

Sustainable revitalization of places

How to avoid regeneration resulting in degeneration.

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Abstract

A city must make the best of its inherent capacity to see a sustainable revitalisation. What made the original neighbourhood function, from a human and social point of view, is only vaguely taken into consideration. We will argue that when revitalising a built environment it is crucial to study how the place has worked from a human and cultural point of view, rather than to merely focus on its use. To re-qualify places for new uses is thus not a project but a process, which means that rebuilding and renovating must leave room for humans to develop and adjust the place to a function appropriate for human ways of being and living. The place must in other words allow people not only to stay but to dwell. Our paper will thus focus on ideas and examples of how to use a micro approach for regeneration of places as part of the creation of a long-term, liveable city.

Introduction, background and aims.

An initial recognition of the inherent capacity of places is central to the approach we propose for sustainable urban regeneration. We will argue that this insight is an important addition to the ruling concept of 'urban renewal' (primary associated with demolition to allow density land use) and its current extension to include 'planning for sustainability'. The apparent hybrid of 'renewal for sustainability' actualizes the importance for any revitalization to be executed as a holistic process rather than a distinct project. If we define process as a flow, this mind shift will prevent sustainable urban regeneration from being hampered by a limited time scope and instead provide a built-in capacity for continuous development. With this approach, sustainable urban renewal will have a chance to advance from a vague theoretical discourse to a practical reality, where sustainable planning incorporates environmental responsibility, economic efficiency and social considerations. However, this more or less established triangle¹ of sustainable approach needs to be further rethought and explored, not least with regard to the complexity of 'social sustainability'. The notion of social considerations is insufficient if we want the triangle to represent a holistic approach. We will argue that it is necessary to establish a human *and* cultural platform early on in the revitalization process. This platform should take into consideration not only the inherent capacity of the place but also how to preserve its authenticity. Furthermore, it should take humans' urge to establish dwellings just as seriously as their right to appropriate living conditions.

The aim of this paper is thus to redefine planning for urban revitalization and redevelopment. This redefinition is made possible by challenging established concepts of sustainability, ready-made programs and typologies, all of which typically have their roots in un-sustainability as they are fixed rather than flexible forms. To fulfill this aim, we have chosen to describe the main concepts which make up our challenge one by one: social versus human sustainability, inherent capacity and authenticity, dwelling versus living, wasted space and problem place and finally hard versus soft city. Furthermore, we will use the Swedish Million Program² (see endnote for facts) as an illustrative example of how to create a 'Human and Cultural Platform' through an investigation based on the described concepts. Finally, in conclusion, we will propose a number of criteria for the redefinition of planning for urban redevelopment, including what we think ought to be incorporated into compulsory regulations.

Keywords:
inherent capacity,
uniqueness, wasted
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dwelling,
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The revitalization process – a human approach to social sustainability.

In the light of the pressing debate concerning the future of Germany cities, the need to rethink metropolitan landscapes inspired an inter-disciplinary project giving fresh views on the potential of German urbanism (Sieverst 2007: 28-29). This initiative immediately highlighted the fact that there are several ways to create a city and that there is 'more than one truth' to city planning. One of the research questions for this project was 'What does the metropolitan landscape mean for the people living and working in it?' (Ibid.p.30). To pose this anthropological question is a relevant starting point when developing a research method aimed at socially sustainable city revitalization. How a person on an everyday basis understands and relates to the space (social and material) that surrounds him is essential for that person's experience of the authenticity of a place.

However, in order to have a holistically sustainable approach to a revitalization program, the investigation of social needs is not on its own sufficient and must be complemented by knowledge of human needs. Maslow's need pyramid, though dating from the 1970s, still appears to be relevant in this context (Maslow 1954/1970). While social needs are more space specific and refer to living conditions, human needs are less so and thus transferable between different projects. It is our impression that there is an ongoing confusion with regard to the distinction between social needs and human needs and we would like to rename the former 'social preconditions'. An illustrative example is the basic human need for *community*, which often is taken care of by having family and friends. When these are not within reach or relations are made difficult, certain social preconditions become important facilitators. We know that need satisfaction is important for human well-being but definition of the latter is ambiguous, as indeed is the distinction between need and desires. Diener and Suh (2007) define subjective well-being as life satisfaction, pleasant affect and unpleasant affect, where the first is cognitive and the two latter are un-reflected³. However, there is reason to believe that long-lasting affect is also the result of cognition, though mainly subconscious (Wilson 2002). This would mean that if the issue of well-being is to guide urban planning we will have to apply our full knowledge of human needs and social preconditions in an effort to find out how well-being is related to these. Otherwise the discussion will have more of a symbolic value: something we all love to talk about without knowing what we mean and even less how to apply what we don't know.

Lance Hosey (2008) rightfully criticized the concept of sustainable architecture saying that '... as it [sustainability] becomes more popular, the definition and goals become less clear' (Ibid. p. 35). He explains further that the concept of sustainability has stagnated in its commitment to environmentally friendly 'high-performance buildings' while social aspects of the concept are neglected (Ibid.). The reason for this stagnation is quite obvious: social aspects are dealt with in a superficial manner due to their complexity: human ways of being (slowly adapting) and human ways of living (fast changing) have to be understood separately even if viewed in interaction (Börjesson 2006). While the long-term environmental and economic benefits of ecological methods of building are well documented, the human and social conditions necessary for sustainability are still not sufficiently researched (Fry 2009).

What makes a city live long and well? 'The Sustainable Wheel'⁴ proposes seven segments: environmental influence, innovative development, affectivity, aesthetics, quality, authenticity and compatibility; a combination of hard and soft issues. Where is social sustainability placed in this 'Wheel'? We suggest that the last five segments, including affectivity, all contain something which is important for social sustainability: immaterial qualities based on human ways of being. They are difficult to measure individually but the combined result is apparent almost immediately in how a place is taken care of by its residents in a continuous process. Lack of care becomes evident quite rapidly in rising costs for maintenance, repair and social support.

Today we are facing a big challenge in handling urban renewal: it is imperative to redefine what has to be regulated as part of a redevelopment scheme or planning permission. The previously mentioned hybrid of 'renewal' and 'sustainability' makes us conscious of the fact that we are all affected by, and therefore involved in, the *process* of renewing and revitalizing a place. To rethink urban renewal and sustainability is to challenge established discourses and try to remove cognitive obstacles. For instance, the theory of discourse teaches us that society organizes our life in different unambiguous concepts that are fixated and presented as objective truths (Winther Jørgensen & Philips 2000:7). As there are no objective truths, we realize that the issue of social considerations is not explained clearly enough but has to be redefined for its specific purpose. For example, In *Arkitektur der forandrer – fra ghetto till velfungerande byområde* dedicated to the connection between house and life, Vacher's heading 'Humans and architecture need to be thought together'⁵ (2008: 36.) clarifies the concept of social sustainability by focusing on human rather than social behavior. Similarly, Carlton Brown, the co-founder of the development corporation *Full Spectrum NY*⁶, working with a housing development in Harlem, explains that human sustainability has to do with the question of how to empower people without destroying the earth (which is against human nature as it prioritizes survival). Consequently, when we talk about human sustainability the focal point is that human ways of being in the revitalization process contribute to people caring, feeling well and empowered, and thus increase the prospect of the place becoming socially stable. Human ways of being are based on health/survival, protection, security, community, identity, integrity, aesthetic simplification and meaning. These criteria are hence to be translated into living conditions.

To use the inherent capacity of a place means developing its authenticity.

The authentic is true to its meaning and function (Graffman 2007). In the late 1920s Le Corbusier, miscalculated - or merely fulfilled his own personal vision - when he abandoned the traditional for the modern in realizing his housing project for the industrial workers in Liege and Pessac. Le Corbusier did not understand that the workers, who already spent all day long in a cold, impersonal, industrial environment, were not the ones bored with traditional design (de Botton 2006:6). They wanted their houses to reflect their *experience of living* and 'looked for a confirmation of their own image of a house' (Moore, Allen, and Lyndon 2001:140). In short, they looked for meaning not just physical function. While Le Corbusier offered them cold functional concrete they were longing for the rural homes that they had once known. In Le Corbusier's houses they could not associate, they did not know what to expect and neither did they recognize themselves nor understand what it was all about. Since then, we have repeatedly seen this sort of building project; the combination of restricted resources and the vision of anyone other than the residents (anticipated or actual).

While the planning of an apartment might very well be in tune with a person's material needs, the immaterial, not least as expressed in the public environment, could be seriously questioned. Referring to Barbra Wilson (2008): '...while architecture is inherently social, the relation between a building, the community and the individual user is rarely considered even today' (Ibid. p. 30). When considering the inherent capacity of a place, the user's actual experience of it is essential. Physical form also affects people socially, (see for instance *Arkitektur der forandrer*, 2008) but to state to what extent form follows function - or the opposite - is not particularly relevant without in-depth knowledge about the inhabitant's everyday life. Sieverst (2007) points out that city planning appears to be trapped in an old traditional⁷ format (such as regional planning or compact towns) while the reality of how we live or want to live today is beyond these models (Ibid. pp. 28 & 33). On this point we agree with Sieverst; that revitalization for our time should focus more on human and social aspects, involving knowledge about people's way of imagining and using a city, to avoid being limited by established models of planning.

For instance, the Million Programs were initially lacking the inbuilt capacity to reflect their future inhabitants. The Programs applied a rigid and homogenous consensus about beauty, form, scale and color. This architectural language is often neat and clean – but also cold and stiff. The places had no obvious vibrancy or vitality, no character, which is a sign of disregard to human ways of being. Here we use the past tense intentionally as, in some cases, the residents of these housing projects have managed to transform their place from one which is merely fit for living to something which allows for some kind of dwelling. This inherent capacity has to be explored and further developed in the revitalization process. There is a tendency to try to understand a place by focusing on measurable indicators, which to a certain extent include the social environment, but ‘community vibrancy’ and ‘community potential’ (Holden 2009:434)⁸ are still sadly neglected. Consequently, it is within these concepts that we will find the core value of a place’s authentic life. In recognition of this situation Holden states, *‘By failing to investigate the range of perspectives that inform the development...we lose the critical edge of our understanding of indicators, how they operate in communities, and how research might help them operate better.* (Ibid. p. 31) Just as Holden wants to shift social indicators from mathematical tools to ‘components of the reasoning process and practice’, we argue that unless you identify a place’s inherent capacity you are not able to plan for human/social sustainability. The knowledge is embedded in everyday life but we need to agree on a method which allows us to explore, retrieve and make sense of it.

As suggested above, there are good reasons to use the Million Program areas in Sweden as pilot cases of how to avoid regeneration resulting in degeneration. Since a socially challenging environment is characteristic of these areas⁹, this fact can neither be overlooked nor, with the awareness we have today, can we claim to meet this challenge solely by new and renovated buildings. On the other hand, we think that these have an enormous potential to flourish if revitalized on the basis of their authentic inherent capacity.

Being, living and dwelling - a differentiation.

The majority of Swedes generally know very little about the Million Programs. When a new area is to be developed, initial surveys are conducted, mapping animal and plant life as well as examining how to minimize the negative effects caused by the forthcoming construction works. However, the equivalent surveys concerning how to create good conditions for human and social life are sadly lacking.

It is not politically correct in Sweden to oppose statements such as: ‘everyone has the potential to become what they aspire to be’, or even to mention that people are different. We are all supposed to want the same things and our definition of well-being is considered to be the same. Questions about national identity and how it related to place, roots and community were not asked until in the beginning of the 1990s, when migration increased and people started to settle in more places than before. How identities are formed and developed became a complex anthropological field that debated phenomena such as globalization, migration and cosmopolitanism (Hannerz 1996, Appadurai 1996, among others).

Appadurai criticized studies that were ignoring the ‘multivocality’ and ‘multilocality’, of places and he underlined that group identity rather than geography creates fellowship and belonging (2003: 28). The Million Programs have in that sense been transformed into translocal places¹⁰, a phenomenon that has been difficult for the majority of Swedes to comprehend. From a social sustainability viewpoint, translocal spaces are dealing with a contemporary version of the ‘multicultural riddle’, which is not based on a common cause (as it once was in the US) but on a wide variety of social and human backgrounds, motives, experiences and expectations. We are again, at least in Swedish society, being politically correct, discussing cultural plurality based on a discourse that suggests multicultural areas as something solely positive (and as if we knew what we were talking about). As a democratic country we pride ourselves on being an open-minded society where not only the politicians but society at large praises this cultural plurality. So when

councils and developers are approaching these areas for renewal, they take as their guide a combination of an imagined picture and a fairly naïve story of cultural pluralism rather than demonstrating a real desire to map and understand the authentic multicultural life in these areas. In the plans for revitalization the people responsible express aspirations to attract a new population (if not middle class native Swedes at least an ethnic minority with resources) by offering more exclusive homes for rent or purchase: more expensive houses, condos and semi-detached houses supposedly serving to erode or at least decrease the stigma of the area in question.

There is a potent, almost overwhelming risk that the problems will remain, you can never become what you are not, meaning that this type of revitalization takes more the form of a 'makeover' and is thus, despite good intentions, a doomed project. This negative standpoint is motivated by demographic facts: people who want to stay in the area cannot afford the new houses¹¹, those who can afford them will make other choices to avoid further segregation (as long as the social stigma attached to the area prevails) and people from other areas will not move there as long as 'multicultural' equals 'social deprivation'. To conclude, 'community vibration' and 'community potential' have to be examined and implemented in the renewal process before material exclusiveness will have a chance of making a difference. In other words, revitalization must incorporate people's understanding of the place. When aiming at sustainability, it is first of all essential to explore the meaning people attach to the place as expressed by how it corresponds to their needs for being and for living.

Ethnographic field studies such as participant observation, in-depth interviews and cultural analysis offer profound knowledge of a place's inherent capacity to revitalize. It can define new norms for architects and builders by contesting established truth: typologies and fixed forms. For instance, what constitutes the norm for 'beauty' appears to be based on cultural experience. This is not surprising as beauty engages more senses than the aesthetic judgment, which is immediate, subconscious and un-reflected (Postrel 2003). Referring to the Million Programs, it is not necessarily the culture of the native country as much as the culture resulting from growing up and living in these environments that has shaped people's idea of beauty. In *The Architecture of Happiness* (2006), when talking about the psychology of beauty, de Botton argues that the human being desires houses/environments that represent what we lack in life. For example, 'we can assume that a person who is weighed down by a chaotic life aspires to live in a whitewashed, rational loft apartment, which in our eyes appears achingly well organized'¹² (Ibid., p. 166.). This is a typical privileged top-down approach to architecture and its relation to people, partly based on the idea that the physical room is a priority when choosing a place to live. When investigating the Million Programs it becomes obvious that most residents are quite satisfied with the form and structure of the house in which they live. Material desires are set aside for other existential priorities, which we define as typical for being and dwelling. Values other than material needs were constantly emphasized in the Husby Dialog (June 2009)¹³, a development project involving residents in the area. One man said that he was happy to pay more in rent if it meant the realization of a youth recreation centre. Another elderly man said 'I don't care too much about the color of my balcony. I need a place where I can 'hang out' in my spare time. I have nowhere to go and just be me.' In other words, we should be sensitive to the fact that 'the beauty' of the Million Programs is questioned more from the outside than from the inside. When analyzing space, the 'living identity', meaning the identity you develop in relation to your neighborhood, is a key to understanding the place. We agree with de Botton's statement that, 'a multitude of styles is a natural cause of our multitude of inner needs.' (2006: 168) The fulfillment of these needs is what differentiates dwelling from living.

An example: Dwelling in relation to human and social sustainable planning in the Million Programs.

'This thinking about building does not presume to discover architectural ideas, let alone to give rules for building. This venture in thought does not view building as an art or as a technique of construction; rather it traces building back into that domain to which everything that is belongs.' (Martin Heidegger)¹⁴

There is a clear confusion in the understanding between living and dwelling in many of the Million Programs. This has actually developed into a major problem provoking antagonism amongst the inhabitants. When a man in Vollemosse, a Million Program in Denmark, was asked why he wanted to leave the area he replied: 'Easy question, it's because of the immigrants. They are just hanging out here like they own the entire place...' (Vacher 2008: 38). This attitude is also common amongst Swedish natives who live or visit the Million Programs. Some women in Husby explained that they felt watched by the men who were hanging out in the area, another filled in: 'Don't they have anything else to do but to sit?' Dwelling involves the basic human need of community but how this is expressed varies culturally. While many immigrants are accustomed to meet their friends in public places, urban adult Swedes socialize in their homes rather than in their back yards. Coming together in public places or 'corners' of your neighborhood is limited to young people and the 'hanging out' culture is actually more or less associated with youths of the Million Program areas but has spread into other groups and areas including city centers.

In several informal interviews, mostly older men with different East African backgrounds expressed that their longing for places which allowed community was more prominent than their need for renovated buildings. 'We don't have any natural places to come together', one of them said, when asked about form, design and planning. 'This place is nice but boring', said another man pointing out the lack of liveliness: no noise and movement¹⁵. The importance of community for dwelling is interesting since it is closely attached to the idea of being, which of course is a precondition for being 'well'. If we are to revitalize the outside rooms of these areas with regard to dwelling, the need for community must be translated into conditions for living. Dwelling does not relate solely to your house but to where you live and feel at home, which includes the entire neighborhood. This coincides with Susan Seagert's explanation that 'The notion of dwelling highlights the contrast between house and home' (1986: 287) which, according to her, implies a more flexible relationship between a person and their home. Dwelling is a combined immaterial and material experience: it is enabled when living also includes being. Börjesson (2006) clearly outlines this distinction when she states that 'Sustainability should thus not be reduced to the idea of physically sustaining but means a contribution to an improved and continued human well-being, making no distinction between body and mind' (Ibid. p. 7). Dwelling is made possible when a place represents meaning. With regard to the revitalization of the Million Programs, the ability to design places which allow dwelling could be considered equivalent to designing an affectively sustainable object.

Wasted space: the importance of the relation of the invisible to the visible.

The Japanese sign for landscape "fuu kei" symbolizes the assimilation of the invisible (nature and the accumulation of time and place) with visible objects, where the visible substance only has meaning in relation to the people (Sasaki 2007). In other words, the very idea of (urban) landscaping is illusory unless it has a clear relation to the humans within it. Sasaki's reflection is actualized with the notion of wasted space. These are often in-between, overlooked spaces but also misplaced places that once made sense, at least in theory, but now are obsolete and neglected.

Wasted space is often discussed in terms of the potential place of unnecessary 'bulks of streets' (Macdonald 2007) like in the American suburbs. It is also used when re-thinking

abandoned land or industrial buildings (Curulli 2007). In the Million Programs wasted space can be characterized by misplaced spots of vegetation (mini-parks) that no one attends to. Managing these places requires dedication from the residents, the municipality and the real estate owners. A clear example of why revitalization must be a process! Wasted space can also be rough (often intimidating and narrow) gaps between the concrete houses or tunnel paths and passages that are abandoned or moderately used. The two latter examples are not only wasted space but contribute to an unsafe environment due to disregard of the relation of the invisible to the visible. The idea behind this sort of planning was to separate the walking path from car traffic but it remains a poor solution to this type of problem. When applying a purely rational perspective it is easy to argue for 'the visible'. However, since reality has made this type of planning socially unsustainable, it ought to be rethought rapidly.

It is easy to draw attention to wasted space by debating obvious problems but 'A wasted space may well be an area with problems but should never be pre-judged. An inventory of potential ought to be made of every place before its eventual problem is asserted.' ('Long Live the City', Design Boost 2008)¹⁶. Curulli also points out that 'Industrial buildings or abused landscapes are not empty containers or 'blank' surfaces where anything is possible.' (Ibid. p.19) We need to understand that a place might have an association beyond an outsider's perspective.

When examining the potential of a place's inherent capacity prior to development, wasted space must also be considered from an inside perspective. Sasaki theorizes (2007:13): 'In which form will human sensibility express the meaning of the visible and the invisible?' The embedded question requires an in- depth analysis of experiences. Sasaki's 'walk through evaluation' is a method under development for research questions of the following kind: *Take a pen and a paper, walk through your neighborhood and chose a couple of stopping points. At each stop look closely and critically at your environment. Write down what works and what doesn't work and make immediate recommendations for improvement.*

Now imagine doing the same thing with people with of very varied backgrounds: young and old, academics and blue collars, Norwegians and Moroccans, architects and builders. After the walk assemble the group around a table and give each person the same amount of time to read out loud what they wrote down. This micro-approach method, used amongst others by Susan de Laval (Arkitekturanalys)¹⁷, has proven to be a useful tool in the revitalization process: it points to priorities and comes up with realistic suggestions. De Laval describes how this method makes residents, architects and planners come together with the common aim of examining and exploring the exterior room of a revitalization area. Ethnographic methods often prove that the meaning of a place is represented by flowing rather than fixed images, which evoke associations, recognition, understanding and expectation (Gärdenfors, 2006, Oakley, 2007, Pöppel, 2007). The intention is not to establish *the* meaning of a space, but to reveal its authentic potential as seen from several inside perspectives. This is an example of an approach which preconditions the fulfillment of human needs. If a place does not combine the visible with the invisible, to quote Sasaki, the space is a waste: it does not make sense to the people for whose benefit it has been planned.

A practical and successfully realized example is Bankside Open Spaces Trust in London.¹⁸ The trust was initiated by Southwark Council on the socially mixed South Bank area and invites residents, including children, to come together and create green places on wasted space. This is a way of attending to small urban gardens which would otherwise have been neglected, to create new ones, stimulate feelings of community and enhance knowledge of flowers and plants. A 'white space'¹⁹ has become a green place.

Conclusion: It takes a human and cultural platform to combine the hard and the soft city.

The majority of all development and revitalization projects are basically ruled by technical norms and regulations, which have also set the standard for planning and building

permissions. This focus is an expression of the ‘hard city’ approach in planning. When this approach is applied without regard to other contextual factors the result has become all too obvious and has negative overtones. The sharpened focus on sustainable urban planning has brought urban development and regeneration problems even more to the fore.

The notion of the ‘soft city’ has consequently gained increased momentum but nevertheless stayed insufficiently explored. One possible reason for this situation is of course that the soft city notion is multidisciplinary and demands a combination of humanities, social science and technical science, which has often resulted in more words than action. Our impression is that accomplishment has stayed with statements like; ‘soft issues have to be seriously considered in the planning processes.

A new platform.

Central to this new platform, which should act as an interrogative base from which typologies and fixed forms are constantly questioned in urban planning, is its ability to propose directions on how human and cultural factors should be approached and valued.

1. The difference between dwelling and living, where the former has its emphasis on the mental and the latter on the physical.
2. The difference between human ways of being and human ways of living, where the former adapt slowly and the latter change rapidly.
3. The re-interpretation of meaning in its cognitive rather than philosophical sense (Gärdenfors, 2006, Oakley, 2007, Pöppel, 2007).

This platform must be considered as a tool in constant development: an aid in the planning process and not yet another self-fulfilling point of discussion.

The tool.

The aim of the tool is to combine dwelling and living without making these notions merge, which could easily obstruct the goal of bringing human and cultural issues on a par with technical ones. It is important to emphasize that hard and soft city issues always have to walk ‘hand in hand’. A solely soft city is of course neither desirable nor attainable. The presentation of the platform is still at an early stage and needs to be developed further into a functioning tool. An important base for the argumentation on which the platform is constructed is attention to human ways of being as a precondition for a holistic take on sustainability. The schematic differentiation of being, living and dwelling is only for the purposes of comprehensibility as in reality there is continuous interaction.

DWELLING - or how to create meaning of being and living	
BEING <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health/survival • Nutrition • Protection • Security • Community • Identity • Integrity • Aesthetics 	LIVING <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shelter • Facilities • Transport • Other infrastructure • Provision • Recreation • Other services
MEANING – or how to create authenticity including taking account of culture. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Association • Recognition • Understanding • Expectation 	

The tool proposes the following: creating conditions for dwelling is a qualification for a sustainable built environment. For these conditions to be put in place, the crucial elements

for being and living have to be judged from the meaning they convey. A knowledge base of meaning is built up by applying this tool in:

- Studies of traditions as expressed over time in the built environment.
- Studies of other types of planning and building experiences.
- Anthropological/Ethnographic studies/investigations.

A Human and Cultural Platform ought to be established before any urban development or redevelopment is granted planning permission.

The Million Programs – show cases.

We will use the Million Programs as show cases for how to approach city renewal but the concepts and methods for examining a place's authenticity are also generally applicable. In this context it is important to emphasize that every place is unique. Therefore all methods will need to be adjusted accordingly.

An anthropological neighborhood study involves much more than interviewing. The ethnographic method requires observation and a profound analysis of how meaning is created. We are not merely reporting but also interpreting the human and social condition which is crucial for new ways of planning. Earlier research confirms that residents have difficulties reflecting over hypothetical changes in their conditions for living (and how these would influence dwelling). Normally, they are unable to tell you what they want to have, only reporting which current conditions work and which do not, what they like and dislike in the house and in the environment in which they live (dwell) today (Nylander, 1999).

The following is an example of a research model (qualitative) to assess human and social sustainability for the Million Programs. It is quite general and therefore also applicable to other places. Initially we stated that defining social and human sustainability is a difficult task and the cause-effect relation ambiguous. We therefore suggest that the sustainability objective has to be clearly articulated prior to the examination:

To aim at Human and Social sustainability is to (with reference to the Human and Cultural Platform):

- **build a dynamic society where basic needs are fulfilled²⁰ (health, survival, protection, security)**
- **examine a place's uniqueness and potential, its inherent capacity (identity)**
- **maintain a place's capacity to endure and manage crises, which is part of its inherent capacity (identity, security)**
- **obstruct segregation/homogeneity (integrity)**
- **guard and respect different representations of fellowship within the community (community, security)**
- **respect the fact that beauty is [culturally] negotiated whilst aesthetics is immediate (aesthetics)**

Research methods for an ethnographic field-study examining the issues above:

Participant observation: By including a representative but small number of households, a broad picture of the place will be obtained. From this in-depth participant method, values and ideas regarding what makes living good or bad as well as detailed knowledge of the area and its population will be accessible for analysis. This comprehensive description will include family, friends, work, leisure, social networks, consumer behavior etc. The aim is to truly understand the everyday life of a number of residents.

In-depth interviews: In urban studies it is impossible to let everyone speak but with an ethnographic 'open theme question' – preferably based on the research from the previous

method – in-depth interviews with a small selection of people will be a good foundation for the contextual social and cultural understanding of the place. Key local people should be included, like merchandisers and public employees, but also regular residents. The aim is to gain increased understanding of the interaction between the public space and the individual. Where are the actual centers and where are the social forces of the place?

Observations: To observe the flow of people on a couple of specific spots over a period of time for an understanding of the individual and the environment. The formerly described ‘Walk through evaluation’ is a more controlled but excellent ethnographic observational method since it will provide a wide variety of spontaneously given information for analysis.

Examination of new market potential: The focus here will shift from the actual residents to future residents. For instance, a greater number of intercept interviews in other areas should be made to estimate the interest in the place to be revitalized. The context is very important for the ethnographer when conducting a short, high-quality conversation and the questions should be as open ended as possible. The aim is to understand how the place can be attractive to potential residents.

Analysis and integration: A holistic cultural analysis of the material must then be made and integrated into the planning, designing and building for a human and social sustainable revitalization.

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¹ According to our practical experience, it has become a truism that the concept of sustainability exists within the triangle of ecological, economical and social considerations.

² The Swedish Million program is a governmental housing program (1965-1974) that reached its goal by building a million homes at affordable prices within a 10 year period. Today these areas are contested as many of them are isolated islands that include not only social but also ethnic and cultural segregation. They have until recently been highly neglected. Many of the houses are in desperate need of renovation and entire neighborhoods are suffering from social stigmatization. They all need to be revitalized to the point of reinvention. A lot has been said about the initial failures and the increasing decay and less about the' capacity of these places. See: "Arkitekture der forandrer- fra ghetto til velfungerende byområde" (eds. Bech-Danielsen, 2008) for a survey on this topic.

³ See the 1997 article "Recent Findings on Subjective Well-Being " by Diener and Suh (University of Illinois) at: <http://www.psych.uiuc.edu/~ediener/hottopic/paper1.html>

⁴ Proceedings from the 2nd *DesignBoost* event 15-17 October 2008.

⁵ Authors' translation. (Människor och arkitektur skall tänkas samman.)

⁶ See article in metropolimag.com "Reaching Toward Human Sustainability in Harlem. A look at the multi-purposed projects of housing developer Carlton Brown." (October 15, 2007).

⁷ Osborne (1995), drawing on Ricoeur, also implies that there are negative effects on real improvements in society when traditionality is regarded as a way of preserving rather than of gaining experience.

⁸ Holden is using the concepts from Stapleton and Garrod (2008) article 'Policy preceding possibility?' Examining headline composite sustainability indicators in the United Kingdom. The article can be found in *Social Indicators Research*, 87, 495–502.

⁹ See for instance *Boverkets* (The National Board of Housing, Building and Planning) report *Integration och etniska hierarkier i boendet* (2007) for a detailed account of this issue.

¹⁰ Global mobility has created local communities within nations reflecting a transnational environment. See for instance (Appadurai 2003) for translocal places.

¹¹ See a column by The National Board of Housing, Building and Planning director Ines Uusmann in *Svenska Dagbladet*, 20 juli 2007. http://www.svd.se/opinion/brannpunkt/artikel_247001.svd

¹² Author's translation.

¹³ The Husby Dialog is a part of Järvalyftet, a project aiming to involve residents in the planning program for renovation, the initiative of the real estate company Svenska Bostäder. For more information see <http://www.jarvadiologen.se/>

¹⁴ Martin Heidegger, "Building Dwelling Thinking", as it appeared in *Poetry, Language, Thought* trans. Alfred Hofstadter. New York: Harper and Row, 1971: 323.

¹⁵ See also: Toje, A. (2009) "Höghus bryter sönder sociala band" ["High-rise houses break social bonds", author's translation] in *Axess*, Nr 4 may 2009

¹⁶ 'Long Live the City' is the official BoostMag for *Design Boost* 2008. See #9 'The importance of asking questions.' <http://www.designboost.se/>

¹⁷ See: <http://www.arkitekturanalys.se/default.asp?headld=1> for more information. Susanne de Laval's dissertation on this subject is called *Planners and residents in dialogue. Methods for evaluation* (1995).

¹⁸ www.bost.org.uk

¹⁹ The notion of 'white space' has emerged from a commercial initiative in Japan to re-colonize all left over or redundant space in the contemporary city.

²⁰ This is an obvious consideration when thinking about sustainability (regardless of guiding principles) and is clearly stated in The Bruntland Report.