What Kind of Home Makes a ‘Good Life’?

A critical exploration of the Swedish kollektivhus to support a degrowth transition

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Abstract:

Under the capitalist growth imperative, mainstream housing is connected to high social and ecological consequences. In light of the need for an alternative approach to housing, my thesis adopts a degrowth perspective to critically explore an alternative housing model: the Swedish kollektivhus ('collective house'; co-housing). In the kollektivhus, residents have their own private apartment which is smaller than conventional dwellings but share common spaces and domestic work. Through a case study of the kollektivhus movement in Stockholm, I investigate how the kollektivhus model aligns with the values and practices of a degrowth imaginary, and how it might support a degrowth transition through the creation of alternative narratives that challenge hegemonic growth-oriented housing narratives. I conducted semi-structured interviews with kollektivhus residents and other actors in the Stockholm housing sector and coded them using thematic analysis. My findings suggest that the kollektivhus model, in some ways, enables practices that align with degrowth values such as care, autonomy, conviviality, and self-limitation. In other ways, however, it does not; constrained by the neoliberal context in which it is embedded, it cannot support for example, the values of de-commodification and, in some instances, self-limitation. My findings also illuminate alternative narratives that reflect housing aspirations that can provide an alternative storyline outside the growth paradigm, by showing that there is another way to live a 'good life' without striving for profit. Through a neo-Gramscian political economy framework, I discuss how these counter-hegemonic narratives might help to erode the legitimacy of hegemonic housing narratives and thus support a degrowth transition.

Keywords: *degrowth, ecological modernization, kollektivhus, co-housing, narratives, Stockholm*

Degrowth takes the false coin of economic growth via capital accumulation and confronts it head on: There is no wealth but life and to protect life on the planet and to ensure the future for all it is necessary to exit the current system of production. This is the essential message for our time.

John Bellamy Foster[1]

[1] Source: D'Alisa, Demaria & Kallis, 2015

Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my dad, who has tirelessly supported me throughout the entirety of my life and educational journey. Thank you for helping me get to Sweden, dad.

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Thank you to all of my interviewees who voluntarily and enthusiastically participated in my research, especially for their support in answering follow-up questions that emerged throughout my research process. I couldn't have done any of this without them and I am immensely grateful for their contributions. To my supervisor Vasna, thank you for your positive encouragement and wisdom throughout my research process. I appreciate you for always believing in me and guiding me throughout the uncertain times and I can't imagine writing this thesis without your support. To my fellow human ecology peers: you are such an incredible bunch of human beings. I've learned so much from you and you've really helped make all of my human ecology dreams come true. To my friends in human ecology – Andrew, Sophie, Patricia, Helene and Kerime – I thank you endlessly for your friendship and for infusing my life with so much love and laughter. And to my best friend Ella, thank you for being such a grounding rock in my life.

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1. Introduction

1.1 The Social and Ecological Concerns of Swedish Housing

The ways we do housing affect not only our everyday lives but also our planet. The Swedish housing context provides a noteworthy point of departure. Consider for instance, that Sweden has the highest proportion of single-person households in the European Union (EU); as of 2017, 51% of the Swedish population lived alone (Eurostat, 2018). The rise of single-person households follows the global trend of declining household sizes in recent decades which carries high ecological consequences (Ellsworth-Krebs, 2020). Notably, smaller households increase per capita energy and resource consumption (Ellsworth-Krebs, 2020; Bradbury, Peterson & Liu, 2014; Liu, Daily, Ehrlich & Luck, 2003; Underwood & Zahran, 2015) and reduce the sharing potential for heating, cooling, cooking and other home devices (Ivanova & Büchs, 2020).

Another concern is that in Sweden's major cities of Stockholm, Göteborg, Malmö and Uppsala, many cannot afford housing (Christophers, 2013). According to The Economist (2011), Sweden's housing market is among the world's most over-valued and unaffordable. Meanwhile, disparities in housing conditions between the rich and the poor are growing in Sweden (Socialstyrelsen, 2010) and the population faces a severe housing shortage, especially for rental accommodation in major cities (Christophers, 2013, p. 902). In Stockholm, people wait for an average of nine years to get an apartment (Savage, 2016).

The unaffordability of housing in Sweden has resulted partly from rising prices of home ownership (*bostadsrätt*[2]), due to a series of neoliberal policies beginning in the 1990s that make it more profitable to own a home than to rent one (Christophers, 2013). These policies have come to frame the 'ideology of homeownership' in Sweden (Christophers, 2013) which can also be conceptualized as the aspirational narrative of homeownership (Nelson, 2018). This narrative

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[2] *Bostadsrätt* denotes a cooperative tenant-ownership tenure form unique to Sweden; in this tenure form, a 'cooperative housing association' (*bostadsrättföreningen*; BRF) owns the home, but tenants own the right to live there (differing from the pure ownership tenure form *äganderätt*, where residents own their home outright). Another important tenure form for this thesis is the rental form *hyresrätt*, where residents rent their apartment from the municipal housing company that owns the building. Finally, cooperative tenancy, *kooperativ hyresrätt*, denotes an intermediate form between bostadsrätt and hyresrätt, where tenants rent their apartment from a 'cooperative tenancy association' (*kooperativ hyresrättsförening*) of which they become a member (Boverket, 2019).

encourages individuals and households to buy a home, sell it on the market for a profit, and then use their profit to buy a bigger, 'better' home (Nelson, 2018). In turn, this narrative contributes to another trend in the Global North, toward increasing house sizes "where many houses are now far larger than necessary for their number of inhabitants" (Nelson, 2018, p. 93).

The trend toward larger homes per capita results in wasted resources and energy and drives biodiversity loss by contributing to land conversion (Lorek & Spangenberg, 2019). Larger floor areas per capita generate increased energy demand to heat and cool the spaces (Ellsworth-Krebs, 2020). Meanwhile, larger homes encourage over-consumption by allowing households to operate more and/or bigger appliances (Lorek & Spangenberg, 2019) and by incorporating "entire rooms for smart digital communication technologies, television screens and sound theatre systems" (Nelson, 2018, p. 6).

Taken altogether, these trends toward housing that is increasingly privatized, unaffordable, and built larger but for fewer people – not just in Sweden but globally – can be understood as consequential of the commodification of housing under the capitalist growth imperative. The home is a product that can be purchased and sold (Forrest, 2015). It is framed as an investment that ties people to the 'growth dogma,' where the notion of a 'housing career' (making profit from one's dwelling) is the smart and responsible thing to do (Habgert, 2018).

In other words, Sweden follows the capitalist logic of housing for growth where neoliberalism has become the dominating housing policy discourse (Holmqvist & Turner, 2014). This logic prioritizes economic interests over social and ecological concerns; it creates insufficient housing for all and has serious environmental impacts, as well as "a political dynamic binding householders to growth capitalism" (Nelson, 2018, p. 5). Meanwhile, aspirational narratives for what constitutes the ideal home – such as homeownership and having a larger home – play a central role in reproducing the capitalist paradigm of housing for growth (Nelson, 2018) and in turn, the development of unaffordable and ecologically destructive housing. There is thus an urgency for alternative forms of housing that resist the capitalist growth mantra in order to counteract these trends and enable residents to share both space and resources.

1.2 The Present Study

In this thesis, I take the stance of the need to explore alternative housing models that overcome the capitalist growth imperative. In doing so, I employ a degrowth approach to housing (Nelson & Schneider, 2018). Broadly, degrowth is a project from and for the Global North that aims to exit the capitalist economy and systematically transition toward a new society that provides a 'good life for all' (Fauré, Svenfelt, Finnveden & Hornborg, 2016; Paulson, 2018; Savini, 2021). Degrowth can be conceptualized as a research area, a social movement, and a process (Khmara & Kronenberg, 2020) that criticizes the hegemony of growth while also calling for a democratic downscaling of production and consumption in industrialized societies (Demaria, Schneider, Sekulova & Martinez-Alier, 2013).

For some proponents, degrowth is a project of building counter-hegemonic narratives and practices that emancipate society from the constraints of the ideology of capitalist growth (D'Alisa, Demaria & Cattaneo, 2013; Parrique, 2019). In doing so, it envisions an imaginary of an alternative world (Kallis, 2018). In turn, degrowth housing models must entail a rejection of the dominant growth-oriented housing narratives and enable residents to engage in practices that align with a degrowth imaginary. Notably, 'degrowing home' "must embrace both the built environment and the mind" (Hagbert, 2018, p. 60).

In the present study, I explore the potential of an alternative urban housing model known in Sweden as the *kollektivhus* ('collective house'; co-housing[3]) to align with a degrowth imaginary and support a degrowth transition. Co-housing is a collaborative housing model where residents reduce their personal living space but share communal spaces and other resources as well as domestic work. It is often praised as an alternative housing form that can challenge the social and ecological impacts of modern ways of living (Thörn, Larsen, Hagbert & Wasshede, 2020), and that, on the surface, has the potential to support the degrowth movement (see Lietaert, 2010; Jarvis, 2019). Although kollektivhus projects are marginal in Sweden compared to

[3] Throughout this thesis I use the terms kollektivhus and co-housing interchangeably. With the term kollektivhus I refer specifically to the Swedish co-housing model.

mainstream housing (Chiodelli & Baglione, 2014), they are still relatively established compared to other alternative housing forms such as eco-villages.

My study focuses on the kollektivhus in Stockholm, the capital of and most populous city in Sweden and the location of 19 kollektivhus projects, which is more than in any other Swedish municipality (see Kollektivhus NUa, n.d.). Not only is there a relative abundance of kollektivhus, there are also various kollektivhus associations in Stockholm that aim to promote the creation of kollektivhus in the municipality, constituting what I call the 'kollektivhus movement.' Stockholm also provides a pressing opportunity for experimentation of alternative housing forms because of the nature of its housing sector. Owner-occupied dwellings (*bostadsrätt*) are the most common dwelling type in Stockholm and have the largest living space per person when compared to rental dwellings (*hyresrätt*) and 'special housing,' i.e., for students or the elderly (SCB, 2021). Moreover, given that urban development drives economic growth, cities like Stockholm are prime sites for experimentation among degrowth activists (Longhurst et al., 2016; Savini, 2021). Some have argued that they are the locations of most "positive fragments of degrowth urbanism" (Alexander & Gleeson, 2018, p. 180) – sites of transformative practices which, since the 1990s, have offered viable alternatives to economic growth (Savini, 2021).

1.3 Aim and Research Questions

The aim of my thesis is to critically explore the potential of the kollektivhus model and its corresponding movement in Stockholm, Sweden, to support a housing for degrowth transition. In turn, I ask the following questions:

1. How does the kollektivhus model in Stockholm align with the values and practices of a degrowth imaginary?

2. How might the kollektivhus movement in Stockholm support the transition toward a housing for degrowth society?

    a. How do residents of kollektivhus communities create housing for degrowth narratives?

1.4 Thesis Overview

Broadly, my thesis employs degrowth and political economy frameworks to criticize the shortcomings of the current housing sector in Sweden and envision a new path forward, which I explore through the kollektivhus movement. In the following chapter I outline the political and economic history of the Swedish housing market to provide the context in which the kollektivhus is embedded. This also helps explain the previously mentioned shortage and unaffordability of housing in Sweden. Against this backdrop, I provide a brief history and illustration of the kollektivhus. In Chapter 3, I present my theoretical framework which elaborates on the hegemonic 'housing for growth' approach in Sweden and the values and practices that might constitute a degrowth imaginary. I also present the neo-Gramscian political economy framework I use to consider how a housing for degrowth transition might come about. Next, in Chapter 4 I present my research methods, which consist of a case study of the kollektivhus movement through semi-structured interviews with various actors in the kollektivhus movement and housing sector. In Chapters 5 and 6 I present and discuss my findings through the lens of degrowth and political economy to answer my research questions. I conclude my thesis in Chapter 7 by summarizing my findings and offering suggestions for future research.

2. Background and Context

2.2 Swedish Housing Market

Since the 1990s the Swedish housing market has become increasingly neoliberalized. This contrasts Sweden's image as the 'poster-child' of the Scandinavian welfare model (Esping-Andersen, 1990) where housing remains a 'fundamental element' of this portrayal (Christophers, 2013). Yet, the Swedish welfare state, and especially its housing policies, have been increasingly dismantled in recent decades (Lindbom, 2001). What we are left with is a very complex and technical housing policy that political economist Brett Christophers (2013) terms a 'monstrous hybrid.' In what follows I discuss the history of the Swedish housing market since the welfare era until the present day of neoliberalized 'hybridity.'

2.2.1 The Welfare Era: The Folkhem Model (1930- 1974)

Following World War I, Swedish housing conditions, especially for the working class, were among the worst in Europe (Grundstrom & Molina, 2016). In response, the new Social Democratic government in the early 1930s developed the welfare state housing model known as the *Folkhem* ('people's home'). The Folkhem model aimed to provide 'good housing for everyone' (Caldenby, 2020). It was highly regulated through complex subsidies that protected the housing market from private capitalist speculation in housing (Grundstrom & Molina, 2016; Ramberg, 2000). The state gave the primary responsibility of housing to the municipalities and offered a guarantee of favourable loans to the newly set up municipal housing companies (Caldenby, 2020). Municipal housing companies in Sweden are up until today entirely municipally owned and controlled (Hedman, 2008). To ensure that these companies did not exploit these funds for other expenditures, the state created housing legislation "which stipulated that these companies must be non-profit" (Caldenby, 2020, p. 45). Further, it administered a system of subsidies that favoured renters (*hyresrätt*) and tenant-owners (*bostadsrätt*) over 'pure owner occupancy' (*äganderätt*; Christophers, 2013).

Between the two world wars, the tenant-owned apartment sector (*bostadsrätt*) became formally institutionalized. A key piece of legislation was the Tenant-Ownership Control Act of 1942, which essentially meant the sector was "located strictly off the market" (Christophers, 2013); it was a "non-commodified form of housing" (Ruonavaara, 2005, p. 221). The state also introduced utility-based rents in the 1950s, meaning that rents are set according to their use-value, not exchange (market-based) value (Christophers, 2013). Yet, in the late 1960s, the Tenant-Ownership Control Act was abolished. Shareholders of bostadsrätt could now sell their occupancy rights for the highest price they could receive on the market. This sector became "the first component of the Swedish housing system to be deregulated and marketised and, thus, neoliberalized" (Christophers, 2013, p. 889).

The Folkhem model arguably culminated following World War II due to the large and growing need for new housing in Sweden (Hall & Vidén, 2005). In response, the Swedish welfare state built a million apartments between 1965 and 1974 through the 'Million Programme' (*Miljonprogrammet*; Hall & Vidén, 2005, p. 45). By the 1970s, the programme had addressed the

post-war housing shortage and ensured decent housing standards for the entire population (Grundstrom & Molina, 2016). Still, it was criticized for its "monotonous design and technical defects" (Hedman, 2008, p. 16) and "ended in a critique of the social consequences" (Hall & Vidén, 2005, p. 46) of economic development. Those who could afford to move out later did, leaving behind those in poorer socio-economic situations (Hedman, 2008).

Finally, another important component of the welfare state was its emphasis on tenure neutrality, expressed in a 1974 bill (see *Riktlinjer för bostadspolitiken*). This bill, and its associated policy regime, ensured that "households in different tenures should ideally have equal standards, costs and influence," in order to "accord equal social status to each tenure form" (Christophers, 2013, p. 894; Lundqvist, 1987).

Swedish co-housing researcher Håkan Thörn (personal communication, March 15, 2021) describes how these welfare state policies have been instrumental to the rise of individualism in Sweden, and thus partly to the rise of single-person households. When the public sector aimed to provide 'good housing for all' and to care for all people (e.g., by managing childcare and elderly care; Bergh, 2014), Thörn argues that Swedes no longer needed to depend on their families for their housing or provision, in contrast to more collectivistic countries such as Italy.

2.2.2 Neoliberalization (1990s- today)

In the early 1990s, Sweden was experiencing a serious financial crisis along with changing political conditions (Egerö, 2012) that spurred several radical deregulations of the Folkhem model. A right-of-centre coalition formed in the 1991 election, and the centre-right New Democracy party immediately initiated liberalizations and deregulations (Bergh, 2014; Hedman, 2008). Grundstrom and Molina (2016) argue that 1991 is a 'watershed' year in Swedish housing policy, when Sweden began to adapt to the neoliberal ideology spreading throughout the EU. Starting in 1991, state subsidies and housing loans were gradually abolished in an effort to introduce a more market-oriented approach and to transfer financial risks to the municipal housing companies and homeowners (Hedman, 2008). Further, a series of policies from the 1990s until 2008 essentially ripped away tenure neutrality of the previous era: in the early 1990s, the state increased indirect taxes on hyresrätt and bostadsrätt (Turner, 1997); and in 2008, it

completely overhauled the property tax system so that homeowners (of which 90% are bostadsrätt) benefited disproportionally more than all other tenure forms, including renting (hyresrätt; Christophers, 2013). This has made renting relatively more expensive.

In addition to the dissolution of tenure neutrality, another important aspect of marketisation of the public rental sector has been the expectation that municipal housing companies should make a profit. Most significantly, the 'Public Municipal Housing Companies Act' (*Offentliga kommunala bostadsbolag lagen*) of 2011 stated that municipal housing companies must conduct their business in accordance with 'businesslike principles' and were assigned a required rate of return (Christophers, 2013).

Christophers (2013) argues that the current Swedish housing system is a hybrid 'monstrosity,' whereby "the neoliberalising wave has washed away most, but not (yet) all, of the regulatory frameworks put in place in the post-war era." The remaining regulatory components, for instance, include the use-value rent-setting system for old-construction of rented apartments, as well as the housing queue system. This hybridity creates shortages in rental accommodation in major cities and leads to "increasingly-unaffordable prices for housing for purchase" (Christophers, 2013, p. 902). Those who are not already part of the owner-occupier market face major economic barriers to enter it unless they hold a relatively privileged socio-economic position. We now see a widening gap between those inside the owner-occupier market and those outside of it, which reproduces economic inequality in Sweden (Christophers, 2013).

2.3 The Case: Swedish Kollektivhus

I now shift from the broader context of the Swedish housing market to providing background to the history and current model of the kollektivhus in Sweden. To begin, co-housing originated in Denmark but was soon followed in Sweden, whose kollektivhus date to the early 20th century (Hagbert, Larsen, Thörn & Wasshede, 2020; Caldenby, 2020). The first kollektivhus in Sweden were built in the 1930s in an effort to support middle-class women for their right to work, to solve the "perceived conflict between women's work and their role at home" (Caldenby, 2020, p. 41). The central kitchen in the kollektivhus relieved women of household work while the day nurseries cared for their children – enabling women to focus on both their families and their

professional development. A stark difference between these early kollektivhus and today's is that they were staffed by other (working-class) women to do the housework and caregiving (Caldenby, 2020).

The next generation of kollektivhus emerged in the early 1980s in the post-war welfare era, "the golden period of cohousing in Sweden" (Egerö, 2012, p. 8) when about 50 collective housing units emerged. This kollektivhus movement aimed to create a sense of community in a society that was perceived to create isolation, following critiques of "the social costs of economic development" in accordance with the Million Programme (Caldenby, 2020, p. 46). It was also rooted in the 1970s alternative movement and thus contained aspects of gender equality and ecological awareness (Caldenby, 2020). These kollektivhus changed "from cooking by employed staff to cooking in collaboration, or from the division of labour to shared labour" (Caldenby, 2020, p. 45).

When most members of the kollektivhus movement found themselves new homes in the kollektivhus projects at the beginning of the 1980s, the movement nearly died out in the 1990s. Since this period of stagnation, however, a new wave of kollektivhus has emerged. The majority of these new kollektivhus are intended to house those in the 'second half of life,' meaning people over the age of 40 who do not have children at home. This model was developed by a group of seniors in 1987 who were concerned about their living conditions as they got older (Vestbro, 2014).

Today, there are 42 kollektivhus in Sweden who are members of Kollektivhus NU, the national kollektivhus association in Sweden that aims to support existing kollektivhus as well as groups that work to create new kollektivhus projects (Kollektivhus NUa, n.d.). Figure 1 shows the locations of member communities of Kollektivhus NU across Sweden, displaying the type of tenure form. As seen on the map, the Stockholm municipality has the highest concentration of kollektivhus in Sweden. Of the 19 kollektivhus in Stockholm, the majority (13) are hyresrätt (rental apartments). One of these, Kombo Kollektivhuset, is still in the final stages of development and the tenancy is expected to start in summer 2021.

The Swedish kollektivhus today is a form of collaborative housing that “promotes ways of sharing spaces and resources, beyond private ownership” (Hagbert & Bradley, 2017, p. 242). The majority of kollektivhus consist of multi-household apartment blocks where the apartments are usually 10% smaller compared to conventional apartments (Vestbro, 2012). Residents have their own flat, fully equipped with a bathroom and kitchen, but share extensive common spaces and facilities such as a larger common kitchen and dining area, and a multiplicity of other rooms for various purposes (Jarvis, 2019; Vestbro, 2014). Swedish co-housing is almost always connected with practices of shared meals and collaborative work (Hagbert et al., 2020), where residents cook together a few days a week and share the cleaning of common spaces (Vestbro, 2012). Some are occupied by individuals and families of all ages, whereas others are occupied by people in the "second half of life" (Kollektivhus NUb, n.d.). In Sweden, kollektivhus projects are initiated by groups of citizens who receive support from municipal housing companies who act as the developer. This contrasts with other countries such as Germany, Denmark, and the USA, where independent groups act as the developer of co-houses themselves (Vestbro, 2014).

Figure 1. Current kollektivhus projects in Sweden (Kollektivhus NU, n.d.)

3. Theoretical Framework

In this chapter I present the degrowth and political economy frameworks I use to investigate how the kollektivhus supports the degrowth movement. I begin by taking a political economy perspective to criticize the logic of the capitalist housing for growth paradigm and its associated strategy of ecological modernization adopted in Sweden. The shortcomings of this approach bring me to the degrowth framework I employ in my study to analyze how the kollektivhus model aligns with a degrowth imaginary. This entails illustrating what values and practices could, or should, be present in a degrowth imaginary that would overcome the capitalist growth imperative. Further, to consider whether, and how, the kollektivhus movement might support a housing for degrowth transition, I present my neo-Gramscian political economy framework that enables me to consider the interplay between political and civil society, and the role of counter-hegemonic narratives.

3.1 Housing for Growth: Ecological Modernization

As discussed, Swedish housing has increasingly subscribed to the neoliberal logic of economic growth. This logic informs Sweden's ecological modernization approach to housing, a strategy which aims to decouple economic growth from resource use and environmental impact (Brand & Wissen, 2018). Ecological modernization emphasizes gains in technology and efficiency and prioritizes market-based mechanisms and technological innovations (Krüger, 2020; Methmann, Rothe & Stephan, 2013; Mol, Sonnenfeld & Spaargaren, 2009). Essentially, ecological modernization assumes that if we can consume more efficiently, there is no need to change our consumption behaviours.

Lidskog and Elander (2012) argue that "Sweden has officially adopted the concept of ecological modernization in the sense that economic growth and environmental policy will not contradict each other" (p. 421). This approach is evident, for instance, in the environmental strategies of municipally owned housing companies, who receive their political directives from Stockholm City Hall. The housing company Familjebostäder states on their website how they work to reduce their environment impact. Their focus lies in building energy efficient homes and building with materials that are "environmentally assessed and environmentally approved"

(Familjebostäder, 2016; author's translation). Yet, there is no mention of creating housing models that can change the behaviours of residents, e.g., through sharing spaces and resources.

Critics of ecological modernization argue that efficiency technologies are not sufficient to counteract the ecological impacts of rising levels of production and consumption (Krüger, 2020). Decoupling continued economic growth from further environmental pressure is simply unattainable (e.g., Jackson, 2009; Ward et al., 2016) and innovations in technology can actually accelerate resource consumption (Foster, York & Clark, 2011). One reason is that the benefits from efficiency strategies are either partially neutralized, or even more than offset, by rebound effects (Santarius, 2015; Krüger, 2020; see Jevons' paradox, Alcott, 2015).[4]

From a political economy perspective, ecological modernization is deployed as a strategic political move that 'masquerades' worldwide as an "ideology-free zone" – it naturalizes rather than questions the process of modernization via technological change (Eckersley, 2004, p. 74). In accordance with Antonio Gramsci and Michel Foucault, ecological modernization has become cemented as the hegemonic approach to 'sustainable development,' whereby society no longer questions this approach, and comes to govern itself in accordance with it (Eckersley, 2004; Robbins, 2020).

Further, the grand hegemonic narrative of growth (Parrique, 2019) is reflected in omnipresent housing for growth narratives which work to stabilize growth-oriented housing policies (Schneider, 2018). Narratives can be understood as giving "a pattern and causal logic to events" (Schneider, 2018, p. 14), and provide storylines that fit within worldviews and values. These narratives include "individual success stories based on larger living areas per person"; the "so-called 'green' or 'ecological' housing" that incorporates "advanced technical development" (Schneider, 2018, p. 14); and of course, the aspirational narrative of home ownership (Nelson, 2018). Nelson (2018) argues that this narrative has powered the construction and real estate sectors, which envisage more, and larger houses being built and sold as quickly as possible in

[4] Additionally, I cannot disregard a world-systems perspective on the shortcomings of ecological modernization, whereby the adoption of "green" technologies in core countries of the Global North often require the extraction of raw materials from periphery and semi-periphery countries, causing not just severe environmental degradation, but also displacement of communities from their land as well as serious human rights violations (Bonds & Downey, 2015).

order to remain competitive. The home becomes a status symbol where ‘bigger,’ or more expensive, is ‘better’ (Nelson, 2018). Adopting a Gramscian (1975) perspective, these narratives become ‘common sense’ (i.e., ideas that are taken for granted; D’Alisa & Kallis, 2020), so that we fail to question them.

As discussed, the renouncement of tenure neutrality in Sweden has fostered the rising ideology of home ownership[5] (Christophers, 2013). It has shifted the hegemonic housing ideal in Sweden toward privatized and speculative housing – namely, ‘the right to buy, the right to own’ (H. Thörn, personal communication, March 15, 2021). According to Thörn, Sweden has moved more towards a situation where “[t]he strengthening of home ownership as a way of living [in recent decades] has made the way you live into a question about status” (personal communication, March 15, 2021).

Thus, we can see how top-down policies can influence housing narratives, which are then reproduced within society as people come to govern themselves accordingly and unquestioningly. We can see the how aspirational narrative of homeownership has become common sense in Sweden; prospective and current homeowners take this narrative for granted, and the Swedish state reinforces it through policies that support home ownership over other tenure forms. In a dialectical process, civil and political society reinforce this narrative (D’Alisa & Kallis, 2020).

3.2 Housing for Degrowth

The insufficiency of housing for growth and its strategy of ecological modernization to offer affordable housing that respects planetary boundaries demands an alternative approach. I now turn to the degrowth framework I apply in my study, which can offer a concrete alternative to ecological modernization (Savini, 2021).

Briefly, the degrowth movement originated in France, where the term *décroissance* (degrowth) first appeared in 1972 (D'Alisa, Demaria, Cattaneo, 2013, p. 214; Gorz, 1972). In 2008, the English term degrowth emerged at the first International Degrowth conference in Paris,

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[5] The tendency toward home ownership is of course not unique to Sweden but parallels trends in Anglo-Saxon and East Asian homeowner societies (Christophers, 2013). In the EU as of 2018, over two-thirds of residents lived in owner-occupied dwellings (Eurostat 2020).

marking the establishment of degrowth as an international research area while also attracting public interest in political debates and mainstream media (D'Alisa et al., 2013; Paulson, 2008).

The degrowth perspective I take is specific to the Global North and may be essentially meaningless for some countries in the Global South. Notably, degrowth is not the only way to a different future society but is just one proposal in the pluriverse of 'transition discourses' (Paulson, 2018). Different groups, depending on their colonial experiences, have different perspectives of "the cultural and historical drivers of growth" (Paulson, 2018, p. 103) and thus conceive different paths and forms of degrowth. This is evident in the diversity of 'Third World' movements, for which "many are struggles *for* development" (Kapoor, 2004, p. 638). I agree with Paulson (2018) that the degrowth movement should not aim to seek a homogenizing, universalizing perspective on degrowth, because there will be no one path that degrowth should take.

Moreover, the degrowth movement offers a diverse framework of ideas, concepts, and proposals to transition toward a degrowth society (Kallis et al., 2015, p. 4). Within this framework exists a degrowth approach to housing, which offers a suite of strategies "to create an environmentally and socially sustainable future for us all" (Schneider, 2018, p. 11). Housing for degrowth (Nelson & Schneider, 2018) has a number of aims that include redistributing access to housing, sharing dwellings more, and "and developing low-level, low-impact, small-scale, decentralised, compact settlements" (Schneider, 2018, p. 14).

Notably, degrowth imagines what values and practices should be present in a future degrowth society – or a degrowth imaginary – while also exploring a diversity of goals, strategies, and actions for how this transition might come about (D'Alisa, Demaria & Cattaneo, 2013, p. 215). In this study, I employ these values and practices to explore how the kollektivhus aligns with a degrowth imaginary, to support housing for degrowth. In what follows, I present the values and practices that constitute a degrowth imaginary, and then turn to my political economy framework which describes how civil and political society can interact for a degrowth transition to come about.

3.3 Values of a Degrowth Imaginary

The values of a degrowth imaginary I have chosen to highlight are (1) care, (2) autonomy, (3) conviviality, (4) self-limitation, (5) voluntary simplicity, (6) direct democracy and (7) de-commodification. These values are not exhaustive for degrowth but offer a helpful overview of key values integral to a hypothetical degrowth imaginary. I use the word hypothetical because presently, there is no such thing as a degrowth society. Although there are small degrowth-inspired experiments, "there is no spatialized 'degrowth world' in its full plenitude" (Kallis & March, 2015, p. 361).

3.3.1 Care

Care is central to a degrowth imaginary and can be defined as "the daily action performed by human beings for their welfare and for the welfare of their community" (D'Alisa, Deriu & Demaria, 2015, p. 63). Under capitalism, "care is outsourced outside the family sphere to the state or the market (e.g. child or elderly care) debasing its essence, which is reciprocity" (D'Alisa et al., 2015, p. 64). Meanwhile the continuous expansion of markets comes to occupy "spaces of care, social life and reciprocity" (D'Alisa et al., 2015, p. 64). This restricts individuals' time to dedicate to their relationships with their self, their friends and family, and their wider societal community, thus inevitably disintegrating relationships. Consequently, this has negative implications for people's well-being. As Aristotle teaches, relationships are fundamental to a good life and "can only be enjoyed in reciprocity" (D'Alisa et al., 2015, p. 64). Degrowth thus aims to re-center society around care. This necessitates creating equity among genders "by sharing care work within the sphere of community as well as within society as a whole" (D'Alisa et al., 2015, p. 65) and connects degrowth to the feminist movement (Hanaček, Roy, Avila & Kallis, 2020).

3.3.2 Autonomy

Autonomy can be defined as our ability to consciously and independently give laws and rules to ourselves (Castoriadis, 1987). Philosopher Cornélius Castoriadis (1987) argues that modern society threatens autonomy by limiting "our personal ability to make decisions" (Deriu, 2015, p. 56). Essentially, the logic of capitalist growth, which "is based on the need to create and

continuously meet new needs and aspirations," removes our ability to determine our own needs and desires (Deriu, 2015, p. 57). Capitalism tells us what we want, so we don't have to decide for ourselves. In a degrowth society, we have the autonomy to decide for ourselves what our needs and aspirations are outside of the capitalist treadmill of consumerism.

Sweden's approach to housing threatens individuals' autonomy to choose for oneself how one wants to live. Consider, for instance, the mass-produced housing of the Million Programme. Although it aimed to provide 'good housing for all,' Swedish co-housing researcher Pernilla Hagbert argues that because it produced for everyone, it really produced for no one (personal communication, March 19, 2021). Today, the housing market's speculative approach "paradoxically (contrary to more ideological notions of a market-driven logic as ensuring individual options) is quite streamlined and does not encompass aspects of autonomy or a richer variation in housing concepts being offered" (P. Hagbert, personal communication, May 12, 2021). On these grounds, the non-speculative, citizen-led kollektivhus initiatives might help restore autonomy to allow individuals to pursue housing models that align with their own needs and aspirations of how they want to live.

3.3.3 Conviviality

Conviviality is closely interrelated to both care and autonomy and emphasizes the importance of social relationships, working together and having tools that everyone can use. It can be defined "as a system of social relationships based on community support, social unpaid work, reciprocity, voluntary work, favour and community exchange, household and informal care work" (Andreoni & Galmarini, 2014, p. 79). Additionally, a convivial society uses 'convivial tools' (e.g., a bicycle or sowing machine; Illich, 1973) which can be used and shared by everyone without reliance on specialists who understand and control those tools, thus supporting their autonomy (Deriu, 2015). In housing for degrowth, "the home is framed as a convivial space" (Habgert, 2018, p. 62) where residents have control over their home environments based on lay (or situated) knowledge, and do not require expert top-down planning.

3.3.4 Self-Limitation

For renowned degrowth intellectual Serge Latouche, a future degrowth society is one of 'frugal abundance' (i.e. well-being as opposed to well-having), which is founded upon self-limitation of needs (Asara, Profumi, & Kallis, 2013, p. 221; Latouche, 2014/2011). This requires overcoming notions of scarcity, which, following David Harvey (1974), is socially produced. Kallis and March (2015) consider how the capitalist pursuit of unlimited wants produces permanent notions of relative scarcity, through the promise of unlimited choice and through positional inequalities that are baked into the capitalist system (Skidelsky & Skidelsky, 2012). Thus, dissolving notions of scarcity and collectively self-limiting our wants can liberate us "from the paralysis of unlimited choice" (Kallis et al., 2015, p. 8; Kallis & March, 2015).

For Kallis and March (2015), the practice of sharing the commons provides the basis for collective self-limitation and is the only way to dissolve scarcity. Co-housing is one proposal for sharing the commons, along with work sharing, car and bike sharing, reclaiming and sharing public spaces, and "regaining the collective control of water or energy" (Kallis & March, 2015, p. 363; Latouche, 2009). Relatedly, the practice of commoning reflects a system of governance or a social practice whereby a community actively pools common resources to be shared. "A resource becomes a commons when it is taken care of by a community" (Helfrich & Bollier, 2015, p. 78) who has a clear vision, or set of rules for what is to be shared and how. Because commoning doesn't rely on economic growth to thrive, it can replace the "cultural imperative 'to have more' with alternative social spheres that demonstrate that 'doing together' can trump 'having'" (Helfrich & Bollier, 2015, p. 78).

The relevance of sharing resources in co-housing has already been recognized in some degrowth research. For instance, Lietaert (2010) considers how co-housing residents create sharing systems that enable them to reduce their consumption of items "such as tools for gardening, maintenance, cleaning tools, cooking, small furniture, camping, etc." (p. 578). The common spaces of co-housing communities are also structured in a way that supports the sharing of goods and services, for example by having common laundry rooms and rooms for children to play (Lietaert, 2010).

3.3.5 Voluntary Simplicity

Simplicity, or voluntary simplicity, describes the choice to downscale one's way of life in order to minimize the use of resources and lower one's consumption (Alexander, 2015). It also involves reimagining 'the good life,' by "pursuing non-materialistic sources of satisfaction and meaning" (Alexander, 2015, p. 133). In other words, those who adopt a lifestyle of voluntary simplicity aim to find meaning in their lives through their relationships and other non-materialistic, non-consumption-based ways. Voluntary simplicity supports a related degrowth value – *sufficiency* – which describes the degrowth focus on "capping" economic growth for social justice and ecological concerns (Pesch, 2018).

3.3.6 Direct Democracy

Within degrowth debates, direct democracy constitutes an emphasis on political decentralization – which can enable decision-making processes to be more democratic (Xue, 2018). In housing, direct democracy enables a 'more direct form of democracy' than representative democracy. It "implies greater citizenry participation, communication and deliberation so empowered residents have more influence and control in their neighbourhoods" (Xue, 2018, p. 189). Notably, the potential and convenience of direct democracy may be higher in smaller, local-scale than in larger-scale communities (Xue, 2018). Different techniques can be employed in direct democracy, which are 'inclusive, simple and straightforward' (Nelson, 2018, p. 250). Sometimes decisions are taken by consensus, and sometimes by voting – "An array of solutions is sought, the successful one leaving the most people relatively content." (Nelson, 2018, p. 250). For Castoriadis, direct democracy is strongly interrelated to autonomy; only when we have the ability to question laws can we have a true democracy (Asara et al., 2013).

3.3.7 De-Commodification

Finally, degrowth calls for the de-commodification of basic needs such as housing. Degrowthers criticize the expansion of markets into some things that should not be for sale nor governed through market logics like land and property rights; for Karl Polanyi (1957), these are 'fictitious commodities' along with labour and money. Unlike traditional commodities, they are not human-made nor intended for sale (Gómez-Baggethun, 2015).

A degrowth approach to housing will require de-commodifying our basic right to have somewhere to live through a reimagined, de-commodified conceptualization of home (Hagbert, 2018). This involves overcoming the capitalist framing of home as an investment that ties people to 'growth dogma,' where the notion of a 'housing career' is smart and responsible (Hagbert, 2018). Further, this involves overcoming the right to private property (which dominates over the human right to have somewhere to live), which reduces residents to either owners or tenants (Hagbert, 2018).

3.4 Degrowth Transition: From a Neo-Gramscian Perspective

Next, my second research question is how the kollektivhus movement might support the transition toward a housing for degrowth society. In order to answer this question, I must consider how this transition might come about. This involves considering the interplay between civil and political society. Accordingly, Asara, Otero, Demaria and Corbera (2015) argue that alternative grassroots practices like co-housing are insufficient for a degrowth transition unless they are also accompanied by fundamental changes in wider political and economic structures.

Although there is no consensus in the degrowth literature about what a politics of a degrowth transition might look like (Kallis et al., 2015), it is useful to consider the potential role of the state in a degrowth transition. To accomplish this, I employ a neo-Gramscian view of the 'integral state' supported by Robyn Eckersley's (2004) theorizing on how the 'green democratic state' might emerge.[6] Together, these ways of seeing the state and its role in contributing to social and ecological transformation enable me to consider how the kollektivhus, through housing for degrowth narratives, might support the transition toward a housing for degrowth society.

3.4.1 The Integral State

To begin, Gramsci (1975) sees civil and political society as intertwined; they reinforce each other through a dialectical process and mutually constitute the integral state. Within the

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[6] Taking these views of the state means rejecting the approach to transformation taken by some political ecologists and degrowth theorists that think we should ignore, or by-pass the state (e.g., see Trainer, 2012, 2019). Eckersley argues that instead of ignoring the state, we need to engage with it and seek to transform it – because any 'green' (or, we could say degrowth) transformations, at least for the foreseeable future, will be state-dependent.

integral state, there is a constant interaction between 'the battle for ideas' with 'the battle for institutions of enforcement.' As alluded to, hegemonic common senses and their related values in civil society interact with and mutually reinforce the production and implementation of laws in political society (D'Alisa & Kallis, 2020). In a dialectical process, civil and political society reinforce hegemonic housing narratives. This emphasises the need to create counter hegemonic narratives in the realms of both civil and political society in order to create change in the integral state, toward a degrowth transition.

Additionally, Eckersley's (2004) view of the state can enrich our understanding of transformation within Gramsci's integral state. Eckersley's elaboration on the importance of 'shared understandings' within a social structure is of special relevance to my study. For Eckersley, 'shared understandings' play an integral role in determining and shifting the material power of the state. Shared understandings refer to normative ideas about the "meaning and purpose of social life" (Eckersley, 2004, p. 27) or "how things are done" (Wendt, 1999, p. 268). I view shared understandings as conceptually similar to Gramsci's notion of common senses, yet they differ in that shared understandings reflect even broader normative ideas about the role of the state. Both have the potential to create change in the integral state and lead to real material change.

Importantly, Eckersley says that shifts in shared understandings can enable changes in material practices by undermining or transforming the 'social basis of legitimacy' of social structures such as states. From a neo-Gramscian perspective, Eckersley argues that the legitimacy of shared understandings within a state is influenced by international hegemonic power. The state might act in ways that are accepted by others as universal in the international order, to appease international forces. In other words, the state sometimes conforms to social expectations of how it should act in order to maintain a long-term "stable and legitimate international order" (Eckersley, 2004, p. 38). From here, we can understand how the state not only exerts hegemonic power over its own population, but it is also influenced by the hegemon of the international order, which it comes to accept as its own.

Putting Gramsci and Eckersley together, common senses or shared understandings (let's just call them 'shared understandings') work to either legitimize or de-legitimize current practices

within the integral state. Through social interaction, the emergence of counter-hegemonic shared understandings both within a nation's integral state *and* abroad, can erode the legitimacy of hegemonic shared understandings in the integral state. Thus, de-legitimizing the shared understandings of neoliberal capitalism (and its related strategy of ecological modernization) is one way toward material shifts (especially through policies) to support the transition to a degrowth society.

3.4.2 Degrowth Narratives to Delegitimize Shared Understandings

For Latouche, drawing on Castoriadis, delegitimizing shared understandings of capitalist ideologies would be a project of 'decolonizing the imaginary' from growth (Latouche, 2015). This project could involve degrowth narratives to help open up and 'decolonize' the minds of politicians (and citizens), who fear that there is no alternative to the capitalist system: "So they stick to what they know, growth policies" (Schneider, 2018, p. 16). Importantly, such narratives must reflect a different imaginary, or shared understanding, of what values and attributes constitute a 'good life,' where well-being is not measured according to income or material wealth (Jarvis, 2019; Kallis et al., 2015; Latouche, 2007).

Housing for degrowth narratives weave together key degrowth values while demonstrating that another way of doing housing is possible (Schneider, 2018). They can show that different ways of living that reflect different aspirations – or counter-hegemonic shared understandings – are not only possible but are meaningful for people. They can demonstrate alternative storylines outside the growth paradigm, expressing housing aspirations that are not related to pursuing profit or subscribing to aspirations of home ownership or the notion that 'bigger is better.' There is another way to live a good life without striving for profit. If we can realize there is an alternative to capitalism, and to ecological modernization, we can start to erode hegemonic shared understandings of housing for growth.

4. Methods and Methodology

4.1 Case Study of Kollektivhus in Stockholm

To explore how Stockholm's kollektivhus movement can support the degrowth movement, I conducted a case study of the kollektivhus in Stockholm. My data collection consisted mainly of semi-structured interviews with residents of Stockholm's kollektivhus as well as with other actors in the kollektivhus movement and the housing sector both in Stockholm and at the national level. Because I conducted my study during the COVID-19 pandemic during March-April 2021, I conducted all interviews virtually, either using Zoom or over the phone.

4.2 Ontological and Epistemological Position

My research project is situated within a critical realist ontology that incorporates moderate social constructionism. I view the world as existing independently of my knowledge and interpretation of it (Benton, 2004). As a critical realist, I take Roy Bhaskar's (1975) ontological view of the social world that articulates three levels of reality: the empirical, the actual, and the real (i.e., causal; Sayer, 2000).[7] Notably, I can perceive the real and actual levels only fallibly, but I can do my best to critically evaluate the legitimacy of different knowledge claims (Benton, 2004) – e.g., about how the kollektivhus model aligns with degrowth values – that emerge from my findings.

Critical realism guides my epistemological position which distinguishes between two dimensions of the world: the 'intransitive' and the 'transitive' (Bhaskar, 1998/1979). The intransitive dimension is the one objective reality, whereas the transitive dimension is my own construction of that reality (Sayer, 2000). My construction of the reality of the kollektivhus movement is guided not just by the degrowth literature I use to make sense of it, but also by my own biases and past experiences. For instance, being born and raised Canada makes me an

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[7] In my study, the empirical level refers to my interpretation, through my observations, of how the kollektivhus movement in Stockholm supports the degrowth movement. The actual level refers to the events and outcomes that I cannot observe through my inquiry, such as all the unobservable practices of kollektivhus residents. And third, the real level, which refers to the "causal mechanisms" – the "underlying relations, structures, and tendencies" (Given, 2008) – that can cause changes in the actual level, could be the narratives and ideologies within civil or political society that either challenge or reproduce housing for growth.

'outsider' to the Swedish context and has thus influenced my research process. Where I come from, housing and status are inextricably linked, yet this relation is arguably less strong in Sweden. Further, being a non-Swedish speaker studying the Swedish context has limited the materials I have access to, as well as potentially limited the depth of information I gathered in my interviews, which I discuss in the following section.

Further, as a moderate social constructionist, I acknowledge human beings as having the agency to think, decide, and act, while also being influenced in their decisions by the greater socio-cultural context of which they are a part (Elder-Vass, 2012). I adopt critical realist scholar Dave Elder-Vass' (2012) realist social constructionism, by which he argues that moderate constructionism is not only "thoroughly compatible" with Bhaskar's (1998/1979) critical realism, but also "enormously valuable" to it (Elder-Vass, 2012a, p. 8). Realist social constructionism enables me to recognize that the way we act is constructed, as least in part, by narratives and ideologies that emerge from our engagement in the social world. If we can change our narratives, we can change the world.

4.3 Semi-Structured Interviews

The majority of my data collection consisted of 16 semi-structured interviews. Eight of these interviews were with residents living in four different kollektivhus in Stockholm: Dunderbacken, Kollektivhuset Färdknäppen, Kollektivhuset Kupan, and Kollektivhuset Tre Portar (see Table 1 below for descriptions of these kollektivhus). Further, four of these interviews were with representatives of kollektivhus associations: the chairperson of Kollektivhus NU, the Swedish national kollektivhus association; the chairperson of Kombo, a kollektivhus association in Stockholm; and two of the co-founders of Boföreningen Framtiden, another kollektivhus association in Stockholm.

I also conducted two interviews with representatives from Familjebostäder, one of Stockholm's municipal housing companies that has five kollektivhus projects (the company with the most kollektivhus in Sweden). One of these representatives is the contact person for all of Familjebostäder's kollektivhus in Stockholm, and the other is the Head of Business Development for the company. Of the remaining two interviews, one was with two representatives from

Sveriges Allmännytta ('Sweden's Public Benefit'), an industry and interest organization for Sweden's 300 municipal housing companies. And finally, I interviewed a politician from Miljöpartiet ('The Green Party') in Stockholm. The interviews averaged around 45 minutes, lasting between 25 minutes and an hour and 25 minutes.

I conducted all the interviews in English and recorded and transcribed each one. I encouraged respondents to use Swedish words if they did not know the correct word in English (and sometimes there isn't one, e.g. for *inneboende* or *gemenskap*). Using English as the primary language for the interviews was definitely a limitation to my study given that English was not a first language for all but one of my interviewees.

For each semi-structured interview, I used an interview guide consisting of a series of predetermined but open-ended questions. Depending on the flow of the interview and the responses of the interviewee, I sometimes asked the questions in a predetermined order while other times I moved back and forth through the questions. In accordance with the process of semi-structured interviews, I also tried to build rapport through active listening skills (Given, 2008). Talmage (2012) describes how research interviews involve "active listening, …or active collaboration between the interviewer and respondent so that the respondents' utterances are appropriately directed and framed for the research interview" (p. 296). During the interviews, I tried my best to resist my impulse to fill silences and instead 'listen' to the silences, allowing the respondent to collect their thoughts, evaluate what has occurred in the interview so far, or find ways to fill the silence vacuum (Talmage, 2012).

Through active listening, the researcher is not just a 'vessel of information' but plays an active role in shaping the research outcomes. This relates to the transitive dimension in accordance with critical realism. The self that I bring to the interview filters everything I hear, everything I listen to, and thus how I engage with the interviewee (Talmage, 2012). The resulting output is a collaboration of interviewer and interviewee (Given, 2008).

At the start of every interview, I informed the interviewee of my research background and process, and of my interest in studying co-housing. For instance, I usually told interviewees about my time living in a Swedish ecovillage, and how it has helped shape my interest in studying

alternative ways of living. I also sometimes discussed details of my own life when relevant to the conversation. This helped to generate mutual interest and further establish rapport, which can help the respondent to develop and articulate their perspective (Talmage, 2012). The interview guides for each of my interviews can be found in Appendix A.

Table 1.
Descriptions of kollektivhus

	Tenure Form	Age Group	Number of Apartments	Year Moved In
Dunderbacken	hyresrätt	For the 'second half of life' (40+)	61	2010
Kollektivhuset Färdknäppen	hyresrätt	For the 'second half of life' (40+)	43	1993
Kollektivhuset Kupan	bostadsrätt	All ages	52	1986
Tre Portar	hyresrätt	All ages	52	1986

4.4 Sampling Approach

I began my data collection using an initial sampling approach that evolved into a more theoretical approach as themes began to emerge from my interviews. Before I started data collection, I interviewed two Swedish co-housing researchers, Håkan Thörn and Pernilla Hagbert, for their insight into my thesis project. I also administered an 'exploratory co-housing survey' to kollektivhus residents in Sweden's three most populous cities of Stockholm, Göteborg, and Malmö. I sent out this survey by contacting kollektivhus communities in these cities through their Facebook and email accounts. My survey gathered information on topics surrounding residents' experiences with co-housing and also asked residents if they would like to be contacted for an interview. See Appendix B for the survey.

The results of the survey guided my research process by helping me determine what interview questions would be relevant to ask kollektivhus residents. For instance, the survey helped me realize the focus that kollektivhus residents place on the social life of their

communities, as well as the potential unaffordability of the kollektivhus. I also used the survey to contact someone living in one of Malmö's kollektivhus, Sofielund, for an initial 'pilot interview.' The initial sampling through the survey and pilot interview provided a point of departure for my study, enabling me to navigate the field of the kollektivhus a little and understand my positionality within it (Charmaz, 2006). I also used the survey to contact my first interviewees: residents living in the kollektivhus communities Dunderbacken and Färdknäppen. From these interviews, I began to refine my theoretical framework.

In the next phase of my research project, I began using a more theoretical sampling approach, which helped direct me 'where to go' (Charmaz, 2006). This is a form of purposive sampling in which I sought participants according to information I would need for my analysis as my study progressed (Morse, 2011). For instance, once I started to understand the importance of sharing and care in kollektivhus communities, and issues with the Stockholm housing market, I wanted to gain a wider understanding of these themes from different actors in both civil and political society. I then interviewed representatives from Familjebostäder, from kollektivhus associations, from Miljöpartiet in Stockholm, and from Sveriges Allmännytta. In the final phase of my data collection, I interviewed more residents in two other kollektivhus communities in Stockholm (Kupan and Tre Portar) to gain a greater diversity of experiences within different kollektivhus. My initial interviewees from Dunderbacken and Färdknäppen were all retired and in the second half of life, and I wanted to find out whether my theoretical framework applied to younger people who were still far from retirement.

4.5 Analytical Approach

I utilized thematic analysis to code the interviews with kollektivhus residents and representatives of kollektivhus associations for themes (values) that align with a degrowth imaginary, and to code all interviews for themes that correspond to my framework for understanding the interplay between kollektivhus (civil society) and Stockholm municipality (political society). I also employed thematic narrative analysis to explore housing narratives and to uncover hegemonic narratives as well as counternarratives (Allen, 2017).

My thematic analysis resembled an iterative approach which was both inductive and deductive. Through iterative cycles of analysis, I worked back and forth through my interview data and themes. As I selected segments of data to code, I made inductive discoveries of patterns to deductively verify my theoretical framework. This yielded further inductive insight, so that I completed another iterative cycle (Raewyn Bassett, 2012). Furthermore, the iterative approach enabled me flexibility to adapt my theoretical framework to the themes that emerged from my data (Raewyn Bassett, 2012). As I moved through iterative cycles of analysis, I continuously updated categories in my theoretical framework, and then repeated the coding process again.

4.6 Ethical Implications

I asked for consent prior to recording each interview and anonymized kollektivhus residents' names to protect their confidentiality, but gained written consent of the residents to use the names of their kollektivhus. I also gained written consent for each interviewee whose name I included in my thesis.

A potential ethical issue could have arisen in my conversations with kollektivhus residents in the sense that I may have unintentionally reinforced the disadvantageous individualisation of responsibility for sustainability goals (Maniates, 2001). Although I aimed to be cautious of this possibility, it is still possible that I induced feelings in residents of 'not doing enough' in terms of their individual and collective sustainability behaviours. A further ethical issue could arise through my criticisms of the housing for growth approach expressed by some of the representatives I spoke with, especially from Familjebostäder and Miljöpartiet.

4.7 Limitations

A major limitation of my study is that English is my native language (and I only have a beginner level of Swedish). This limited some of the resources I could access, such as documents in Swedish, but also influenced my interviews, which were with mainly native Swedish speakers. Likewise, a lot of degrowth research is published in languages that I do not know, so I sometimes had to rely on others' interpretations of this research (especially for Latouche). Moreover, I conducted my study during the COVID-19 pandemic and from Lund, Sweden and not Stockholm. I was thus not able to visit any kollektivhus and conducted all my interviews over

video call or over the phone. Conducting interviews by video call likely had both positive and negative effects on rapport. For instance, the internet connection was sometimes faulty, which disrupted the flow of conversation. Yet, the informality of it may have actually helped to foster a greater sense of ease in my interviewees and build rapport (Weller, 2017). Moreover, the short time span of a few months to carry out my thesis also limited the number of interviews I was able to conduct and thus the perspectives I could gain.

5. Kollektivhus and a Degrowth Imaginary

In this chapter I present my findings from my interviews to answer my first research question, how the kollektivhus movement aligns with the values and practices of a degrowth imaginary. I illustrate the following practices that support or contradict the values of a degrowth imaginary: (1) reciprocal relationships; (2) communal cooking and shared meals; (3) sharing spaces and resources; (4) decision-making processes and abilities; and (5) rent-setting processes.

5.1 Reciprocal Relationships

A main theme present in my interviews with co-housing residents was reciprocal non-market relationships between residents. These relationships provide strong evidence for care and conviviality. Most of these relationships are informal whereby residents who become friends support each other in various ways, such as doing grocery shopping for each other or offering rides when needed. Maja[*], living at Dunderbacken expressed: “You can always have some help if you need. Practical help, emotional help and so on.” Likewise, residents of Färdknäppen and Dunderbacken expressed just checking in on each other if they haven’t seen someone for a while. Linnea[*] sums up this aspect of care, saying “You have an eye out for each other.”

Moreover, the three residents I spoke with who live at Kupan and Tre Portar are all parents of young children and expressed feeling supported by other parents at their kollektivhus. Oskar[*], living at Kupan, informed me of a group chat for parents in the kollektivhus, where residents organize various activities to do together with their children, like going for a walk in the

[*] Name has been changed.

forest. Similarly, the two residents living at Tre Portar expressed how residents help each other out with childcare. As Lukas* explained:

> If we can't get home early, it's just a phone call or just texting someone, and someone will pick up my kids and they can stay there for two hours without a big deal. So that makes it like a kind of freedom feeling… of course, we help each other. It's like, not complicated.

He elaborated on how this freedom he feels to ask neighbours for help with childcare compares to the stress experienced by his friends who don't live in a kollektivhus, when they need to work late and cannot pick up their children, "because they have to call their father or mother or someone living in another city or, or they never can, especially [during the pandemic]."

Aside from informal reciprocal relationships of care, Dunderbacken has a formalized special group, called *Förtroende Rådet* ('the Council of Trust') which provides residents with a more organized way of caring for each other. The group consists of three or four people who can be approached by anyone in need for help or guidance to solve a problem. Another example for a formalized instance of caring relationships in Dunderbacken is that residents with a medical emergency needing to go to the hospital, will be accompanied by another volunteering resident, who will bring along their medical information that the kollektivhus keeps on file.

These instances of relationships demonstrate how kollektivhus residents have re-claimed care which capitalism has outsourced to the state or market (D'Alisa et al., 2015). These relationships work because they are reciprocal, and contribute to residents' good life, by for instance, giving them a 'feeling of freedom.'

In addition to residents caring for each other, I also learned about instances where residents cared for people in disadvantaged situations by giving them a place to live for free. Alfred told me about how one of the residents at Dunderbacken met a young girl at a refugee camp in Greece, brought her back to Sweden and asked if she could stay with someone at Dunderbacken. Alfred took her and her boyfriend in for a year; and another resident who left for

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* Name has been changed.

the summer, let them stay in their apartment for additional three months. Alfred described feeling solidarity among Dunderbacken residents who offered support in this situation:

> This is one of the things you can do when you stay in a collective. So even if I'm the one who said I'll take care of it, other people helped out, they raised money for her transit card, they raised money to pay for different things and so on.

In another other instance, I learned that Tre Portar took in a couple people who were homeless and living in tents in Stockholm that had been burned down. This occurred during the winter, so a Tre Portar resident acquainted with these people, offered for them live in Tre Portar's guest flat, which led to them staying for about five years. Everyone living at Tre Portar was helping to pay for the flat (because everyone living in a kollektivhus shares the rent for the common spaces) even though it meant that no one could stay in the guest flat for several years. Both of these instances demonstrate how the community of care extends beyond the residents of the kollektivhus to others in society. Here, the kollektivhus acts as a convivial society that collectively cares for and de-commodifies housing for those in need.

5.2 Communal Cooking and Shared Meals

The communal cooking and shared meals offer an illustrative example of the degrowth practice of commoning (Helfrich & Bollier, 2015) and best support the values of self-limitation and voluntary simplicity. Before residents move in to a kollektivhus, they are clearly informed by the kollektivhus association that it is mandatory for them to participate in a cooking team, and they must agree to this. This clear rule is an exemplary indication of commoning. And, as in commoning (Helfrich & Bollier, 2015), there is strong communication between members of cooking teams, which allows them flexibility. This is especially important for residents who are still in the work force, enabling them to contribute even when their work schedule conflicts with the cooking schedule. For instance, Linnea from Färdknäppen explained: "Most of the people who work do the dishes or maybe they prepare dinner the day before, like baking bread or making the soup and stuff."

Further, Ulrika Egerö, the chairperson of Kollektivhus NU, argued that the common dinners help to lower residents' resource consumption through eliminating excess packaging by

buying in bulk, and by using less electricity to cook for 30 or 40 people than when people are cooking for just themselves. This provides an example for how communal cooking enables residents to share the commons and thus collectively self-limit themselves and aligns with the findings of a master's thesis on Färdknäppen which found that residents reduce their greenhouse gas emissions by about 10% per person per year compared to the national Swedish average (Sundberg, 2014). Sundberg believes that the electricity savings from communal cooking play a role in this, as well as energy savings for heating and electricity from sharing common spaces. These energy savings are marginal at best, but they do show that commoning *can* make a difference. Sundberg also estimated that only about 15% of food at Färdknäppen is consumed communally, so perhaps if residents ate more meals together, they could further reduce their emissions.

From a different point of view, two residents also expressed how the shared meals limit their needs, or desires, to go out for dinner. Lukas at Tre Portar expressed: "Instead of thinking should we go to have dinner in a restaurant, it's not really an option because we have the best restaurant in a way here." He also said how he doesn't feel the need to go out for coffee to meet friends so much, because he can go to his neighbours' homes to have coffee. Likewise, many residents at Dunderbacken have been meeting for *fika* (Swedish coffee time) every single weekday morning at 11:00 for ten years. These practices relate to self-limitation and voluntary simplicity; through co-housing, residents are able to pursue satisfaction and meaning in their lives without consuming (Alexander, 2015) at the restaurants and cafés offered by market society.

5.3 Sharing Spaces and Resources

In addition to cooking and sharing common meals, residents discussed a variety of other ways they share common resources, or practice commoning. These provide evidence for overcoming scarcity and enabling self-limitation (Kallis & March, 2015). For instance, Färdknäppen, Dunderbacken, and Tre Portar all have a free shop where residents can leave clothing and other items that they no longer need, for other residents to take. Kupan, on the other hand, has a *loppis* ('secondhand market') that occurs every year in the dining room of the kollektivhus, where people from outside Kupan are also welcome.

Another important aspect of commoning relates to the extensive shared spaces in a kollektivhus, which helps residents confront notions of scarcity and enable self-limitation of the size of their individual apartments. Although residents' apartments are about 10% smaller than the average flat in Stockholm, residents do not feel that they have given up any floor space, because of the extensive common spaces they have access to. Ulrika of Kollektivhus NU lives at Dunderbacken and elaborated on how living in a kollektivhus has helped her overcome her desire for more space in her individual apartment:

> I would say if we didn't live in a co-house, we would need to have a flat like 70-80 square meters to have the same feeling of space and freedom, and having the things we need, like a guest room, and everything… Like me and my husband, our flat is 57 square meters… it's really what we call in Swedish, space-effective, and it's perfect for us. If I would live in an ordinary house, it would feel really too small.

Klara, meanwhile, who lives at Tre Portar, expressed another way residents can confront scarcity in order to self-limit themselves:

> You are surrounded by people with similar values. That means that you don't have to feel that 'everyone else has this, everyone else does that.' Because you are surrounded by people who also let their kids share rooms, buy most things second hand, don't have cars, don't fly, and so on.

Here, residents collectively overcome scarcity by dissolving positional inequalities inherent in capitalism (Skidelsky & Skidelsky, 2012), enabling them to collectively self-limiting their wants (Kallis & March, 2015).

Furthermore, my findings revealed that the municipal housing companies constrain the extent to which kollektivhus residents can self-limit themselves. For instance, Mette Kjörstad of Boföreningen Framtiden explained to me how the initial plan to build Färdknäppen was for the kitchens to be smaller than they are, because the communal kitchen and dining room would make up for the 'lost' space. However, Familjebostäder, the company that built Färdknäppen, did not allow this, contending that "all the flats have to be fully equipped…. because if co-housing falls out, then they can rent them out as regular apartments." In other words, municipal housing

companies like Familjebostäder are afraid that co-housing might not be viable, and they do not want to risk losing profit if the kollektivhus is not attractive to prospective tenants. This speaks to the consequences of the neoliberalization of the housing sector whereby the state has transferred its financial risks to municipal housing companies (Hedman, 2008). Additionally, this demonstrates that even though the kollektivhus movement might aim to create infrastructure that differs from mainstream housing, it can still be constrained by the hegemonic approach of housing for growth, which pushes for certain types of infrastructure that will not threaten the growth imperative. Along these lines, municipal housing companies appear resistant to kollektivhus groups who want to build in less resource-intensive ways. Ulrika of Kollektivhus NU, explained:

> I know some of the groups that want to have co-houses being built, wants to have them very environmentally friendly. What happens, is when they get in contact with a developer or housing company, the companies feel 'oh, this sounds complex, with both co-housing, and the environmental concept,' so I usually say to them, if you really are anxious about getting a co-house to live in, concentrate on that.

This speaks to how the capitalist system limits our autonomy to make decisions for ourselves for how we want to live (Deriu, 2015), by forcing us to choose either social or environmental goals. Apparently, the logic of housing for growth means we cannot have both. In turn, kollektivhus in Sweden are usually built according to the same standards of conventional housing, meaning they are built with concrete, which has significant implications for carbon emissions given the cement production process (Olivier, Janssens-Maenhout, Muntean & Peters, 2015). Along these lines, in my conversation with a politician from Miljöpartiet about his party's priorities in housing construction in Stockholm, he emphasized that they are "trying to make buildings more energy efficient," and that "solar panels are almost standard, now, on every building." This serves to confirm the hegemonic strategy of ecological modernization in Sweden (Lidskog & Elander, 2012).

5.4 Decision-Making Processes and Abilities

My findings surrounding residents' abilities to make decisions that affect their kollektivhus are mixed, and have differing implications for autonomy, direct democracy, conviviality, and de-commodification. These decisions relate to issues surrounding the kollektivhus community, the physical building, and the admission of prospective tenants. Table 2 at the end of this section summarizes these findings.

5.4.1 Decisions Relating to the Community

All of the kollektivhus in my study have a governance model that enables residents to collectively make decisions that affect how their kollektivhus community operates and lives together. The models differ slightly between the kollektivhus, but generally the decisions are either made by consensus, vote, or just by the board when appropriate. For instance, Dunderbacken has a system that consists of sofa meetings, house meetings, and an annual meeting. Ebba explained to me that every week, "anyone in the house can call a meeting on the sofa." No decision is taken at the sofa meetings; instead, residents discuss their views and come to understand each other's perspectives on an issue. From there, the issue can be taken up at a house meeting, where residents decide on how to live together in the house. Ebba explains how it's not always easy to have consensus, because residents often have different perspectives on an issue. And sometimes residents must take a vote, "and then the chairman of the house meeting will decide what to do." This system supports direct democracy through its inclusivity where everyone has a voice, and flexibility in decision-making processes to find the best solution for everyone (Nelson, 2018).

One issue that came up, however, is the lack of participation in house meetings in some kollektivhus. In Tre Portar, for instance, Lukas informed me that out of over 100 residents, only about 10 to 15 of them attend house meetings (although about half of them are children, who cannot attend the meetings), and it's 'more or less' the same people who attend every time. Those who do not attend the meetings cannot influence decisions for their community. This low participation and lack of influence of many residents arguably weakens direct democracy. It also suggests that this kollektivhus is too large for direct democracy to be convenient (Xue, 2018).

Another reason for low participation is likely that some residents are simply not interested in participating in their kollektivhus community, which I take up later in this section.

5.4.2 Decisions Relating to the Physical Building

Further, the tenure form in the kollektivhus also influences residents' autonomy over the physical environment of their dwellings. Notably, Kupan uses the bostadsrätt system; it has a *bostadsrättsförening* ('tenant-owner association'; BRF) which makes Kupan unique compared to the three other kollektivhus in my study. Through the BRF at Kupan, residents can make and implement decisions that relate to their physical building. For instance, Oskar discussed an issue recently taken up by the BRF about the building of a fence in the front yard to prevent children from running onto the street. The BRF will make its decision about the fence "when they feel it's okay. But if they feel it's going to be there is a risk of conflict, then they do a vote, but then it's not consensus. It's 50%. … [And] that's not something you can't do very fast, because it's once a year." Because all residents have the opportunity to participate in decisions about their kollektivhus, and directly implement them, the BRF system at Kupan supports values of direct democracy, autonomy, and conviviality, more than the other kollektivhus in regard to decisions over the physical building.

Although the BRF system affords Kupan residents more autonomy to make decisions over their house in this respect, it is precisely this BRF system that constrains the degrowth value of de-commodification. Notably, the use of this system reproduces the commodification of housing where the home becomes an investment to make profit (Hagbert, 2018). Residents at Kupan are caught up in the system of making a profit from their dwelling (Hagbert, 2018) which enables them to make a bostadsrätt 'housing career.'

On the other hand, Färdknäppen, Dunderbacken, and Tre Portar use the hyresrätt tenure system, whereby the tenants rent their apartments from a municipal housing company that owns the building and that is responsible for property maintenance and collecting rent from tenants. The residents I spoke to indicated that they feel they have enough autonomy in this system and do not want the responsibility of 'having to play landlord.' Dunderbacken used to have a different

tenure form (*kooperativ hyresrätt*) until a couple years ago, when they changed systems. As Maja, a Dunderbacken resident, explained to me:

> [W]e administered the rents and so on, and we had quite big freedom to organize, but it takes a lot of resources to organize, and people don't want to sit with economic things and be competent enough, so we decided to leave that organization [*kooperativ hyresrättsförening*] and it's just like ordinary rented flats here.

Alfred further elaborated on the reasoning behind this change in tenure system, saying: "It was a hassle, having responsibility to be in charge. For example, picking out your neighbour because they're not paying rent. That was tough." Prior to the change, residents were responsible for cleaning the whole building, but as Alfred explained, "cleaning a high window is difficult, especially if you're unsteady, you shouldn't be doing that." The undesirable responsibility over managing their home arguably constrains the community's autonomy and conviviality, yet seems to be related to the age of residents and the size of the kollektivhus. For instance, Maja explained to me how it's too much work to

> own and take care of a house as big as this. It's 71 [61] flats [and] I think many people feel that it's too much work really. It's better to have an organization that does everything technical, so you don't have to think about it. But I think [it could work better] if you had co-housing with younger people who are well-educated in these areas of economy and technology and architecture and so on.

Because residents feel they do not have the knowledge or capacity to have control over their building, the kollektivhus does not serve as a convivial space for them. Instead, there is a need for 'specialist knowledge,' or competency from municipal housing companies to administer the rents and take care of property maintenance (Deriu, 2015; Illich, 1973; Hagbert, 2018).

When I spoke with Ulrika, the chairperson of Kollektivhus NU about the ideal size of a kollektivhus, she said that although they haven't made an official investigation, between 15-60 apartments seems to work best. Yet the ability of kollektivhus to be on the smaller scale is usually constrained by municipal housing companies. When I spoke with Gabriella Granditsky, Head of Business Development at Familjebostäder about this issue, she explained how

Familjebostäder has certain economic ambitions that constrict the minimum size of a new building, and that a "project with only 30 apartments would probably be too small." Once again, we can see the constraints of the hegemonic approach of housing for growth in Sweden, which forces municipal housing companies to make a profit.

5.4.3 Decisions Relating to Incoming Residents

Where residents wanted more decision-making abilities, was deciding for themselves who moves into their communities. Whereas residents of Färdknäppen and Dunderbacken can decide for themselves who moves into their kollektivhus, through their interview or admissions committees, residents of Tre Portar and Kupan do not have this option. At Tre Portar, prospective residents can register their interest for an apartment based on their place in the municipal housing queue, through the Stockholm Housing Agency (*Bostadsförmedlingen*). Prospective residents then engage with the municipal housing company, Stockholmshem, who approves the tenancy.

Lukas and Klara who live in Tre Portar expressed desire for greater control over who moves in. By not being able to select the tenants themselves, there is a risk that people might move in who are not interested in living in a kollektivhus but who simply want somewhere to live. In that case, residents move to the kollektivhus who have no intention of contributing to communal meals or participating in other activities such as house meetings. This can cause the kollektivhus to lose its sense of community, and in turn, weaken conviviality (Andreoni & Galmarini, 2014) as well as constrain pretty much all of the degrowth values I have outlined. But it also speaks to the challenges of the housing market in Stockholm, and especially the housing shortage (Christophers, 2013). People need somewhere to live, and if they happen to find a place in a kollektivhus, they might move in even if they are not interested in the concept.

Klara at Tre Portar illustrates the ambivalence felt by residents who are satisfied with the amount of autonomy they have, with the exception of not being able to decide who moves in:

> In some ways, it's a problem that we can't decide who gets to move in. And [as a result], I'd say probably about 50% of the people are not active... But I think it is a huge, huge advantage that we don't have to deal with the difficult things like how do we get rid of this person who's, you know, a nuisance .... We don't have to make our neighbors pay rent

> and stuff like that… So I think this is probably to be preferred… for such a big house. If it was like a small house, it would be good to own it. But then it would be more like, you and a few friends maybe. But with like over 50 flats, it's too much of a responsibility, financially and legally and everything.

Here, again, the size of the kollektivhus is a barrier for the home to be a convivial space (Hagbert, 2018). Without the capacity to manage their home at its current size, residents also cannot determine whether incoming residents will contribute to their communities.

Similarly, Kupan residents do not have the possibility to decide who moves in. Oskar informed me that because Kupan has the bostadsrätt tenure form, there is no possibility for the house to influence who buys an apartment. When someone sells their apartment, they usually sell to whoever offers the highest price, because this system follows a free market ideology, as described earlier. However, the potential buyer does have to go through an interview with the kollektivhus' BRF who informs them about the rules (i.e., mandatory cooking and cleaning) and the potential buyer must accept these rules. This is a way of filtering people out who are not interested in living in a kollektivhus. Yet, there is still the risk that people accept the rules because they just want somewhere to live.

In contrast, Färdknäppen and Dunderbacken, who have the hyresrätt tenure form, *are* able to make suggestions to Familjebostäder (the municipal housing company that owns their building) over who they would like to move in. These kollektivhus have special committees that interview prospective tenants and assess their ability and willingness contribute to their kollektivhus. This is because Färdknäppen, the older of the two houses, made an agreement with Familjebostäder over this right to suggest tenants, which paved the way for Dunderbacken to have the same agreement. Thus, residents of Färdknäppen and Dunderbacken have arguably more autonomy than residents of Kupan and Tre Portar, in the sense that they can influence which tenants will move into and contribute to their community, which in turn influences the extent to which their communities can reflect convivial homes that foster degrowth values.

Table 2.
Summary of decision-making processes and abilities

<table>
<tr><th></th><th>Dunderbacken</th><th>Kollektivhuset Färdknäppen</th><th>Kollektivhuset Kupan</th><th>Tre Portar</th></tr>
<tr><td>Decisions relating to the community</td><td colspan="4">Has governance model that incorporates inclusive decision-making processes yet can be constrained by low participation</td></tr>
<tr><td>Decisions relating to the physical building</td><td colspan="2">The board must engage with Familjebostäder who implements decisions</td><td>Bostadsrättsförening (BRF) enables residents to make and implement decisions</td><td>Must engage with Stockholmshem who implements decisions</td></tr>
<tr><td>Decisions relating to incoming residents</td><td colspan="2">Has admissions committee that interviews prospective tenants; can make suggestions to Familjebostäder</td><td>Cannot influence who moves in; the seller of the apartment usually sells to whoever offers the highest price</td><td>Cannot influence who moves in; Stockholmshem approves the tenant</td></tr>
</table>

5.5 Rent-Setting Processes

The rent-setting processes for kollektivhus follow the same rent-setting systems for all accommodation in Sweden, and severely limit the ability of the kollektivhus to align with the value of de-commodification (especially for Kupan, whose bostadsrätt system follows a free-market ideology). Notably, the high costs of rent on new construction in Stockholm makes the rents of newly built housing, including kollektivhus, unaffordable and thus inaccessible for many. This is consequential of the hybridity of the Swedish housing market described by Christophers (2013).

When I spoke about the issue of rent prices with Mette Kjörstad from Boföreningen Framtiden, she said "When I realized the price of the new flats in Kombo [the newly built kollektivhus in Stockholm] I was so disillusioned, I was really heartbroken."[8] In my conversation with Ingrid Schmidt, the chairperson of the Kombo board, she referred to the law introduced in 2006 called *presumtionshyra* ('presumption rent for new production)'. This law states that rents

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[8] The rents for the newly built Kombo kollektivhus, which was built by Familjebostäder, range from SEK 7,900 for a 26.5 square meters apartment, to SEK 15,000 for a 73.5 sqm apartment.

for new construction should be set according to the production value of the apartment, not the use value (as in the rent-setting system for old construction). The law is intended to encourage municipal housing companies to build new housing and allows them to charge the maximum price to cover the costs of construction. The law also does not enable Kombo to negotiate the rent prices with Familjebostäder. The high prices of Kombo ended up excluding many people who had been in the queue for years but who could not afford the rents. This constrains the autonomy of these people whereby they cannot pursue a housing model that aligns with their aspirations of how they want to live.

This also demonstrates how the kollektivhus movement is not able to overcome the reach of markets into housing, and thus enable the de-commodification of our residents' basic right to live (Hagbert, 2018). Although in theory, the kollektivhus movement may aim to resist the privatization of housing, it does not have that ability because the rents of the kollektivhus are governed by the neoliberalized, profit-driven Stockholm housing market.

I also discussed the issue of high rents with the representatives from Familjebostäder, Miljöpartiet, and Sveriges Allmännytta. Gabriella from Familjebostäder considered that the construction costs are an important determinant of high rents. She argued that the higher rents are important to create new construction, "because we couldn't have had any new production if we have used the old way to set the rent" [according to use-value]. Likewise, the politician from Miljöpartiet elaborated on the need for more construction in order to lower the rents and said that the main focus on municipal housing companies should be to build and have apartments for tenants. These apartments should be affordable for everyone but should also contribute to profits, he said.

Another contributing factor to the cost of high construction is the way the market has come to favour home ownership as the ideal way to live. As a representative from Sveriges Allmännytta (the Project Manager for Renovation and Remodeling, and Property and Sustainability) explained, the market enables prospective homeowners (of bostadsrätt) to take out substantial loans and then deduct their interest rates. He argued that:

> [T]his has really been driving the construction prices upwards, which also then affects the rents and new construction. I would say I mean, this is this is one of the cornerstone issues of the public housing sector, or the housing sector.

The prospects of the state reversing the favouring of home ownership seem bleak. As the project manager described, this would be “political suicide”. Deductions in interest rates, he said, “have become so important for everyone. So a lot of people are dependent on them. And it's once you started doing it, rolling them back, it's been basically impossible, because it would be political suicide.” He explained that there have, however, been increasing restrictions on the size of loans people can take out to buy a house in the last 10 or 20 years, which can “keep down this sort of spiraling housing prices.” Yet, he reiterated, the prices have

> just been just going straight up. Now it's [a] bit more stable, but still not great. From my point of view, I think it's just that you start favoring homeownership, it's very very difficult to stop. It would be a political suicide. Basically. Everyone would feel it. And a lot of people who do vote would feel it.

Importantly, this signifies how powerful the hegemonic aspirational narrative of home ownership has become in Sweden. This narrative reinforces people’s expectations of how they want to live, and without a viable alternative narrative taking its place, it’s hard to go back. There is thus a need for such an alternative narrative, or storyline, to the profit-oriented narrative of home ownership. I return to this issue in the next chapter.

To summarize Chapter 5, I’ve demonstrated that some practices of the Swedish kollektivhus in Stockholm align with the values of a degrowth imaginary, while others do not. Notably, across all kollektivhus, I found that residents care for each other through reciprocal relationships which helps them to reclaim care, which capitalism has outsourced to the state or market (D’Alisa et al., 2015). These relationships also support conviviality, especially by exchanging favours and resources, and through the sharing of community work (Andreoni & Galmarini, 2014) by cooking together. Further, through commoning practices such as common meals and having free shops, residents can collectively self-limit themselves, while experiencing

convenience. Yet self-limitation can also be constrained by having to engage with a municipal housing company who acts as the developer of the kollektivhus.

Moreover, the autonomy of kollektivhus residents is limited by their (in)ability to make decisions over future tenants, which can affect their community as a whole. In addition, the processes used to set the rent of newly built kollektivhus are constrained by the increasingly neoliberalized Swedish housing market. Under this political-economic system, the rising prices of bostadsrätt as well as the housing shortage in Stockholm drive up the costs of construction, while municipal housing companies need to make a profit through the production-value rent setting system. Thus, I argue that the potential of the kollektivhus movement in Stockholm to align with a degrowth imaginary is limited by the greater political and economic systems of which it is embedded. This is not surprising considering that degrowth is currently "politically unfeasible" because it clashes with the capitalist hegemony of economic growth (Buch-Hansen, 2018; Krüger, 2020; Linz, 2017). In other words, under capitalism, degrowth housing is largely unattainable.

6. Toward a Housing for Degrowth Transition

So far, I have considered how political (and economic) society constrains the potential of the kollektivhus to align with a degrowth imaginary and proposed the importance of degrowth narratives to create changes in political society. I now turn to presenting my findings to answer my second research question: how the kollektivhus movement might support the transition toward a housing for degrowth society through the construction of alternative narratives outside the growth paradigm. As some of the kollektivhus practices I've presented above indicate alignment with degrowth values, this means that they also indicate elements of housing for degrowth narratives (as a reminder, housing for degrowth narratives weave together key degrowth values while also demonstrating that another storyline, or another way of doing housing, is possible; Schneider, 2018). Notably, through the practices of reciprocal relationships, communal cooking and shared meals, and sharing spaces and resources, kollektivhus residents illuminate other ways to live a 'good life' that are not profit-dependent.

6.1 Alternative Narratives

I now elaborate deeper on my findings for how residents construct housing for degrowth narratives, where they discuss how they've overcome hegemonic housing aspirations, and instead embrace aspirations of social relations – symbolizing the values of care, autonomy, conviviality and voluntary simplicity. I generally found that residents of kollektivhus construct housing narratives that signify a shift from trying to find comfort in a 'lovely flat,' to finding comfort in community.

To begin, Maja's story of how her aspirations for her housing have evolved demonstrate a shift from having a 'beautiful' flat to live in, to wanting a supportive community to live with. Her story serves as an illustrative example of overcoming the aspirational narrative of home ownership and having a 'fancy' place to live. She described how one of her initial flats in Stockholm "was a beautiful room but it was really lonely." She then made a 'bostadsrätt career,' where she bought a flat, then sold it for more money "and then I moved to a bigger and better flat for ten years, and then I moved here." She discussed how she has felt "a bit lonely," in her life, but the community she now has at Dunderbacken "means everything" to her. When I asked her if she's had to give up any comforts since moving to Dunderbacken, she immediately said "No, my flat is much better. I think it's very nice to cook together."

Maja's narrative reflects the value she places on reciprocal relationships in her caring, convivial home, which contribute to a good life for her and have helped her overcome loneliness. This supports the notion that the kollektivhus poses a solution "to the growing atomisation and loneliness of single-person households in large cities" (Schneider, 2018, p. 24). Yet it should be noted that living alone does not necessarily make you lonely, rather it is the lack of social connections (Ortiz-Ospina, 2019) and potentially the urban context (Bugeja, 2005).

Alfred also emphasized the importance social relationships in his kollektivhus by saying that living at Dunderbacken has provided a 'cultural richness' in his life:

> By nature I'm not such a social person. But here I have it delivered on a silver platter. So that's related to [the] cultural richness of living here. I definitely have met people who I otherwise wouldn't have anything to do with.

Similarly, Klara discussed how prior to living at Tre Portar, she was living in a bostadsrätt on her own, which "was a lovely house, it was really really nice. But I really didn't like my neighbours." In contrast, she described her new flat and the shared areas at Tre Portar as being

> quite rundown, it's not very high standard for being in Sweden. But I feel very comfortable with my neighbors… If I need help with something, there's always someone who will be happy to help. And I feel like I'm surrounded by people who care who want to, you know, interact with their neighbors…. [When communal dinners are happening], that is obviously extremely comfortable to just come home and you know, be able to go and sit down and someone else has cooked for you…. And you can, if you don't feel like being sociable that day, you can take the food home with you and eat at home… That's super, super handy and super nice.

Klara's story adds another element to the picture of the importance of social relationships over material aspirations for her home. In accordance with voluntary simplicity (Alexander, 2015), she re-imagines the 'good life' by embracing non-materialistic sources of comfort. Even though her kollektivhus is 'quite run down,' she finds it much more comfortable than in her previous accommodation, because she lives with people who care for each other in reciprocal ways. Additionally, Klara also elaborated on how the kollektivhus offers her the perfect balance of collectivism and individualism:

> For me it's ideal because I've lived with other people a lot, but I'm not super sociable. I like doing projects together and stuff like that. But I don't want to be with people all the time. So for me, it's perfect to have like my own flat and then shared areas, and that I can choose when I want to be sociable.

This balance between collectivism on the one hand, and personal freedom and individualism on the other, is of integral importance to the storyline of the Swedish kollektivhus. This corroborates Törnqvist's (2019) findings in her study on co-housing in Stockholm, which she framed as a case of 'individualized collectivism.' She considers the hegemonic norm of personal freedom in Swedish society, where Swedes believe that "stable social norms will keep their neighbours out of both their lives and their backyard" (Berggren & Trägårdh, 2010, p. 16).

As already mentioned, this norm is reflected in the immense proportion of single-person households in Sweden. As of 2010, only about 3% of Stockholmers live collectively (Ekstam & Sandstedt, 2010).

In my interview with the project manager from Allmännytta, he corroborated this norm for individualism. When I asked about the relevance of more collective living and sharing in Swedish housing, he said: “Swedes are private people…. I don't know, it's not really our style.” Yet Klara’s narrative shows that the collective living model of the kollektivhus can, to some extent, challenge this norm by offering a creative compromise to individualism in people’s search for community (Törnqvist, 2019).

6.2 Alternative Storyline to Challenge Hegemonic Shared Understandings

Promisingly, the successes of kollektivhus – some of which have endured for over thirty years – seem to be showing politicians in Stockholm that the kollektivhus is a viable housing model so that they should support the implementation of kollektivhus and other more collaborative housing models. Representatives from kollektivhus associations emphasized in my interviews how the kollektivhus can shift the way politicians think – or shift their shared understandings of what constitutes ‘good housing’. For instance, Ingela Blomberg, co-founder of Boföreningen Framtiden, discussed that now Kombo Kollektivhuset is almost ready for completion:

> We had a presentation [for Kombo]; we usually have some kind of ceremony when the building of a house has come to a certain point. And there were politicians, even from the parties, even from the board [of Familjebostäder], they sort of all agreed on that this co-housing is a very good idea. So we will always have at least one project in the pipeline. And this has never been said before. So, I mean, it's also that co-housing has become slowly, slowly, slowly over time, it's become more accepted, even from the other parties. So maybe the next time… We don't have to fight so hard. We hope…

Thus, it seems that the movement is gaining promising traction within political society in Stockholm. Along similar lines, Mette of Boföreningen Framtiden expressed hope for how the

kollektivhus is opening up the minds of politicians by welcoming study visits and guests into her home at Färdknäppen:

> The more people could see what a co-housing is, the more positive they become… Three years ago, I was arranging a meeting with a housing company… five, six people from their highest level. And I and another person, we had invited them to have a dinner at Färdknäppen. And they walked around and were sitting in the dining room… And one man who was the chief of this big company, when they said goodbye, and they were about to leave … this guy who had been a bit silent, said 'as I was on my way here today, I was skeptical. But now I'm not.' And he was smiling. And… there is very few people who come to co-houses and afterwards say they will never like to live there… How this goes on, you know, like rings on the water?

From a different perspective, however, Gabriella at Familjebostäder has a more pessimistic outlook on the future of kollektivhus:

> Neither the politics nor our own, like me or my boss, we don't really see that we should do more of conceptual houses. Because we have a big demand on what we do already. I will say like, if we would try to find new markets, if we would need that, then we will think even more on like the future tenant, we do that to some extent. And I think that we will need to do it more in the coming years, because for the moment, there are a lot of other companies that are constructing a lot. So we will have more and more available houses, then we will need to think more of the future tenants and make more analyses. We have begun to do that, we do it more now than like five years ago. And I think we will do it even more in the future. But right now, we don't really need to adjust our products.

This points to the profit-oriented focus of municipal housing companies under Sweden's neoliberalized housing sector. Likewise, this again highlights the role of the state, and the need for shifts in shared understandings in political society to direct these companies to adjust their housing models to be more collaborative. Otherwise, housing companies feel no need to change the way they build.

6.3 Toward Housing for Degrowth?

The narratives I presented above show that the kollektivhus, contributes more to the 'good life' for the residents I spoke with than when they were living in more conventional ways, like making a 'bostadsrätt housing career'. I see these narratives as playing a major role in eroding the legitimacy of hegemonic housing narratives and I believe that the most promising contribution of the kollektivhus movement to support a degrowth transition is through the creation of alternative narratives that demonstrate an alternative storyline outside the growth paradigm.

There is, obviously, still substantial work to be done to shift the shared understandings in the integral state. Especially if considering Eckersley's point that this will require shifts in shared understandings not only in Sweden, but also in the international order, or at least in the EU. The housing trends I discussed in the introduction to my thesis arguably work to reinforce the legitimacy of shared understandings of what is an acceptable way to live – i.e., the home is an investment, and is increasingly larger for fewer people. We can also see how historically, the Swedish state has previously conformed to the international hegemon, when in the 1990s, the welfare state became dismantled by conforming to expectations of neoliberalism that were spreading throughout the EU (Grundstrom & Molina, 2016).

Not only do we need to change values, norms and practices within Sweden, but also outside its borders, in order to enable housing for degrowth. Yet, I believe there is still reason for optimism. The Swedish kollektivhus is of course not the only alternative housing model that challenges the capitalist growth paradigm. Rather, different variations of co-housing and other alternative housing models are popping up all around the Global North, for instance in Germany, Denmark, the United States and Japan (Vestbro, 2010). And research indicates that communal housing is becoming a growing trend in western societies, especially among young people in urban regions (Törnqvist, 2019). For some inspiration and hope, see: LILAC the UK's first ecological, affordable co-housing community (LILAC, 2021); or the Haight St. Commons, a DIY housing cooperative in San Francisco, CA (Haight St. Commons, n.d.).

Collectively, these housing models can all begin to shift shared understandings in the international hegemon by demonstrating that there is another way to live outside the growth

paradigm. The more we can see that people can live, and live well, in accordance with degrowth values, the more we can erode the legitimacy of the neoliberal growth hegemon, toward a degrowth shared understanding for a degrowth future. I thus believe there is a need for more storytelling efforts that showcase alternative housing forms and ways of living that foster a good life in alignment with degrowth values. This aligns with other calls in the literature to "articulate and make visible other imaginaries of sustainable living" (Hagbert & Bradley, 2017, p. 242; Keil, 2007; Swyngedouw, 2007).

6.4 Additional Considerations

Due to lack of space, I was not able to incorporate into my study all the themes that came up in my interviews, especially themes related to a feminist political ecology perspective. This includes the (sometimes lack of) a gender balance in kollektivhus, where the kollektivhus for the second half of life are inhabited by a two-thirds majority of women. Although men and women do share work equally within the kollektivhus, this is not specific to the kollektivhus model but rather is widespread in Sweden, where gender equality is strong (yet there remains substantial room for improvement; see Martinsson, Griffin & Giritli Nygren, 2016). Further, in accordance with criticisms of co-housing for tending to social and ethnic homogeneity among residents (Chiodelli & Baglione 2014), I learned that kollektivhus associations oftentimes have a hard time appealing to a diversity of social groups along social, cultural, and economic lines, and most residents tend to be well-educated and middle class. I thus call for future research to adopt a feminist political ecology perspective and to investigate the entry barriers to collaborative forms of housing for disadvantaged social groups in the Global North, so that *all* social groups can access such housing that is inclusive of them and meets their specific needs or aspirations.

7. Conclusion

The housing sector is an important area of research for a degrowth transition towards a future that overcomes the social and ecological consequences of mainstream living under capitalism. Housing is "the single largest asset in people's everyday lives and one of the biggest financial assets in most economies" (Schwartz and Seabrooke, 2008, pp. 238-239). Not only is it central to contemporary economies and politics (Christophers, 2013) but also constitutes a key

part of our everyday lives – it "provides a basis for our aspirations and visions of what kind of life we wish to lead and, by extension, what kind of society we construct" (Hagbert, 2018, p. 57).

Considering the importance of housing to our lives, societies, and planet and the failure of capitalism to provide affordable housing for all that respects planetary boundaries, I explored one alternative housing model to investigate how it might support a degrowth approach to housing. Through my research, I found that the kollektivhus model in Stockholm fosters a degrowth imaginary in various ways, while also being constrained in other ways, particularly by the capitalist housing for growth context in which it is embedded.

Specifically, I found that residents' reciprocal relationships, which can be informal or formal, help to reclaim aspects of care from the capitalist society. I also found that commoning practices through cooking and sharing meals (and fika) together, as well as sharing spaces and resources, helps them to overcome notions of scarcity. This enables them to collectively self-limit themselves by reducing their consumption at restaurants and cafés while also reflecting a caring, convivial society. Through my interviews it became evident that the decision-making processes at the kollektivhus support direct democracy in some ways, most notably by enabling residents to participate equally in decisions that affect the functioning of their community. However, in other ways, not all the kollektivhus have the ability to influence who moves into their community, which can influence the extent to which residents that move in are willing to participate and contribute to the community. This influences their participation in cooking teams and in house meetings, and their ability to support degrowth values in general. I discussed how this (in)ability to decide who moves in is related to the type of tenure form and relation with their municipal housing company.

Further, I also found that although residents living in a kollektivhus with the hyresrätt tenure form didn't have control over more 'landlord' duties like collecting rent and maintaining their properties, this wasn't something they wanted, because they didn't feel they have the knowledge or capacity to take on this responsibility. This suggests that the kollektivhus does not function as a fully convivial space for them, where the size of the house and the age of the residents are constraining factors. In turn, this suggests the need for housing forms that are on the smaller scale.

Moving beyond the specifics of the practices among kollektivhus residents, I considered how the neoliberal 'hybrid' housing context in which the kollektivhus movement is embedded constrains the alignment of the kollektivhus to a degrowth imaginary in many ways. Yet, I argued that the kollektivhus can support shifts in political society to enable a degrowth housing transition most substantially through the creation of degrowth narratives that demonstrate an alternative storyline which can erode hegemonic shared understandings within the integral state. Along these lines, I presented evidence indicating that the kollektivhus has already begun to shift shared understandings within political society in Stockholm, whereby politicians and housing companies are beginning to take note of the viability of this housing model. Yet, there is still substantial work to be done, not only in Sweden, but on an international level, to shift hegemonic shared understandings, or housing for growth narratives, and thus to enable a degrowth transition (amongst other transitions in the pluriverse of transition discourses). I thus conclude this thesis with a call for future research and storytelling initiatives to illuminate and make visible alternative housing models and ways of living that challenge hegemonic housing aspirations and expectations.

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Appendix A: Interview Guides

Sample guide for kollektivhus residents

1. Can you tell me about how you grew up; where and in what kind of home?
2. Can you tell me about the process that brought you to wanting to live here?
3. How have your needs and aspirations for your accommodation changed over time?
    a. *[What was your previous tenure form]*
    b. *[Have you ever felt pressured to own your accommodation?]*
4. How does your co-housing community satisfy your needs and aspirations?
    a. And do you feel like you've had to give up, or gained any comforts, since living here compared to your previous accommodations?
5. How has your everyday lifestyle, or way of living, changed since living here?
6. What does community mean to you?
    a. *[And how do you see your role in supporting or shaping your community?]*
7. Can you elaborate on how residents care for each other and share resources?
8. How do people in your social circle (like friends, family) outside of co-housing feel about your choice to live here?
9. Can you describe what kind of people live here?
10. How do residents envision the purpose of your kollektivhus?

Sample guide for representatives of kollektivhus associations

1. How does [your association] view conventional housing models?
    a. Why is co-housing a good alternative?
2. How does [your association] see the role of co-housing in contributing to social sustainability?
    a. Do you have a diversity strategy, to be inclusive of people from different social and economic backgrounds?
    b. What are the main challenges preventing co-housing from being more socially sustainable?
3. How does [your association] see the role of co-housing in contributing to ecological sustainability?
    a. What are the potentials in terms of sharing resources?
    b. What are the main challenges preventing co-housing from being more ecologically sustainable?
4. What are the main barriers to co-housing in the Swedish urban context?
    a. Can you elaborate on financial barriers?
    b. What are the main challenges when engaging with municipal housing companies?
    c. Supply vs demand - which do you perceive to be more of a challenge?
5. Do you think co-housing can be for everyone?
6. What do you hope for the future of co-housing in Sweden?

Guide for Head of Business Development from Familjebostäder

1. How do current political directives shape your sustainability efforts?
2. How do you perceive your role in contributing to sustainable housing in Stockholm?
3. How has the 2011 law which mandates that you have to act 'business-like,' affected the way you provide 'good housing for all'?
4. What does 'good housing for all' mean to you?
5. How do you view the role of co-housing to provide sustainable and 'good housing for all'?
6. What risks does Familjebostäder take on in building co-housing projects?

Guide for contact person for all of Familjebostäder's kollektivhus Stockholm

1. Before the pandemic, what has been your level of engagement with the kollektivhus in Stockholm?
    a. How long have you been in this role?
2. What kinds of things (requests/ proposals/ issues) have come up, that the kollektivhus want your help with?
    a. Negotiations of rents?
    b. Solar panels?
    c. Anything else?
3. Any tensions - and how are these resolved?

Guide for representatives from Sveriges Allmännytta

1. Can you help clarify the role of Allmännyttan for me?
2. And your relation to the Swedish State?
3. What are your main ecological sustainability aims and challenges?
4. What are your main social sustainability aims and challenges?
5. What do you perceive are the main benefits and challenges of the 2011 law stipulating housing companies must make profit?
6. How do you anticipate the future demand for different forms of housing?

Guide for politician from Miljöpartiet

1. How does the Miljöparti view the development of conventional housing forms in Stockholm, e.g. single-person dwellings?
2. How does the Miljöparti view the kollektivhus or other housing models that allow for more sharing of resources and communal spaces?
3. And how do these perspectives differ between the Moderate Party (*Moderaterna*) and the Miljöparti - and shape the political directives for the housing companies?
4. What is the Miljöparti's stance on the 2011 law stipulating that municipal housing companies have to make a profit?
    a. And stance on favouring home ownership over other tenure forms?

4. What do you hope for the future of housing in Stockholm?

Appendix B: Exploratory Co-housing Survey

General

1. What is the name of the co-housing community (kollektivhuset) that you live in?
   [Enter your answer]
2. What kind of accommodation did you live in prior to moving here?
   a. Single-person apartment
   b. Two-person apartment
   c. Multi-person apartment
   d. Two-person house
   e. Multi-person house
   f. Student corridor
   g. Other *[Enter your answer]*
3. In your previous accommodation, what was your tenure type?
   a. Private rental
   b. Public rental
   c. Ownership
   d. Tenant cooperative
   e. Other *[Enter your answer]*
4. What motivated you to move into a co-house (kollektivhus)? Please choose all that apply.
   a. Affordability / financial reasons
   b. Environmental / sustainability reasons
   c. Social reasons
   d. Other *[Enter your answer]*

Sharing behaviours

5. How many communal meals do you usually attend per week?
   [Enter your answer]
6. What are your motivations for attending communal meals? Please choose all that apply.
   a. Easier / less time-consuming than cooking for myself
   b. Cheaper than cooking for myself
   c. Prefer eating with others than by myself
   d. Other *[Enter your answer]*
7. What environmental/sustainability aspects are considered in the creation of communal meals (e.g., vegetarianism, sourcing local, minimizing packaging)?
   [Enter your answer]
8. Aside from sharing meals together, do you share other resources (e.g., clothing swaps, bike-sharing, car-sharing, appliance-sharing) with other residents? Please describe.
   [Enter your answer]
9. Do you or any other residents support each other in different ways (e.g., carpooling, haircutting)? Please describe.
   [Enter your answer]
10. How often do you typically use common spaces?

  a. Every day
  b. 3-5 days per week
  c. 1-3 days per week
  d. Rarely, a few days per month
  e. Never

11. What is your favorite common space and why?
    [Enter your answer]
12. In your opinion, how much do other residents typically use the common spaces?
    a. Often, there are usually people using the common spaces.
    b. Rarely, I do not see people using the common spaces except to eat shared meals.
    c. I'm not sure.
    d. Other *[Enter your answer]*
13. Before the coronavirus pandemic, how often did non-residents typically use the common spaces?
    a. Daily
    b. Weekly
    c. Monthly
    d. Seasonally
    e. Yearly
    f. Never
    g. Not sure
    h. Other *[Enter your answer]*
14. Has this changed during the pandemic?
    a. Yes, non-residents have stopped using our common spaces.
    b. Yes, non-residents have been using our common spaces less frequently.
    c. No, non-residents still use our common spaces just as frequently as they used to.
    d. I'm not sure.
    e. Other *[Enter your answer]*

Other behaviours

15. Aside from eating meals together, do you socialize with other co-house residents (e.g., by watching movies, gardening, exercising, or doing other hobbies together)? Please describe.
    [Enter your answer]
16. Do you participate in social activism (e.g., community events, local volunteering) with other co-housing residents? Please explain.
    [Enter your answer]
17. Do you participate in environmental activism (e.g., helping with sustainability initiatives, implementing sustainable practices within your co-house) with other co-housing residents? Please explain.
    [Enter your answer]
18. Do you feel that you are more socially and environmentally conscious and active since moving to your co-housing community?
    a. Yes, definitely
    b. Yes, maybe a little

c. No
d. Not sure

19. If you answered yes to the question above, please explain.
    [Enter your answer]
20. How does your community organize itself or make decisions? For example, do you have a board that holds regular community meetings? Please describe.
    [Enter your answer]

Satisfaction with kollektivhuset

21. Please rate your level of agreement with each of the following sentences [on a 5-point Likert scale: Strongly disagree, Disagree, Neither agree nor disagree, Agree, Strongly agree]
    a. I feel like I help shape my co-housing community.
    b. My co-housing accommodation is affordable compared to other accommodation options in my city.
    c. I am satisfied with my co-housing community.
    d. I prefer co-housing to my previous accommodation.
    e. I am satisfied with the tenure type here.

Demographic information

22. How old are you?
    a. 18-24
    b. 25-34
    c. 35-44
    d. 55-64
    e. 65-74
    f. 75+
23. Were you born in Sweden?
    a. Yes
    b. No
24. If you answered no to the above question, what country do you come from?
    [Enter your answer]
25. What is your gender?
    a. Woman
    b. Man
    c. Non-binary
26. What is your annual income level?
    a. <100,000 SEK
    b. 100,000 - 200,000 SEK
    c. 200,000 - 300,000 SEK
    d. >300,000 SEK

Thank you

Thank you for completing the survey!

27. The next step in my research project is to conduct interviews (over Zoom) with residents of co-housing communities. Would you be open to being contacted for an interview?
    a. Yes
    b. No
28. If you answered yes, please provide your name and email address. Please note that your name and survey responses will remain anonymous.
    [Enter your answer]
29. If you have any questions or input, please feel free to contact me at [author's email]. You're also welcome to write anything in the space below :). Tack!