcasses and car wrecks that 'remain for weeks'. This characterises an area in decline, of misery and out of the society, a lost place without any hope for the future, a district which has nothing left but burnt car skeletons to offer for kids as playground. The underlying message is that Rosengård is not a place for children to grow up (Bruschi Ures 2009:29).

In this way, during the 2008 events, the media discourses stigmatize Rosengård as a dangerous and threatening district, in stark contrast with the

Swedish society by depicting a genuine ‘war scene’ where ‘wild’ protesters attack the authorities and by using military terms. It is a ‘war’ that takes place between the ‘excluded inhabitants’ of Rosengård and the ‘established society’ (*Ibid.*) and it is very likely that the reader might feel fear and anxiety when reading these reports without having any other alternative representations on the district.

#### **IV.1.3. Discourse from inhabitants of Rosengård: Zlatan Ibrahimović’s perspective versus ‘ordinary’ inhabitants’ perspective**

##### *i. Zlatan’s perspective: reinforcing the image of the ‘ghetto’ displayed by the media*

Perhaps the most well-known inhabitant of Rosengård is the international soccer superstar Zlatan Ibrahimović, mostly known as ‘Zlatan’ whose autobiography, co-written with David Lagercrantz and released in 2011, became a best-seller. Whereas the book is specifically renowned for being emblematic of Zlatan’s egocentrism and famous assertions which made the footballer’s pretentious reputation, I will rather focus on his representation of Rosengård. Wacquant *et.al.* (2014) state that in his autobiography, the footballer dramatises his ascension and ‘coming out of the ghetto’. In this way, he draws from his childhood’s memories in Rosengård a ‘ghetto image’ similar to the one broadcasted in mass-media and further contributes to the widespread stigmatized image of this district. I argue that these narratives display facets of essentialist and retreatist identity strategies through an open challenge discourse and represent Rosengård as a parallel society.

First of all, I identified in Zlatan’s narratives some elements depicting Rosengård as a parallel society. He reflects that his early life in Rosengård was like living in ‘another planet’ (2011:49) where he had few interactions with Swedes and the city of Malmö, where times were tough at home and bike stealing constituted his daily life experiences:

*'we didn't go in for hugs and that sort of thing (...) You had to deal with things yourself (...) You had to grit your teeth, and there was chaos and rowing and a fair few smacks and slaps' (Ibrahimović and Lagercrantz 2011:13)*

*'I had no idea where the football stadium was – or anything else in the city, for that matter. Malmö might not have been far away. But it was another world. I would turn seventeen before I went into the city centre, and I knew nothing of life there (...)' (Ibid.:33)*

Zlatan emphasises that the fact he was coming from the 'tough' district of Rosengård resulted in the feeling of being very different, especially when first joining Malmö FF, Malmö's football club:

*'There were a couple of other foreigners there already (...) Otherwise it was just regular Swedes, including the kind from the posh suburbs. I felt like I was from Mars' (Ibid.:33)*

*'I wanted to be great (...) Not that I believed I would turn out to be some kind of superstar, exactly. Jesus-Christ, I was from Rosengård! Maybe I turned out a bit differently because of that.' (Ibid.:27)*

According to him, coming from Rosengård constitutes thus a very distinctive attribute that differentiated him from the Swedes and contributed to his identity formation as a 'tough guy':

*'I was a tough kid from Rosengård. I was different. That became my identity.(...) But I mean, I was from Rosengård. I didn't give a damn about the Swedes' (Ibid.:36)*

*'you needed to have a tough attitude in Rosengård (...) Most of the time, though, we didn't have any rows (...) It was more a matter of us in Rosengård against everybody else.' (Ibid.:23)*

An open challenge position can also be outlined when he recalls a match as a child with his first football club MBI, Malmö Ball and Sporting Association: he states that it was 'against a bunch of snobs from Vellinge' (...) it was the brown kids versus the posh kids (...) we won 8-5 and taunted the rich kids" (Ibid.:31)



Then, he further reasserts the image of Rosengård as a ‘criminal district’ by describing the numerous illegal and criminal activities surrounding him, in particular how one of his half-siblings was involved in drug trafficking. He even states that he might have himself fallen in the criminal milieu:

*“People have asked me what I would have done if I hadn’t become a footballer. I have no idea. Maybe I would have become a criminal. There was a lot of crime in those days. Not that we went out thieving. But a lot of stuff just happened, and not just bikes.” (Ibid.:26).*

The image of a ‘lawless territory’ and the clichés on the suburbs are further reinforced when he states:

*“People in Rosengård don’t boast about having a fancy apartment or a beach-front house. People brag about having flash cars (...) Everybody drives in Rosengård, whether they’ve got a driving licence or not.” (Ibid.:58)*

The overall representation in these childhood memories is about a disadvantaged neighbourhood where poverty and unemployment are predominant, where everyone struggles to make a living and where rare opportunities to get out of misery can be challenged and challenging:

*“(...) if you’ve had a life like mine, growing up as a snot-nosed kid on a council estate (...) a lot of people want to knock you down when you’re up, especially if you come from the wrong side of the tracks and don’t behave like a nice Swedish boy” (Ibid.:56)*

To sum up, Zlatan’s narratives on Rosengård reinforce on the one side the dramatic aspect given to his ascension ‘out of the ghetto’ and on the other side the widespread association of Rosengård and European disadvantaged neighbourhoods in general with American ghettos in the European mass-media. This association can be also highlighted in his use of the black maxim: *“You can take the boy out of the ghetto, but you can never take the ghetto out of the boy” (Ibid.:11)*. In this way, Zlatan’s autobiography and the way he portrays Rosengård

echo to the widespread media discourse and stigmatised image of this district of Malmö as an area of ‘gang violence’.

***ii. Ordinary inhabitants’ perspective on Rosengård: ‘feeling at home’***

One might be interested to compare Zlatan’s representation of Rosengård with the perspective of other inhabitants who lead a more ordinary life. Due to limited amount of time, I could not conduct interviews of inhabitants of Rosengård myself. I rely instead on secondary sources: the first study led by Mahmoud Azzam (2013) is centred on social capital: he conducted 10 semi-structured interviews of young adults living in Rosengård from different ethnicities in order to understand their experiences as inhabitants of this segregated and stigmatized neighbourhood. The interviews address various themes including family, education, work, gender, network and the experience of living in this district which we will particularly focus on. The second study, led by Belma Dzafic and Lejla Huseinovic (2010), also focuses on the perception of young people regarding Rosengård and how they think other people consider them. I categorize the interviews according to the three identity strategies.

To begin with, many of the respondents highlight the specific atmosphere of ‘feeling at home’ in Rosengård and being part of a larger community (Azzam 2013:41). This feeling of being ‘at home’ arises from the proximity of friends and relatives who share either similar ethnic cultural background or the common history of immigration to Sweden and growing up in Rosengård, regardless of the different ethnic belonging (Azzam 2013). One of the respondents also emphasises that coming from Rosengård participates in shaping identity as it gives a strong multicultural personality and consequently more social skills and knowledge about different traditions and perspectives (Azzam 2013:43). Thus, Rosengård not only constitutes a geographic area but also reflects a specific ‘brand’ that generates feelings for both residents and people outside the area (*Ibid.*).

I understand these discourses from young adults living in Rosengård as an essentialist identity strategy since they seek to defend their district and invert the stigma often associated to it (Wacquant 2011 cited in Wacquant *et.al.* 2014): they depict a comforting 'home' where friends and relatives are close to each others and which constitutes a safe area to them (Azzam 2013, Dzafic and Huseinovic 2010). Then, thanks to its multiethnic population composition, some respondents argue that this neighbourhood offers a 'strong multicultural personality' to its inhabitants that is consequently considered as a major feature shaping their identity (Azzam 2013).

Nevertheless, the affiliation to this district is not considered equally by the inhabitants: whereas some young people are proud to come from Rosengård as illustrated above, others find it stigmatising and argue that it undermines their integration with the rest of the society (*Ibid.*). Similarly, Dzafic and Huseinovic's study highlights how young people in Rosengård feel stigmatised and labelled as criminals by the media and the society, and often encountered at school the prejudice that all inhabitants of Rosengård have participated in the 2008 riots (Dzafic and Huseinovic 2010).

Many of the respondents in Azzam's research notice that, because of their residential area, they often lack a diversified social capital and the 'right networks' to access better job opportunities (2013:47-48). The respondents describe how school constitutes a significant tool for diversifying their social capital and enhance their integration with the outer society. However this requires efforts: indeed, referring to Bourdieu (1986), Azzam explains how the majority community can retain opportunities for social capital from ethnic enclaves. In addition to this challenge, some respondents also face the disapproval of their friends who want to hold them back if they seek to increase their social capital and create new relationships beyond the ethnic enclave. In other words, those adopting an engagement strategy may confront others who rather promote a retreatist strategy.

In this way, school is depicted as a complementary tool for increasing social capital when the familial background offers a limited social capital. This is further outlined with the testimonies of some respondents facing socio-economic difficulties who were not able to attend secondary school outside Rosengård. They ‘feel ashamed’ because they do not master the Swedish language properly as adults and tell how their lack of education, networks and/or family support have gradually led them towards criminal activities and greater exclusion from the ‘majority community’ because of their closed and homogeneous social interconnection. Therefore, I argue that some inhabitants in Rosengård can adopt a retreatist identity strategy in order to compensate their difficulties to integrate with the society outside the neighbourhood. Within the district itself, the different ethnies and cultures can form parallel worlds, as one of the respondents states:

*‘We do not enter Albanians, Serbs or Gypsies. Only we are Arabs. It's the same with the Albanians, they are also for themselves. We may sit together and talk and like this, laugh a little and so. Then everyone goes their way’ (Azzam 2013:49).*

On the overall, Rosengård is the object of a clear essentialist and retreatist discourse from the media, a perspective that can be also highlighted in Zlatan’s autobiography. The footballer adopts such discourse in line with the media in order to ‘sensationalise’ his life and interpret his reality in a more ‘romanesque’ way in order for his narrative to be more attractive and ‘entertaining’ to the reader. When it comes to other inhabitants of Rosengård, one can highlight the three identity strategies in their discourses: some are rather using an essentialist and ‘defensive’ discourse against their stigmatisation created by the media that threatens their identity whereas others adopt a strategy in between retreatism and engagement. Indeed, many of the respondents testify how it can be challenging to diversify their social networks because of the ‘criminals’ and ‘marginal’ stigmatisation they experience from the media and the rest of the city’s inhabitants. Moreover, the geographical layout of Rosengård may contribute to comforting its inhabitants within the district where they feel most ‘at home’ since it is where they create most of their social capital. Consequently this can lead to a

potential confinement of the inhabitants within the area and a certain ‘isolation’ from the rest of the city.

## **IV. 2. Discourse Analysis on the commune of Vaulx-en-Velin, Lyon**

### **IV.2.1. The city authorities’ discourse on disadvantaged neighbourhoods in Vaulx-en-Velin: end the ‘breakage’ by a ‘strategy of reconquest’**

The selected official document for this study is entitled ‘*Nouveau Programme pour le Renouveau Urbain de la Métropole de Lyon*’ (2016) – thereafter ‘*Nouveau Programme de Renouveau Urbain*’ –. In this document, the authorities of the Metropolis state that they aim at achieving social and territorial cohesion as well as equal access to rights and services for the citizens of the Metropolis. I mainly identify in this official document two discourses of engagement and retreatist strategies but some assumptions could also refer to an essentialist discourse. For instance, in the beginning of the programme, the Metropolis of Lyon states that its urban renewal projects since the beginning of the 2000’s is a ‘*strategy of reconquest on difficult areas*’ (*Nouveau Programme de Renouveau Urbain* 2016:4) what associates the urban renewal project as a ‘military undertaking’ in the mind of the reader, an image of confrontation and ‘war’ against some districts that would ‘resist’ to the legitimate city authorities.

#### ***i. A positive account of the previous urban renewal programme***

The first part of the document present in a positive tone the results from the previous urban renewal plan: globally, the various actions undertaken have led to a ‘*spectacular and significant enhancement of the situation of neighbourhoods facing difficulties*’ (bold writing in the text) and the development of the transport infrastructure resulted in the opening-up of these neighbourhoods, what has ‘*erased the spatial barriers and segregation logic*’ (*Ibid.*:4). This self-content tone is further emphasised by the statements: ‘*the overall measures have triggered*

*in the 'target districts' a deep dynamic of transformation whose effects will be assessed in the long run*. The former large-housing estates have made way to 'high quality mixed-housing' what is claimed to have enhanced the inhabitants' living standards, the attractiveness of these districts and restored the same urban quality as in the rest of the Metropolis (*Ibid.*:8, bold writing in the text).

***ii. 'Target districts' still in great need for improvement***

However, in a second part the city authorities state their awareness about the yet '*hard life conditions experienced by some neighbourhoods and their inhabitants*' where poverty is still high (*Ibid.*:5). The *Nouveau Programme de Renouveau Urbain* needs to pursue and reinforce the initiated work from the previous programme in the 'target districts' entailing 'urban dysfunctions' (*Ibid.*:9). I identify in this part a rather retreatist identity strategy since the disadvantaged neighbourhoods and their inhabitants are described by means of statistical data in contradiction to the rest of the Metropolis: in the 'target districts' the share of unemployed population is 'two to three times higher', there is 'three times more state-subsidies recipients' and 'two times more individuals without any qualification' than in the rest of the Metropolis (*Ibid.*:5). By contrasting statistics between disadvantaged neighbourhoods and the rest of the Metropolis, the city authorities consolidate the idea that these suburbs are isolated and concentrate socio-economical issues such as misery, unemployment, subsidies-dependent populations to name only a few.

Among the numerous socio-economical issues in the suburbs raised by the *Nouveau Programme de Renouveau Urbain*, neither delinquency nor criminality are mentioned. By describing how efficient was the previous urban renewal plan in 'rebranding' the 'target districts' and enhancing their attractiveness, combined with the description of a still alarming situation in the suburbs, this document seems to justify the launch of the *Nouveau Programme de Renouveau Urbain*.

The second official document which I will analyse is entitled '*Plan Local d'Urbanisme pour Vaulx-en-Velin*' and was issued in 2015 by the delegation for urban development of the Metropolis of Lyon. This report is focused on the urban renewal of the Vaulx-en-Velin commune initiated since the mid-1990's and which aims at diversifying and enhancing the housing in the commune. Similarly to the 2016 *Nouveau Programme de Renouveau Urbain*, I outline in this document an engagement discourse in the way it promotes a 'reinforced social cohesion and mix'. Indeed, this report sees in 'heavy urban restructuring' – entailing the demolition of large-housing estates such as the '*Mas du Taureau*' as a way to 'rebalance the share of social and private housing'. In combination with an enhanced public transport infrastructure, the objectives are to 'open-up', reintegrate this neighbourhood to the Metropolis of Lyon and improve the attractiveness of the area thanks to an enhanced quality in the housing and in the surrounding environment.

The physical aspect of the neighbourhood, mainly composed of large-housing estates, is fairly criticised in this report. It is stated that these buildings are '*clustered around the [commune's] city center and break morphologically and functionally with the surrounding environment what is impacting significantly the landscape*' (*Plan Local d'Urbanisme pour Vaulx-en-Velin* 2015:18). Moreover, because of their shape and displaying, these large-housing buildings do not 'communicate' with the area and consequently are not well-integrated with the traditional built environment (*Ibid.*). By criticising the architecture of the large housing estates, the report reasserts the idea that this area is breaking with the rest of the environment, a depiction of spatial division which I understand as reflecting a retreatist discourse.

#### **IV.2.2. The media's discourse on the violent events in Vaulx-en-Velin during the 1990's: a simplistic view entailing a retreatist and essentialist discourse**

Several researchers have studied the media representation of French suburbs. According to Gregory Derville, the media sustain a simplistic discourse on the French *banlieues* in two ways. First, they display a dichotomised categorization of urban neighbourhoods, by constantly referring to the '*banlieues*' or 'difficult neighbourhoods' in contrast to other 'regular' districts, as if there were 'good' and 'bad' districts (Vieillard-Baron 2012:28; Tissot 2018). Then, the media discourse on the French *banlieues* is simplistic because occasional: the media pay only attention to the *banlieues* to report dramatic or spectacular events (Derville 1997). The case of Vaulx-en-Velin is a good example regarding this matter: in October 1990, one of its districts, the '*Mas du Taureau*', experienced violent riots after the death of Thomas Claudio in a motorcycle accident, allegedly provoked by the police. This incident is progressively built as a national issue by the media who emphasise the violence and dramatic aspect of the protests: the reports display a growing number of protesters, police forces and burned cars (Gandonnière 2000). My analysis of the media discourse on Vaulx-en-Velin is grounded on Pierre Gandonnière's research (2000): he examines how the media constructed a stigmatising image of Vaulx-en-Velin during the 1990's events.

##### ***i. The categorisation of Vaulx-en-Velin as a 'banlieue'***

During the October 1990 event, the media broadcast images of burning cars, vandalised facilities and clashes with the police – representations that are, in the media universe, often associated with suburbs (Gandonnière 2000) – in combination with comments inflating the dramatic aspect of the events: the suburbs are described as '*cooking kettle ready to explode*' and '*genuine ghettos*' (Gandonnière 2000:36). It is a common practice in the media to portray the *banlieues* and their inhabitants as a nest for all kinds of social issues and negative images such as violence, drug trafficking, 'ghetto' and Islamism (Derville 1997). The use of the term 'ghetto' has become a common label to designate the French suburbs since the 1970's, despite its controversial use (Wacquant *et. al.* 2014;



Tissot 2018; Derville 1997; Vieillard-Baron 2012). Indeed, by associating the French districts which encompass an important share of foreign-background population with the racially-segregated American ghettos, the media contribute to generate a distorted depiction of the reality in the suburbs (Vieillard-Baron 2011; Derville 1997).

The media further consolidate the belonging of Vaulx-en-Velin to the category of *banlieue* by referring to other *banlieues* where ‘similar’ violent events occurred and by referring to labels such as ‘*mal des banlieues*’ [trouble of the *banlieues*] and ‘*urban violence*’ (Gandonnière 2000:35,41). Gandonnière argues that there is furthermore a proximity between the report on Vaulx-en-Velin’s events and other reports displayed during the same TV news programme: he observes that the other themes addressed were related to trials, criminal and violent incidents involving Maghreb-origin, foreigner or immigrant individuals (2000). In this way, the recurrent broadcasting of negative images of violence and criminality by the media results in the association of Vaulx-en-Velin with social issues by the society. This stigmatisation is consolidated by the creation of a ‘scenario’ of urban violence that is periodically reminded at any incident involving the death of a young inhabitant from the suburbs, the accusation of the police’s responsibility and the following of violence (Gandonnière 2000:60).

#### ***ii. The construction of the ‘reality’ in Vaulx-en-Velin by the media***

Through their reports, the media contribute to create the reality they claim to depict (Derville 1997). Indeed, the media’s interpretations of an event can be biased, simply by their selection of what will be broadcasted or not. They decide in this way on the perspective they give to the TV viewers. For instance, in the Vaulx-en-Velin riots, the journalists are positioned behind the police and firemen forces and resulting from this location, the casting of stones and Molotov cocktails are coming from the protesters’ side. The latter are thus perceived as the aggressive ones. However, if some journalists have been located on the protesters’ side, they would witness the tear gas and charges from the police (Gandonnière 2000). The violence and aggressiveness of the protesters is further emphasised by

assumptions such as '*Vaulx-en-Velin screams its hate*' or '*the CRS forces [special police forces] had to charge them*' as if they had no choice but to employ violence (Gandonnière 2000:37) to repress these 'wild' and 'hater' protesters.

Gandonnière notices that, at the beginning of the events, the media interview some inhabitants of the Mas du Taureau neighbourhood in Vaulx-en-Velin. Yet, they later only focus on institutional leaders and city's official representatives' statements and testimonies, what constitutes a subjective interpretation of the events. Furthermore, the different relatives' and friends' versions of Thomas Claudio's accident are progressively discredited and forgotten in the TV news: the two passengers of the motorcycle are assumed to have been driving without helmets and even described as former 'delinquents' (Gandonnière 2000:50). The author observes that the label of young men from suburbs as delinquents, criminals and often 'well-known from the police' is recurrent in TV reports. This designation contributes to legitimate the official authorities in contrast to the 'young delinquents' of the suburbs, a legitimating process that can also be observed in the fact that the police version of incidents often becomes the official one. In this way, the TV reports on Vaulx-en-Velin violent events are biased: the media adopt a specific interpretation of the events, that is, the one from the authorities.

***iii. The interiorisation of the 'reality' constructed by the media on Vaulx-en-Velin by the society and the stigmatisation of the neighbourhood***

The continuous reports on Vaulx-en-Velin broadcasted by the media on television contribute to the stigmatisation of this neighbourhood as a violent, criminal and dangerous area in the French society. Just by mentioning 'Vaulx-en-Velin', one automatically thinks to a wide set of negative clichés and images: burning cars, concrete buildings and violent protesters. Belonging to Vaulx-en-Velin becomes synonymous to belonging to a gang (Gandonnière 2000). In this way, I argue that the media adopt a retreatist and essentialist identity strategies in their discourse that represents this suburb as a different entity marginalised from the rest of Lyon,

where violence, gangs, danger and threat are widespread as testified by their reports.

#### **IV.2.3. Discourse from inhabitants of Vaulx-en-Velin on their district**

After considering the perspectives of city authorities and of the media, it is now time to consider the inside perspectives of inhabitants from Vaulx-en-Velin. I will first examine how some inhabitants simultaneously reject and exploit the stigma constructed by the media on them. Then, I will study the various representations they display on their neighbourhood ‘from the inside’ before relating these depictions to the identity strategies.

##### ***i. From hostility to exploitation of the stigma broadcasted by the media***

Regarding the stigma depicted on them and their district, the inhabitants of Vaulx-en-Velin adopt a hostile attitude to the stigma and the media. They feel ‘betrayed’ by the journalists (Gandonnière 2000:120) because they feel that their testimonies were manipulated and the broadcasted images are exaggerating the reality, in addition to nurture similar violent events by ‘imitation effect’. Consequently, the media and the negative images they broadcast on the neighbourhood are considered as responsible by the inhabitants for their socio-economic difficulties to integrate the society (*Ibid.*). Because of the reputation of Vaulx-en-Velin as a violent and criminal neighbourhood, inhabitants claim that they struggle on the labour market as employers have preconceived ideas about them. The bad reputation of the district also undermines the local economy as enterprises are reluctant to settle and invest (*Ibid.*). This process is conceptualised as the ‘spiral of the stigmatisation’ by Derville (1997:111) and results in the consolidation of the media representation on the neighbourhood as socially and economically precarious.

However, some inhabitants can invert the negative stigma linked to Vaulx-en-Velin towards a positive attribute. In this way, claiming its belonging to

Vaulx-en-Velin can be a way to feel more respected, to reinforce a ‘bully’ image, a phenomenon that can be particularly used among young people (Gandonnière 2000; Wacquant *et.al.* 2014). In this way, the stigmatisation of Vaulx-en-Velin can be exploited by its inhabitants. Furthermore, it can constitute an excuse for one’s socio-economic difficulties, a way to victimise and offload one’s responsibilities (Gandonnière 2000). It can also be exploited by the local politics: indeed, the dramatic depiction made by the media on Vaulx-en-Velin after the October 1990 events resulted in the government to justify the set up of several urban renewal initiatives, programmes and attract influx of capital (*Ibid.*).

### ***ii. Depicting Vaulx-en-Velin from the ‘inside’***

Far from the ‘burning’ and ‘violent’ media narratives, the inhabitants of Vaulx-en-Velin rather portray their neighbourhood as a ‘refuge’ town: indeed the commune enjoys a ‘welcoming reputation’ thanks to its spacious apartments suitable for large families and cheap housing, which satisfies foreign as well as local populations that struggle to find accommodation in the city center. Consequently, Vaulx-en-Velin is also depicted as a ‘human mosaic’ given its cultural and ethnic diversity, what contrasts with the ‘homogeneous’ representation of ‘immigrant’ population depicted in the media (Gandonnière 2000:135).

Because of this ‘welcoming’ and ‘cheap’ reputation, Vaulx-en-Velin attracts mainly socio-economically disadvantaged populations, which leads to a greater concentration of poor and unemployed populations in comparison to other districts. In this way, living in Vaulx-en-Velin can be also perceived as ‘social downgrading’ (Vieillard-Baron 2011:37-38), which explains why middle-classes or households achieving better economic situation tend to desert the area (Gandonnière 2000). As in other disadvantaged neighbourhoods, there is in Vaulx-en-Velin a higher turn-over of inhabitants. The stigmatising discourse broadcasted by the media can thus influence individuals in their housing choice.

In order to break with these clichés of ‘poor’, ‘criminal’ and ‘disadvantaged’ and offer an alternative image of their neighbourhood, the inhabitants and authorities of Vaulx-en-Velin have been fostering the cultural and associative life of their district since the 1990’s events (Gandonnière 2000; Braiki 2015). For instance, the broadcasting of a local newspapers that do not contain any section on anecdotes [*faits divers*] (Gandonnière 2000:130), the promotion of local rap music artists (Braiki 2015), or events such as ‘*A Vaulx Jazz*’ and the international hip-hop competition ‘*Battle de Vaulx*’ constitute means for inhabitants of Vaulx-en-Velin to promote nationally and internationally an alternative perspective on their commune as a living and artistic place with great potential.

### *iii. Identity strategies in the discourses of inhabitants from Vaulx-en-Velin*

I argue that, by their hostile attitude towards the media and the stigma they create on Vaulx-en-Velin, the inhabitants adopt an essentialist identity strategy. The stigmatisation they experience by the society is perceived as a genuine threat for their identity therefore they adopt a discourse of conflict and opposition against the media. Some inhabitants might exploit the stigma as an excuse for their exclusion from the society and in this way adopt a retreatist strategy: they enclose themselves into their socio-economic difficulties and hold the media and the society for accountable to their problems. Yet, the flourishing of cultural and associative initiatives since the 1990’s events testifies the will of inhabitants to promote dialogue, openness and interactions between Vaulx-en-Velin, the society and even gain a positive international acknowledgement, thanks to cultural events such as the commune’s jazz festival and international break dance competition.

## **IV. 3. Comparing the segregation and the stigmatisation of Rosengård and Vaulx-en-Velin**

From the previous analysis and comparison of different urban actors’ discourses on Rosengård and Vaulx-en-Velin, I draw the following conclusions:

**i. The media reinforce the stigmatisation of disadvantaged neighbourhoods by their retreatist and essentialist discourse**

The media discourse is likely to be the most renowned and spread among the society given its easy access and comprehensible language for the wide majority of the population. The suburbs of Rosengård and Vaulx-en-Velin are described by the media through essentialist and retreatist discourses: they depict areas characterised by unemployment, criminality, violence, danger and all kinds of other social issues. By constantly associating these districts with these social issues, the media stigmatise these neighbourhoods as ‘dangerous’, ‘threatening’, and breaking with the rest of the society, an image gradually interiorised by the audience. This stigmatisation is embodied in the use of the ‘ghetto’ image, with reference to the districts in the United States mainly inhabited by Afro-American populations, which reinforces the representation of the suburbs as only composed of non-European populations.

The stigmatisation of the suburbs can also be consolidated by the impression that the media only report on suburbs to relate violent incidents such as car burning or gang violence. It is noteworthy that individuals mostly remember violent and ‘extraordinary’ incidents rather than more ‘usual’ reports on economics, politics or culture (Gandonnière 2000:126). Furthermore, reports on society incidents are also more understandable for the broad majority since it does not require specific knowledge (*Ibid.*).

The media contribute in this way to the territorial stigmatisation of the urban space by their essentialist and retreatist discourses. More recently, the several terrorist attacks that hit Europe have increased the stigmatisation of young Muslims living in the suburbs, associated with terrorism: in Sweden as well as in France, the media reports on religious extremism in the suburbs have led many to think that being Muslim and living in the suburbs is synonymous with being a potential ‘jihadist’.

**ii. The city authorities seek to promote the ‘liveability’ of disadvantaged neighbourhoods and to justify the renewal projects by using a retreatist and engagement discourse**

At official level, I observe that in both cities, Malmö and Lyon, the city authorities adopt a rather open and inclusive discourse regarding disadvantaged neighbourhoods. On the one side, they emphasise the potential and capacity underlying in these areas and how efficient their previous or future urban renewal projects are in achieving inclusion and integration with the rest of the city.

Yet, on the other side, they adopt a retreatist discourse when it comes to future urban projects: they emphasise how poverty, unemployment and physical isolation are still big challenges in these districts. I see this as a strategy exploiting the negative images widespread in the society regarding the physical aspect of the ‘concrete suburbs’ in order to justify new renewal projects and attract capital influx. However, I noticed that the French city authorities are more critical regarding the architecture of the buildings in Vaulx-en-Velin than the Swedish city authorities regarding ‘*Miljonprogrammet*’ housing in Rosengård. This can be explained by the fact that the French renewal programmes seek to justify their politics of demolition and area restructuring of large housing estates districts.

In all, the discourses displayed by city authorities in Malmö and Vaulx-en-Velin match with the ‘entrepreneurial city’ discourse outlined by Harvey: the city needs to be promoted as ‘innovative’, ‘safe’ and ‘creative’ (Harvey 1989:9).

**iii. The inhabitants of disadvantaged neighbourhoods are targets of stigmatisation, but also contribute to reinforce the stigma themselves through their narratives**

Regarding the perspectives of the inhabitants living in Rosengård and Vaulx-en-Velin, I identified the three identity strategies in their discourses in both French and Swedish cases. The essentialist strategy can be observed in their open

challenge position against the stigma created by the media on them and their living area. This challenging attitude can be hostile, but the stigma can also be reinterpreted in a hyperbolic claiming in some cases: living in Rosengård or Vaulx-en-Velin is no longer perceived as a shameful feature but rather claimed as a positive feature, it is considered as a comfortable place for its inhabitants, who state that they 'feel at home' in Rosengård or feel 'welcomed' in Vaulx-en-Velin, beside promoting the cosmopolitanism in their district as a richness and an asset. Other individuals reinterpret the stigmatisation and exploit the narratives of crime and violence on their district as a way to feel feared and respected. The stigma is thus re-used as part of their identity.

The stigma can be also exploited by inhabitants of the suburbs as a way to justify their exclusion and failures in life: because they are stigmatised, they are bound to marginality and can therefore only rely on their district to provide them social, economic or cultural resources. Others even state that they have no choice but engaging in marginal or criminal activities. I conclude that these individuals are using a retreatist discourse since they value their district and its inhabitants as the most reliable in comparison to the rest of the society that is excluding them.

Nevertheless, there is a share of the population living in Rosengård and Vaulx-en-Velin who adopts an engagement strategy with the rest of the city and the society. This can be through extending its social capital with inhabitants of other districts, as exemplified in the Rosengård case. The engagement strategy can also be undertaken by inhabitants clustering into associations with the objective to promote an alternative image of their neighbourhood to the negative one displayed by the media. More specifically, I see in the narratives made by some inhabitants a reinterpretation of the clichés on the suburb into a romanticised image. For instance, Zlatan encompasses his narrative on his childhood neighbourhood Rosengård with a rather 'nostalgic' tone in spite of the 'harsh life' that he experienced there. He exploits the image of the 'ghetto' associated to



Rosengård to dramatize his ascension and perhaps consolidate an image of ‘tough guy’.

However, despite the positive image and defensive discourses that can be claimed by inhabitants of Rosengård and Vaulx-en-Velin, these districts are also characterised by an important turn-over: as soon as their economic situation enhances, households tend to leave the area. In this way, deprivation tends to remain or be reproduced in these districts, what is assessed as a challenge for both city authorities to ‘keep’ or attract middle-classes to the stigmatised neighbourhoods in order to have more socially-mixed population in terms of economic resources and ethnical backgrounds.

## **CONCLUSION**

Socio-economic segregation has always existed in cities. Nevertheless, the shift towards the ideology of Neoliberalism has reinforced the polarisation of populations in European societies. This ideological shift subsequently participates in transforming the urban social landscape: the most centrally-located neighbourhoods are enhanced to become attractive and ‘liveable’ for higher and middle-class populations, while the city suburbs become predominantly inhabited by lower-income populations as large-housing estates constitute more affordable housing. The latter has become an increasingly diversified population but who shares in common the accumulation of socio-economic deprivation.

Disadvantaged urban areas and their inhabitants have gradually become the object of several negative discourses in the media as well as among politicians: they are increasingly associated with criminality and social disorder, a depiction which has spread among most of European societies, as this comparative study suggests. These narratives have resulted in the territorial stigmatisation of disadvantaged neighbourhoods, a categorisation further institutionalised by the setting up and

implementation of urban renewal programmes specifically targeting these districts.

Using the identity strategies theory and by applying the method of Discourse Analysis to official sources, media outputs and academic research produced on Malmö and Lyon, it has been demonstrated how urban agents adopt different identity strategies in their discourse to define themselves and interact with each other with regard to disadvantaged neighbourhoods. Therefore, in addition to their economic resources, identity also influences urban agents' residential choice and constantly shapes their interactions in different contexts. In the current European urban context, residents of disadvantaged neighbourhoods tend to be stigmatised as the cause for social disorder. In turn, inhabitants of these districts adopt either a hostile attitude towards the society or a more committed position towards dialogue, openness and understanding of the other.

Drawing from the analysis, I demonstrated how media tend to broadcast stigmatising discourses on inhabitants of disadvantaged neighbourhoods by constantly associating these areas with negative images of violence, misery and hostility. The media contribute in this way to the stigmatisation and segregation of these districts by the society. However, this tendency is also reinforced by some inhabitants of disadvantaged districts themselves by the identity strategies they adopt and through the narratives they identify and display to the society.

The analysis of official documents revealed that rather than an essentialist discourse, city authorities both in Malmö and in Lyon adopt an engagement identity strategy when referring to disadvantaged neighbourhoods: they tend to emphasise the segregation more than the 'criminal' stigma of disadvantaged neighbourhoods and promote how their urban renewal programmes can enhance the attractiveness and image of these districts. I see these discourses as a way to justify the implementation of urban renewal projects and thus attract middle-classes to stigmatised neighbourhoods. Yet, despite these similar aims, the city

authorities implement differently their urban renewal programmes: in Malmö, the city authorities aim to enhance the image of disadvantaged neighbourhoods through ‘social investment’, which involves making the societal systems more equitable and ‘creating knowledge alliances’. In Lyon, the city authorities seek to improve the image and attractiveness of disadvantaged neighbourhoods by ‘rebalancing’ social housing offer and implementing heavy restructuration of disadvantaged neighbourhoods, which entails the demolition of ancient large housing estates from the 1960’s-1970’s and the rebuilding of more diversified housing integrated with the city, as well as the creation of public amenities to enhance the residents’ quality of life.

In the same line as the stigmatisation process, it has been demonstrated that segregation is not a one-sided phenomenon: populations may cluster according to their economic resources but also by voluntary choice. Yet, this assumption can be challenged by the fact that households tend to move out from the disadvantaged district as soon as their economic situation enhances. Thus, self-segregation according to identities and cultural values seems to fulfil a coping mechanism for disadvantaged populations in Western European cities facing socio-economic difficulties.

Avoiding the concentration of poverty to urban areas has been one of the main tasks of urban planners for centuries. Nowadays, through ‘social mixing policies’, urban planners seek to rearrange the social composition of disadvantaged districts to disperse poverty. Yet social sustainability is now also further considered when implementing restructuring policies that underline a greater concern for the well-being of individuals at social level in addition to economic level. Despite the wide and multilevel restructuring policies currently undertaken in Western cities to cope with segregation and the clustering of poverty in the suburbs, several scholars highlight that the priority should remain ‘helping people rather than buildings’ (Cheshire 2006:1236): indeed, an enhanced living environment will not remedy by itself to economic inequality. More than

the ‘discursive recognition’ of exclusion experienced by certain categories of populations or the promotion of local associative and cultural organisations in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, the city authorities should also put the emphasis on providing better access to the ‘material redistribution of knowledge and resources’ (Kinnvall and Nesbitt-Larking 2011:84) and pay attention to discourses of marginalisation and stigmatisation currently broadcasted by the media on certain neighbourhoods.

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