



Combating Inequalities through Innovative Social Practices of and for Young People in Cities across  
Europe

Cities in their national contexts

## **MALMÖ**

Symptoms and causes of inequality affecting young people

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This report is part of Work Package 2 of the research project entitled “Combating Inequalities through Innovative Social Practices of and for Young People in Cities across Europe” (CITISPYCE). CITISPYCE has been devised against the back drop of research which shows the disproportionate impact of the global economic crisis on young people across Europe. This includes excessively high rates of youth unemployment (particularly amongst those who face multiple social, economic and cultural disadvantages) and threats to the social provision enjoyed by previous generations. CITISPYCE partners are working on a three year multi-disciplinary, multi-sectoral programme to examine the current state of the art and ideas concerning social innovation against inequalities faced by young people, explore socially innovative practices being developed by and for young people in urban areas, and test the transferability of local models of innovative practice in order to develop new policy approaches. The CITISPYCE consortium covers ten European countries and is funded by the European Commission (FP7, Socio-economic Sciences & Humanities).



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## 1. Malmö – a presentation

Malmö, located in the south-west corner of Sweden in the Scania (Skåne) region, has 304,849 inhabitants (2012), which make it the third biggest city in Sweden. The notion of Malmö as a city dates back to the 12<sup>th</sup> century. At this time, large parts of southern Sweden, including Malmö, belonged to Denmark, which it did until 1658.

Malmö is a growing city. The population is calculated to increase to 324,500 by 2017 (Malmö stad, 2012). Malmö is situated on the border to Denmark, separated by the narrow strait of Öresund. Connecting Malmö with Denmark’s capital Copenhagen, the Öresund Bridge was inaugurated in 2000. Since then, the Öresund region has become of increased importance to Malmö. Often, Malmö and other cities in the Scania region are described as part of the Öresund region with a population of approximately 3.8 million (2011).

Since the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, the population of Malmö has been steadily growing - however with the exception of the 1980s and 90s, a period which often is described as a major regression in the history of Malmö. As industry peaked at the end of the 60s, Malmö had a population of 265,000. The industrial city of Malmö was relying on in particular ship-building and textiles. Work force immigration was at this time a significant factor of the population growth. But as a result of the crisis, many industries were shut down in the 70s and 80s, causing the city to lose much of its power of attraction. A lot of people chose to leave Malmö and settle in detached houses in residential areas outside of the municipality. During the period 1970-1984 Malmö lost more than 35,000 inhabitants, equivalent to a decrease with over 13% of the city's population. In the early 90s, the majority of the remaining industries closed down, causing a massive unemployment. Coinciding with this, the number of immigrants,<sup>1</sup> mainly refugees, increased dramatically, contributing to the population starting to increase again.

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<sup>1</sup> In this report, the terms immigrants and foreign background will be used. The term immigrant refers to people born in another country than Sweden, while foreign background is defined as having two parents born in another country than Sweden.

During the last two decades, Malmö has undergone a profound change in its character. As the character of the industrial city faded, Malmö was forced to solve the situation. Since the mid-90s, the local government, led by social democrats, has paved the way for a transformation of Malmö to a post-industrial city. A number of key actions have been symbolic for the transformation, such as the building of the Öresund Bridge, the establishment of Malmö University and the transformation of former industry areas in the western parts of the harbour to areas of environmentally sustainable residential, commercial and office buildings. In this area the city's landmark Turning Torso stands 190 metres tall.

Population growth has been part of the transformation. The connection to Copenhagen and continuous high immigration has been important factors explaining the growth rate during the last 15 years. The transformation has also turned Malmö into a younger city, to some extent explained by the establishment of the University. 36,143 persons are between 16-24 years old, equivalent to 12% of the total population (2011). The young population sets a mark on the city's cultural life. In the city area around Möllevången in the central city, there is a vibrant music-, art- and nightlife. Many artists emerge from different parts of the city, expressing different genres and cultural backgrounds.

Indeed, Malmö is often described as a multi-cultural city, as 170 nationalities are represented in the population. During the 50s and 60s, workforce immigration was the main reason that the share of immigrants raised from 5% to 12%. From the 90s and on, the refugee and family reunification immigration has contributed to the current figures, where 30% of the population is born outside of Sweden (2012). This is one of the highest proportions of foreign born residents in Swedish cities. Furthermore, 10% are born in Sweden with both parents born in another country. It should be taken into account, however, that the second largest immigrant group comes from Denmark, which is just 30 km away over the Öresund Bridge. Other large immigrant groups come from Iraq, former Yugoslavia and Poland. Malmö also have the largest population of Roma in Sweden, around 8,000 persons.

When it comes to politics and administration, the system of Swedish government is divided into three administrative levels: the central state, the 20 regional counties (landsting) and the 290 local municipalities (kommuner). There is a high degree of decentralisation. Regional and local authorities are being granted considerable autonomy, although the national government provides the framework and structure for local government activities. The regions are responsible for, amongst other things, health care and public transport. The municipalities impose tax on private income and are legally bound to be in charge for several key institutions, such as social services, education and child care, elderly care, planning and building and environmental issues. An important part in the decentralisation of power is that the municipalities in Sweden have a planning monopoly, meaning that the municipality decides how land and water in the municipality should be planned.

Malmö is a municipality divided into five city areas. Each city area has a local parliament and self-government regarding certain areas such as social service and elderly care.

## 2. Inequality in the city and the response to it

Swedish society has historically been associated with certain values. Safety, equality and state-provided welfare are attributes that often comes up when the “Swedish model” is lifted in international discussions. In the post-industrial globalised society, however, the Swedish model is under reconstruction (Stigendal, 2011: 20).

The societal changes during the last decades have had consequences for the equality among young people. The development of the Swedish society has created different opportunities for different groups of young people, often coinciding in what part of the city they live. The opportunities coming with the transformation of Malmö have proven to be unevenly distributed. Malmö has become a segregated city, where people with different conditions are living separated from each other. Many young people are living in areas characterised by social exclusion.

### 2.1. Economy and labour market

In Sweden, employment policies, strategies and legislation are set out by the central governmental institutions. The Swedish national agency for employment, Arbetsförmedlingen, is the nation’s largest provider of jobs, also responsible for national programmes for labour market policies and collecting data on employment and unemployment. Arbetsförmedlingen is a state-controlled organisation, but local and regional actors might also pursue in actions and projects to deal with the unemployment in the local context. There is also a tradition among NGOs and private actors to work against unemployment among young people.

While unemployment rates in Sweden are not high in general and have been relatively stable during the last 10 years, the labour market has become gradually harder to enter for young people. This is evident when looking at the unemployment data for young people in Sweden. The relation between general unemployment and youth unemployment has moved from 1:1.5 to 1:2.5 during the time span 2003-2008 (Håkansson, 2011: 4). Recent statistics show that Swedish youth unemployment is above the European average, while the general unemployment is one of the lowest in the EU.

#### *It’s hard to get a job for young people in Malmö*

According to the EU statistics, the national youth unemployment rate (2011, age span 15-24) is around 23% (Eurofound, 2012: 5; European Commission, 2012: 21). Current national figures (March 2013), which use the age span 18-24, gives a rate of 17.4%. The difference could be explained by the difference in age span. In the European statistics, a large number of young people who attend primary or secondary education are included in the statistics, hence the larger figure.

In Malmö, unemployment rate figures (March 2013) show that 23.2% of the young people (18-24) in the workforce are unemployed. Looking at the total youth population (18-24), the unemployment ratio is 12.3%, compared to 10.9% for the national average (Malmö stad, 2013b: 21). The corresponding national

figure for young people in the age span 15-24 is 11.5%, according to the EU Youth Report. (European Commission, 2012: 22).

Compared to the other major cities in Sweden (Stockholm and Göteborg), youth unemployment seems to be greater in Malmö, regardless what statistics are used (see table 1 below). The larger figure in Malmö may, however, have a statistical explanation. A problem with the unemployment rate is that full-time students are often registered at Arbetsförmedlingen in order to get a part-time job. These full time students are consequently seen as part of the work force, although they have a full-time occupation. Another, more Malmö-specific, problem is that the figures do not include people working in other countries. Statistics show that 1,172 young people aged 16-24 worked full-time in Denmark in 2010 (Malmö stad, 2013b: 29). But according to the official statistics, they are not working at all. The statistical problems considered, the figure 23.2% might be exaggerated.

	Malmö	Sweden	Stockholm	Göteborg
Unemployment rate (18-24) (March 2013)	23.2	17.4	9.3	15.1
Unemployment ratio (18-24) (March 2013)	12.3	10.9	N/A	N/A
Employment rate (16-24) (2011)	34.2	43.9	42.3	40.5
NEETS (16-29) (2010)	15.6	11.1	10.1	10.9
Long-term rate,% of unemployed (18-24) (March 2013)	20.6	7.9	N/A	N/A

*Table 1: Summary of youth unemployment rate, unemployment ratio, employment rate, share of NEETs and long term unemployment rate.*

Nevertheless, there are inequalities in the labour market for young people. The local varieties in Malmö are high. The housing areas Herrgården and Sofielund have significantly higher figures than other parts of the city. There are also substantial inequalities connected to where you are born. 37.8% of young people in Malmö born abroad are unemployed. Moreover, a greater share of young men are unemployed, compared to young women (26.7% compared to 19.5%).

As a way of compensating the uncertainty in methods calculating the unemployment rate, the *employment rate* can be used as a supplemental method of comparison. According to the EU statistics, the national youth employment rate is slightly above 40% (Eurofound, 2012: 11). National statistics, which use a slightly narrower age span (16-24 compared to 15-24), gives an employment rate of 43.9%. Again, this higher figure could be explained by a smaller proportion of the population who likely are attending education. The employment rate among young people (16-24) in Malmö is 34.2% (2011), compared to 33.9% in 2008. The figures are lower than Stockholm (42.3%) and Göteborg (40.5%). Studies show, however, that the percentage should be around 5 units higher when taking the young people working in Denmark into account (Malmö stad, 2013b: 32). As in the case with unemployment rates, there is a great difference in employment rate between young people born in Sweden and born abroad. Young men (20-

24) born in Sweden have an employment rate of 54.2% (2010) while 29.1% of the young men born abroad are employed (Salonen, 2012: 29). For women, the difference between natives and immigrants is even larger.

The employment rate measure also has the problem of including people who are in education, and might or might not be looking for a job. Both the unemployment figures and the employment rate are heterogeneous measures that include many different types of situations for young people in Malmö. Furthermore, it does not tell us what kinds of employment the young people have. Nor does it take into account the work that is done in the households, often by women (Stigendal, 2007). The data seems to be hard to rely on. During the last couple of years, authorities have started looking into the *NEET* (not in Employment, Education or Training) indicator, as it might provide a more accurate picture of the situation.

According to the EU statistics, the national figure of NEETs is 7.5% (Eurofound, 2012: 29; European Commission, 2012: 58). This is a bit lower than the figure of 11.1% in a recently published report on NEETs in Sweden (Arbetsförmedlingen, 2013). The larger figure in the Swedish report can again be explained by the different age span (16-29), compared to the age span of 15-24 used in the European reports. A younger population in the statistics means more people potentially in education. Also, the Swedish figures are from 2010, while the EU Youth Report uses a figure from 2011.

The Swedish report shows that 15.6% of all young people (16-29) in Malmö could be categorised as NEETs in 2010. In absolute numbers, this is equivalent to 10,305 young people in Malmö who do not go to school or have a job. The statistics also state that the share of NEETs in the age group 16-29 has increased from 14% in 2008. The share in Malmö is the highest of the three largest cities in Sweden (see table 1). The area of Herrgården in the area Rosengård in Malmö is extraordinary. Here, nearly every third person in the age group 16-29 is not in employment, education or training. Another area with a high share of NEETs is Sofielund, which is more centrally located in Malmö. Here, the share of NEETs accounts to at least 20%.

Those born abroad are overrepresented in the NEET category. The share among young people born abroad is 21.6%, compared to 8.8% of the young people born in Sweden (Arbetsförmedlingen, 2013: 26). Furthermore, almost one third

**Local response: Jobb Malmö**

The city of Malmö is running a number of activities and projects under the umbrella '*Jobb Malmö*'. Activities including mapping of competences, guidance, help with job search and assessment of work and vocational practice. All unemployed aged 18 or above are welcome to participate.

Other activities include *SEF UNGA*, a municipal 'employment agency' for young people, which offers young people employment within the city areas and administrations. *SEF UNGA* aims to give participants networks and working life experience. The jobs are 'real' in the sense that they give a normal wage. All young people employed in the project are also offered a tutor.

*Jobb Först* (job first) is a measure for young people 18-24 living in areas within the areas in the city's Area programme (see chapter 2.2.1). The programme gives young people possibilities for a 12 month employment in the city area where they live.

of the NEETs in Sweden have not reported to the unemployment office or any other institution. In Malmö, this corresponds to several thousand young people (Salonen, 2012). Thus, what they do for a living or how they get by is not known. As Arbetsförmedlingen states, there is a risk that *“this is a core of young people with very large establishment problems and with high probability risk of becoming permanently excluded from society”* (Arbetsförmedlingen, 2013: 6 (my translation)).

### ***Short-term unemployment is increasing more than long-term***

The long-term youth unemployment rate (18-24) in Malmö is 20.6%, compared to the national figure of below 10% in both the 18-24 age group used by Arbetsförmedlingen and the 15-24 age group used in the EU Youth Report (Malmö stad, 2013b: 26; European Commission, 2012: 23). Statistics show that the long-term unemployment rates have increased during the last ten years. The share of young people remaining in unemployment for longer periods is, however, relatively small.<sup>2</sup> The majority of unemployed young people are unemployed for shorter periods, which could be explained by an increase of temporary employments (Arbetsförmedlingen, 2013: 16).

56% of young women and 44% of the young men (16-24) in Sweden have temporary employment (2011), a small increase since 2007.<sup>3</sup> In Malmö, the numbers are higher than the national average and higher than the figures in Stockholm and Göteborg.

### **Inequalities - caused by a changing labour market, welfare changes and/or structural discrimination?**

The relatively high youth unemployment in Sweden is often argued to have its explanation in the fact that the labour market of today is in need of skilled and well-educated personnel and thus resistant to hire non-experienced work force. As in most western countries, the shift on the labour market from production to service has struck young people in particular. Many jobs in the current sectors demand a university degree and/or several years of experience. This has caused many of the previous entry-level jobs to disappear. Young people without a degree are left to low-qualified jobs within the service-sector. Another possible structural cause is the fact that Sweden has a system that makes the transition between education and work complicated, compared with for example Denmark and Germany where apprentice-systems integrated into the education has made the introduction to labour market easier (Håkansson, 2011).

#### **Local Response: Sofielund Agency**

*Sofielund Agency* is an NGO-driven project aimed at young unemployed people in the age of 16-29 in Malmö. The project offers a variety of activities that are formed according to each individual's needs and wishes. The project aims at, using theory and practical training, making it easier for young adults to establish themselves on the labour market or to begin studying. Young people can attend in three so called workshops; re-design/re-cycling, events and media.

The project is funded in part by the European Social Fund (ESF) and run by the NGO *IRUC*, in cooperation with the unemployment agency in Malmö and several other actors.

<sup>2</sup> Compared to older age groups and to EU-levels of long-term youth unemployment.

<sup>3</sup> Own calculations based on data from ULF/SILC 2011, SCB AKU Quarter 4 2007). Note that the age span (16-24) differs from the one used in the Eurofound report (15-24).

Increase in shorter terms of youth unemployment could be explained by the increase of temporary employments. Young people are certainly facing uncertainty on the labour market. Many are jumping from one short, insecure employment to another, often managed by manpower companies. Thus, in between these jobs, they are having short terms of unemployment. As research has shown, the temporarily employed are the first ones who get unemployed in times of economic crisis (Arbetsförmedlingen, 2013: 26).

Entering the labour market seems to be especially hard for young people living in areas characterised by social exclusion, which are statistically marked by high unemployment. This coincides with a high share of immigrants, low education rate among parents and low results in schools. As some of the young people have immigrated to Sweden, the lack of language skills might make it harder to enter the labour market. Many also argue that the Swedish system of validating foreign education is failing.

Thus, structural and social obstacles hinder many young people from a foreign background from completing their education and thus qualifying for a job. Another possible cause is the lack of social relations. Many of the young people in socially excluded areas do not socialise with people who have a job. On the contrary, the norm is *not* having a job. Many young people leave school without any social relations to adults or people outside the sphere of close friends and family. Thus, participation in the civil society might be crucial for getting a job (Håkansson, 2011: 85). Statistics show that the citizens in socially excluded areas have a relatively high participation in NGOs. The thing that matters here, though, is what kind of organisations they are involved in. Are the NGOs homogenous, or do they offer the young people possibilities to meet with people other background, people who are representing the society, for example by having a job?

#### Local Response: Ung i Sommar

A problem for many school age young people is the lack of summer jobs. The city of Malmö is running the *Ung i Sommar* (Young in the summer) scheme, to which young people in Malmö can apply. The scheme is a 4-week summer internship for young people aged 16-19. The internship aims to provide an insight into the world of work, to give experience and is an opportunity to earn some money. During the internship, the participants get an allowance, however, not comparable with a regular wage.

## 2.2. Welfare regimes

The Swedish model of welfare has been labelled by Esping-Andersen (1999), in his division between three types of welfare regimes, as the Nordic or Social Democratic welfare regime. In this regime, the state is primarily responsible for providing economic security and welfare. The welfare regime is characterised as general, as benefits are not means tested, based on previous income and financed by taxes, not insurances.

Unemployment benefits are to a large extent funded by taxes, but administered primarily by trade unions, where membership has traditionally been high.<sup>4</sup> To be eligible for unemployment benefit, you need to

<sup>4</sup> In 1993, the proportion of trade union membership was 85 %. Since then it has been decreasing, and policy changes in 2006 caused a massive drop in membership rate between 2006 and 2008-. In 2011, the membership rate was around 70 %.

register at the National agency for employment, showing that you are willing to take a job. Most Swedes are members of an unemployment fund (A-kassa), to which a monthly fee is paid. Membership entitles to up to 80% of former salaries for the first 200 days of unemployment. There is, however, ceiling at 680 kronor (around EUR 70) per day. Thus, only people on relatively low incomes will receive 80% of their previous earnings. If you are not a member of any fund, or do not fulfill the conditions (being a member for a full year before becoming unemployed and working twelve months prior to applying for the benefit), you are entitled to a basic payment of 320 kronor (around EUR 35) per day. This is the case for many young people, coming from studies or short term employments.

Social allowance (försörjningsstöd) is available to persons who cannot support themselves, for example unemployed who are not eligible for unemployment benefits, study loans/benefits or other types of income or support. Social allowance should provide what is called 'a reasonable standard of living'. The assessment of social allowance is individualised and takes into account the circumstances of the specific case. Social allowance covers, among other things, the cost of food, clothing, health care, telephone and TV license. Persons eligible for social allowance can also receive support for housing costs, electricity, home insurance and union fees.

Support for sick leave and parental leave is also general and supplied by the state. Sick leave pay normally amounts to 80% of your salary. The employer pays for sick leave for the first two weeks. After 14 days of sickness, the Swedish social insurance agency (Försäkringskassan), pays the compensation instead of the employer, usually also around 80% of the total salary. Benefits can be applied for a maximum of 364 days during a 15-month period.

To conclude, the welfare system has traditionally been general and generous. Policy changes are, however, changing the Swedish welfare model. In the transition from an industry-based society, the state's role in providing welfare has become less dominant and is less efficient in providing welfare for people that are sick, unemployed or on parental leave (Malmö stad, 2013a: 102). We are seeing a shift from 'welfare' to 'workfare', from public sector to market driven collaboration and from understanding marginality in terms of institutional and structural causes to a focus on individualised problems and solutions (Stigendal, 2012). This chapter presents indicators on how these changes affect young people in the city of Malmö.

### **2.2.1. Access to social income**

***Material poverty? No. Increasing gaps? Yes.***

Comparisons of the proportion of the population receiving social allowance are often used as an indicator of inequalities between and within cities. On a national level, the percentage of the Swedish population receiving social allowance is 4.7% (2010). Among young people (19-25) the proportion is double. Furthermore, the proportion is three times higher among young people born outside of Sweden than

young people born in Sweden (Ungdomsstyrelsen, 2012: 153). Malmö is one of the municipalities with the highest share of young people receiving social allowance.

In comparison with other EU-countries, Sweden is not a poor country. According to EU statistics, Sweden has amongst the lowest at-risk-of-poverty or exclusion rates, at risk-of-poverty rates and material poverty in the EU (European Commission, 2012: 48–51). The risk of poverty rate has, however, increased during the period 2005-2010, and the local differences are large. According to a recent study using data from Statistics Sweden, the at-risk-of-poverty rate in Malmö (18-64 years old) is 29% (2008), almost double the figure of the national average (Salonen, 2012: 46; European Commission, 2012: 48).

Statistics on young people's economic situation in Malmö are sparse. There is no information on youth exclusion rate, at-risk-of-poverty-rate or material deprivation rate for young people in Malmö. However, it is likely that the figures for Malmö are significantly higher than the national figures presented in the EU Youth Report. This could also demonstrate by consulting another indicator: poverty rate among children. According to a recent study (Angelin et al., 2012), poverty<sup>5</sup> rate among children (up to 18 years old) in

Malmö has during the last decade been 30-35%, compared to the national average of 11-15%. The precarious situation for children is also evident when consulting the figures in the EU Youth Report, which shows that the risk of poverty for Swedish children (up to 18) is over 30% (European Commission, 2012: 48).

Despite the lack of indicators, we can see that the inequalities are increasing. In recent reports, Statistics Sweden shows that the at-risk-of-poverty rate has increased with 50% during the period for a specific group; the unemployed (Statistiska Centralbyrån, 2012). A report from OECD shows that Sweden has the fastest growing social inequality in the OECD, as the difference between the average earner and those with the lowest incomes has increased the most since 1995. Sweden has dropped from first to fourteenth place on the list of countries with the least differences (OECD, 2013). At the same time, the median income after taxes has increased dramatically, to one of the highest in EU.

**Local response: The area programme**

With the aim to tackle the lack of social sustainability in Malmö, the city of Malmö is running five area-based programmes during 2010-2015. By influencing development in five selected areas, the programme seeks to enhance the social sustainability throughout Malmö. The aim is to create a programme wherein environmental, economic and social sustainability are mutually reinforcing.

Both physical and social changes are to be made within the programme: New train stations, densification of buildings, parks, streets, and gardens are planned in all areas. At the same time, social measures are to be made in the fields of schools and local communities. The areas will be seen as innovation areas; ideas will be created and raised, and a climate to attract new start-ups in business, culture and education will be encouraged. Participation and involvement of the people living in the areas is crucial as the programme seeks to strengthen citizens' knowledge and ability to influence their lives, their income, their housing and their education.

<sup>5</sup> Defined as children in households which incomes are not enough to pay for accommodation and basic living expenses, or have had occurrences of social allowance during the current year.

Looking at Malmö level, a sharp increase in income inequality between households in Malmö has emerged during the last decade. The poorest households have become poorer, in absolute numbers, while the most financially well-off households have improved considerably since the early 1990s. Malmö's richest decile has gone from being six times richer the poorest decile in 1990 to be twelve times richer in 2008. Thus, the poorest households have not benefited from the economic recovery. This increase in economic diversity, often described as an increase in *relative* income poverty, is larger in Malmö than in the rest of the country (Malmö stad, 2013a: 100).

To conclude, we don't know much about young people's economic situation in Malmö. Every third person of working age in Malmö is, however, at risk-of-poverty and child poverty is more than double the national average. At the same time, differences between people living in different parts of the city are increasing. Those who have jobs are doing well. But for those who are outside, who are not established in the labour market or on sick leave, the increases in relative income poverty have been dramatic during the last decade. The poorer in Malmö are getting poorer.

### ***A question of politics?***

What could be the reasons for the increase in inequality between people who work and people without a job? A possible explanation is the cuts in the welfare system, described earlier in this report. There are some recent policy changes in taxation policy during the last decade that can illustrate this. The increase in inequalities can be argued to coincide with the so called 'jobbskatteavdraget' (work-tax deduction), a tax deduction for all employed people. This priority is part of the current government's strategy of motivating people to work, the so called "work first principle", which implies that rather than providing social benefits, the government should strive to reduce unemployment so people can work and support themselves. The deduction has increased the disposable income for all people having a job, while it has not affected the economy of unemployed, sick or people not able to work for other reasons. Parts of the tax deduction have been financed by increases in the fees for the unemployment insurance funds, which has led to a political debate.

Indeed, this is a highly political question. The national government is acknowledging the increase in difference between those who work and those who are unemployed, meaning it should be seen as an incentive to put more effort in order to get employed, while the left wing party and Social Democrats, but also the governmental advisor Lars Calmfors of the Swedish Fiscal Policy Council, claim that the tax deduction is worsening the divides (Calmfors, 2011).

### **2.2.2. Housing**

The large increase in Malmö's population during the last decades has put a strain on Malmö when it comes to city planning and the supply of housing, especially for young people. The EU Youth Report puts it well: "*Housing has a crucial significance for young people. Their progress towards full independence involves finding – and paying for – their own home*" (European Commission, 2012: 54).

The same report discusses the lack of dwellings in terms of different concepts of homelessness: inadequate housing, insecure housing, houselessness and rooflessness. While the latter two are not widespread problems for young people in Malmö, inadequate and insecure housing is very common among young people. Thus, the supply and conditions of housing in Malmö is a highly debated issue.

***Housing policies in Sweden – an important part of the welfare regime***

The majority of residences in Malmö consist of apartments in apartment blocks. Around 62% are apartments in apartment blocks and 38% detached houses (Boverket, 2007: 129). Of the apartments in apartment blocks, 62% is rental apartments. Condominiums (owning your apartment in an apartment block) are something that has just recently been implemented in Sweden and is slowly increasing its share in newly built apartment blocks. The remaining 37% of the housing structure in Malmö is so called 'bostadsrätter'. A bostadsrätt can be described as a share in a housing cooperative, where you buy the right to live in your apartment, but the apartment is owned by the cooperative, where you become a member. You can only own a share by living there and only members are allowed to live there. The members pay a monthly fee to cover costs for heating, maintenance and interests in the cooperative's loans. Sub-letting rules are restrictive.

The housing cooperative apartments have been one cornerstone in the housing policy of the Swedish welfare regime. Another cornerstone has been the public housing companies, which are mostly providing rental apartments. Since the 1930s, Swedish public housing companies, 'Allmännyttan', has been an important part in the Swedish welfare system (Boverket, 2008, Pagrotsky, 2010). Traditionally, the public housing companies in Sweden have been a way for municipalities to offer non-expensive housing available for the general public. Public housing has often been spread out in the city to counteract housing segregation. The public housing companies have also been setting the norm for the rent in general, meaning that private housing companies have been obliged to follow the annual increase in rents set out by the public housing companies.

Except for the task to provide dwellings, the public housing companies have had a tradition of working against social inequalities in projects and activities. Research (Grander and Stigendal, 2012) has shown that these projects and activities often make a difference for the inhabitants of the cities, especially in areas characterised by social exclusion. Since the share of people living in public housing companies is considerable, so is the potential for making a change. Around 15% of the total share of rental apartments in Malmö is owned by the public housing company MKB, owned by the city of Malmö (Boverket, 2008).

Public housing in Sweden is sometimes incorrectly labelled as social housing. Public housing in Sweden differs from social housing in other European countries since the apartments in the public housing are available for everyone, not only people with low income or other special needs. Recent changes in legislation are, however, forcing the public housing companies to act on the same conditions as private housing companies, endangering the existence of public housing as we know it. For example, the

legislation might make it harder for public housing companies to work against social inequalities, since all actions pursued by the companies since 2011 must result in economic profit.

Generally, the quality of housing in Sweden is high. During the most extensive growth of the public sector and welfare system, the so called ‘million dwellings programme’ was initiated in 1965. The government decided to build one million dwellings during the period 1965-1975, in order to solve the issue of the lack of apartments and to increase the quality of living in Sweden. Two thirds of the dwellings built were rental apartments built in large scale housing areas on previously unexploited land outside of the city centres, much like the French *banlieus* (see e.g. Wacquant, 2008). Examples of this are Husby in Stockholm and Rosengård in Malmö. Many of the houses were built by the public housing companies, who received generous subventions and benefits from the state. Thus, the million dwellings programme resulted in that the municipalities becoming the country’s largest provider of dwellings in apartment blocks (Boverket, 2008: 13). The strong position of the public housing companies is regarded as an important part of the general welfare model, since the apartments were available for the general public. Today, 25% of the Swedish population reside in apartments built in the million dwellings programme.

Many of the large-scale housing areas on the outskirts of the cities are today, however, associated with social exclusion. This can somewhat be explained by miscalculations in the establishment of the million dwellings programme. The high demand for apartments cooled off in the early 1970s, coinciding with economic stagnation. This led to vacancies in the newly built houses. Instead of the industry-workers the houses were built for, the apartments came to be populated by households that had had a hard time financially, as well as newly arrived immigrants and refugees. Another problem was that the areas were built according to a functionalist approach, the planning ideal of that time. The areas were mainly planned for sleeping and spending time with your family after work. Working, shopping and meeting people should be done in other parts of the city. This functional approach resulted in areas lacking opportunities for recreation and social activities. The unemployed people and newly arrived immigrants who ended up in the apartments did not have the possibility to do very much in the areas (Grander and Stigendal, 2012).

Thus, the million programme areas started – unintentionally – to develop into one of the edges of the currently segregated cities. The polarisation has continued, especially during the 1990s. The housing segregation has become stronger in the sense that the million programme dwellings primarily are occupied by people from a foreign background. Mobility patterns in the housing market emphasise the ethnic dimension of inequality and segregation. Households with native Swedish backgrounds tend to move to higher status areas, whereas people with immigrant backgrounds tend to move to other, equally low-status areas (Andersson et al., 2007).

***A problem for young people in particular or a problem connected to social exclusion?***

Since young people in general have limited economic resources, they are more limited in their possibilities in the housing market, and the supply is small. There is a lack of inexpensive and small rental

apartments. A recent study by the Tenants' Association on young people's housing situation in urban areas shows that 49% of young adults (20-27 years old) in Malmö and the nearby city of Lund live in their own dwelling. This is the lowest measured rate in history. Ten years ago, 64% had their own places to live. Furthermore, the proportion of young people living in insecure tenure (subletting, living with kin, friends or in private rented rooms) has raised from 23% in 2003 to 31% in 2013 (Hyresgästföreningen, 2013: 15f).

This situation is confirmed in the statistics regarding young people leaving the parental household. The mean age of young people (born 1985) in Malmö leaving the parental household is around 21.5 years old for women and 22.2 years old for men (Statistiska Centralbyrån, 2006: 24). The mean age has been steadily increasing compared to people born 1970.

While these figures may not be alarming for people from other parts of Europe, it is important to see the figures in a context. In Sweden, there is a tradition that young people move away from home and make their own living at a relatively young age. The welfare system is not based on the family living together in order to take care of elderly or young people. In this sense, the increasing proportion of young people living with their parents might be seen as a problem. Crowded households are a problem in many of the socially excluded areas, which make it hard for young people to find peace and quiet when doing homework.

When talking about the lack of apartments for young people, it should be said that being young is not the main reason for having trouble finding a place to live. Instead, it seems that the difficulties have to do with the increased inequality in general. With the current situation, where there is a lack of small apartments, especially among the public housing company's dwellings, young people have to rely on either money to buy a housing cooperative apartment or personal networks to increase the chances of getting a private rental apartment.<sup>6</sup> Thus, the inequalities regarding income, employment and social networks also have influence on young people's possibilities to get an apartment.

To solve the problems, many actors argue for an increase of the share of small and inexpensive rental apartments by building new apartment blocks designated for young people or people with limited resources. This has, however, proven quite hard to do. Many argue that this is caused by regulations when it comes to producing houses to affordable prices, whether it is rental apartments or apartments in housing cooperatives. Many also argue that the regulations (Sweden's Planning and Building Act) cause a long building process, where it can take 5-10 years from a plan to a built house. The municipalities' planning monopoly definitely creates possibilities for democracy in the planning process and gives the cities tools to control the establishment of different housing tenures, thus decreasing segregation. It has, however, been criticised for being ineffective when it comes to solve quickly emerging lacks of dwellings in larger cities.

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<sup>6</sup> Some of the private companies are connected to the city's public queue-system. However, this is only compromising a small share of the total amount of rental apartments in the city.

### 2.2.3. Education and training

The Swedish school system consists of pre-school (one year normally at age six) and then nine years of compulsory school. After passing compulsory school you have the option to apply for upper secondary school. A reform in 2011 divided the upper secondary education into 12 vocational educations and six university preparatory programmes. After a university preparatory education, you can apply for university. If you have chosen a vocational programme, you still have the possibility to continue to higher education, for example by attending a Folk high school. A Folk high school is non-formal adult education which could be run by municipalities or NGOs. If you choose not to continue to upper secondary education or if you drop out of school at any stage, there is municipal adult education and/or supplementary education, which could pave the way for higher education.

Educational institutions in Sweden can be run by municipalities as well as private companies and NGOs. Private for-profit schools are competing with non-profit public (municipal) schools. The same legislation and inspection policy is applied. The Swedish system of independent schools, inaugurated in 1992, differ in several respects from other countries. Independent (private) schools are funded entirely by taxes. Each school, regardless what kind of body who runs it, gets a compensatory transfer voucher ('skolpeng') from the municipality. The voucher is a pre-determined amount of money per pupil and is supposed to cover costs for education, pupil care and food.

10% of the pupils in elementary education attend independent schools. At upper secondary level, the rate is 20%. Besides municipalities, the bodies owning and running education establishments range from small NGOs to large investment companies based in international tax havens. There are no restrictions on the profits or dividends to the owners of the school. An independent school is like any business. This means that a school can make a profit, which is paid directly to the owners. There is no obligation to re-invest the profits in the school. This kind of profit outtakes are prohibited in most other EU states. The system also makes it possible for an independent school to go bankrupt. Recently, one of the largest Swedish independent school providers, JB, owned by a Danish private-equity firm, went bankrupt. 14,500 pupils now wait to be placed in other schools. The teachers are losing their jobs.

With the reform that inaugurated the independent schools in 1992, parents also got the possibility to choose a school for their children. Instead of automatically being placed in the nearest public school, parents could now choose to place their children in a queue for any school, public or independent.

#### *Indicators of a school system with difficulties*

During recent years, alarms have been raised regarding the quality of the Swedish school system, which for a long time has been regarded as amongst the best in the world. The Swedish school system has dropped in international rankings. The score in the international PISA-evaluation, which ranks reading comprehension and mathematical skills among 15-year olds, have deteriorated. The share of students who do not meet basic reading comprehension has become larger (Skolverket, 2010). Furthermore, measurements and research show that the Swedish schools have become less equal. The results of the

pupils often correlate to the socio-economic status of the area the school is situated in, and many argue schools can not provide the same level of quality of education in all parts of the cities. Reports of disturbance and tough working conditions for teachers are more and more common among schools in socially excluded areas.

Results and grades among pupils are almost the only indicators on education being lifted in the national debate. An indicator often used in Sweden, although not used in the EU Youth Report, is the proportion of pupils qualifying for upper secondary school. In 2010/11 87.7% of all pupils in Sweden in year 9 qualified for secondary school. There are, however, large local differences between and in cities. For example, the share of pupils in Malmö's public schools qualifying for a vocational education at upper secondary school is 76.1%. The corresponding figure among independent schools is 93.4% (Malmö stad, 2013a). Furthermore, there is a wide gap between different areas. The highest proportion (nearly 90%) of pupils qualifying for a vocational education at upper secondary school is found in Limhamn-Bunkeflo, while the lowest share is found in Rosengård (40-50%). At a specific school in Rosengård, the rate of pupils with grades necessary to qualify for upper secondary school is 29% (Malmö stad, 2012b: 19).

Looking at the indicators asked for in the strategy report, the national rate of early leavers from education and training is around 8% (European Commission, 2012: 38). Unfortunately, this definition of early leavers is not used at local level. It is, however, likely that the rate for Malmö is considerably higher. A recent study shows that 45% of pupils in Malmö who begin upper secondary school leave education or need more time to complete the education (Sveriges Kommuner och Landsting, 2012: 32). This is noticeably higher than the national average of 31.7%. In fact, the Malmö rate is amongst the highest in Sweden. The rate is also increasing over time to a much greater extent in Malmö than the national average.<sup>7</sup> This suggests that the rate of early leavers in Malmö would be much higher than the national rate, also when using the definition in the EU Youth Report.

Although the drop-out rate can be regarded as high, the Swedish school systems various ways of completing your education have led to the majority of Swedish youth completing at least upper secondary education. 79.7% of the young people in Malmö (20-24) have completed at least upper secondary education, according to the City of Malmö's statistics. This could be related to the national average slightly below 90%, stated in the EU Youth Report (European Commission, 2012: 36).

### ***From the people's school to a neo-liberal schoolbook example?***

The statistics tell us that there are problems related to the schools in Malmö. But it does not tell us why young people drop out of school, or why they do not succeed in getting the grades necessary. There is often a tendency to blame the young people attending these schools, or their parents. But it must be stated that the living conditions of people in a specific area do not only depend on the people living there, but on the systems as well as the results of the systems (Malmö stad, 2013a). The school is such a system.

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<sup>7</sup> My own calculations based on the appendixes to the report from Sveriges Kommuner och Landsting.

The basis of the Swedish school system is - according to the legislation – to create as equal education opportunities as possible. As the figures presented in this report show, this is clearly not the case. We are witnessing a rapid deterioration in the Swedish school system. We are seeing growing inequalities in and between schools. The possibilities for young people to succeed in school are highly dependent on which school they attend. This inequality between schools, often referred to as school segregation, is highly debated in Sweden. Many fear that school segregation leads to young people growing up in specific areas getting lesser possibilities for applying for future higher education, thus increasing the gaps in the cities further.

The independent school system and the freedom of choice between schools may explain why the differences between schools with good and poor outcomes have increased dramatically. Many pupils (or their parents) opt out of schools with a bad reputation since they fear that they risk getting poorer education and poorer life chances. There are also signs that the opportunity to choose has created a ‘white flight’, i.e. native Swedes leaving schools with higher rates than pupils from a foreign background, thus increasing the segregation in cities. Thus, a downward spiral is seen in schools in many areas marked by social exclusion. The consequences could be drastic. We have seen examples of the municipality shutting down schools with problems, forcing pupils to travel to other schools further away from their homes.

The large inequalities that are marking the Swedish education system are by many regarded as a consequence of the development of the school system; from an equal public school to one of the world’s most neo-liberal educational systems. As an article in *The Economist* states: “*When it comes to choice, Milton Friedman would be more at home in Stockholm than in Washington, DC*” (*The Economist*, 2013).

### **2.3. Power, democracy, citizenship**

As previously mentioned, the system of government is divided into three administrative levels. The three levels contain both directly elected councils and administrative units. The municipal level, for example, consists of a directly elected city council (*kommunfullmäktige*) and a municipal executive board (*kommunstyrelse*), appointed by the city council. The executive board is managing the overall political work, by delegating power to a number of political committees. Municipal authorities perform the practical work at the local level. Malmö is led by a political coalition of Social Democrats, the left-wing party *Vänsterpartiet* and the green party *Miljöpartiet*, while the regional and national government is constituted by liberal-conservative coalitions.

In Sweden, elections are held in September every fourth year. To be able to vote in the elections for the national parliament you need to be a Swedish citizen. Citizenship is not required in order to vote in local and regional elections. Instead, you have to be a registered permanent resident of the county or municipality and have lived in Sweden for three consecutive years. According to the EU Youth Report, the participation rate of young people (15-30) in political elections in Sweden is above 90% (European Commission, 2012: 77). Lacking national statistics using the same definition, we have looked at the national average rate of participation among first time voters (18-22 years old) in Sweden. For Sweden, the rate was 79% in the national parliament elections in 2010 and 76% in 2006 (Ungdomsstyrelsen, 2012: 119). In Malmö, the corresponding rate was 70.2% in 2010 and 65.5% in 2006 (Malmö stad, 2010: 4f). Thus, Malmö has a significantly lower turn-out than the national average. Within Malmö, the local differences are large. The highest rate of participation can be found in the western parts of the city (around 80%) while the areas Herrgården and Sofielund have the lowest rates (around 60%) (Statistiska Centralbyrån, 2013).

**Local response:**

**Demokratiambassadörerna (youth democracy ambassadors)**

As the 2010 election came close, the city of Malmö hired 45 youth democracy ambassadors. For five months the ambassadors worked using outreach methods and met thousands of young Malmö residents. The evaluation of the project points to a substantial increase in the participation rate as well as increased possibilities for more general societal participation and involvement for young people in Malmö (Malmö stad, 2010a).

The strategy report is also asking for participation rates in NGO-based activities.<sup>8</sup> According to the EU Youth Report, the national rate is around 11%. While I have not been able to find these figures for Malmö, we have found other indications that might be of interest. Statistics point to that young people's participation in the representative democracy's traditional channels of influence, such as party activities and union membership, is at historically low levels. For example, the proportion of Swedes who are members of a political party in Sweden has more than halved since the early 1980s; from 14% in 1980 to 5% in 2006 (Statistiska Centralbyrån, 2008: 35). Among young people (16-25) in Sweden, the rate was 3.5% in 2009. A lower share of young people with immigrant background and young people living in metropolitan areas are members of political parties. There is no data on political participation on the Malmö level, but the average rate in the larger cities (Stockholm, Göteborg and Malmö) is 2.9% (Ungdomsstyrelsen, 2012: 129). Furthermore, the proportion of unionised young people (18-24) has fallen, from 45% in 2006 to 27% in 2008/09. In contradiction, political interest among young people is increasing. Around 50% of young people are interested in political questions, and more than 65% are interested in questions concerning society (Ungdomsstyrelsen, 2010).

<sup>8</sup> "Self-reported participation in activities of a political organisation or political party or a local organisation aimed at improving their local community and/or local environment in the last 12 months. Age 15-30."

The civil sector has traditionally been an important part of the Swedish welfare model. In the national youth policy, NGOs have had an especially important two-fold role: to provide meaningful recreation and to be a ‘school of democracy’ (Ungdomsstyrelsen, 2012). Although fewer young people are active in political parties and trade unions, the overall participation in NGOs among young people (16-25) in Sweden (2009) is still high at 61% (Ungdomsstyrelsen, 2012: 218). Included in this rate is membership in all types of NGOs, including sports, trade unions, political parties and consumer associations. 47% of young people born abroad are members of an NGO (Ungdomsstyrelsen, 2010: 99).

### 3. Life for young people in the city

As we have shown, there are differences in young people’s living conditions. Many young people, but also their parents and others in their networks, are unemployed or have temporary positions. The relative poverty is increasing. School and housing segregation is increasing, further deepening the gaps in the city. At the same time, the welfare system is changing towards a more selective, restrictive and market-oriented system. All in all, the situation for young people in specific areas of the city seems to get worse over time. Many young people’s provision is unknown. There is a fear that this might lead to deepening long-term social exclusion for a relatively large group of young people.

But what is it like living in Malmö? How are the inequalities described in this report manifested in the everyday life of young people? To be able to tell, we would need to hear the voices of young people from different parts of the city. But the interesting stories are perhaps mostly told by the young people living in areas characterised by social exclusion. How are young people in the areas characterised by social exclusion leading their lives?

During earlier empirical studies of such an area, Hermodsdal, we have learned that many young people have a feeling of hopelessness and disbelief in society. Much of the hopelessness is related to a feeling of discrimination, which could be connected to the segregation of the city. Many young people we have met express a huge sense of futility, and most of them link their situation to their foreign background. The young people express mistrust in society, which they mean has given up on the parts of the city where they live. This goes for private and public employers who won’t employ people from their part of the city (*“I have no education. But even if I had one I would never get a job”*), police discriminating young people in the areas (*“Every day, I see their eyes, how they eye-ball me. Police treat us immigrants harder than Swedes”*) as well as the public authorities who are withdrawing public institutions such as shutting down schools, youth centres and other meeting places. The disbelief in the future has an effect on young people’s motivation to finish elementary studies and to apply for higher studies. Since there is doubt among young people that they will get a job, why should they try to get high grades or proceed with university studies?

The young people we have met also express an isolated existence where they do not move outside their residential area to any greater extent, and where their social network is restricted to friends in the area. Most of them don't even try to find a place to live in the central city. Firstly, they do not have the money to afford the rents, or to buy a place. Secondly, they have no contacts who could recommend them to private landlords. Thirdly, they are certain that the landlords won't let an apartment to a youngster from the suburbs. Instead, many of the young people are still living with their families in overcrowded apartments. As not very many activities or meeting places are offered, they have nowhere to hang out but the streets. The young people we have met state that the perceived discrimination creates an aversion against society and its representatives, such as politicians "*who makes decisions over our lives but never visits the areas*", but also police and firemen. The neglecting of young people in these areas could mean that a lot of competence among young people is not used. The risk is that their potential is channelled into more violent forms, such as torching cars and buildings or smashing windows. Scenes like this have been witnessed in Herrgården in Malmö in 2009, and just recently in Husby, a suburb of Stockholm.

Young people in the larger cities have gathered in grassroots organisations to oppose the developments of inequalities in the so called deprived areas. Examples of this are Megafonen in Husby or Pantrarna in Lindängen, Malmö. Young people in the organisations form a collective identity as being outsiders, being from the suburbs, claiming that the rest of society is discriminating against them, thus reinforcing segregation and structural racism. Although organised and searching contact with the established actors, these groups of young people are often looked upon with suspicion, and are not given much space in the serious debate.

Whilst the riots in Herrgården 2009 and Husby 2013 might have come as a surprise to many in other countries, still seeing Sweden as the Social Democratic welfare model creating equal opportunities, young people living in the areas are not surprised. Nor are researchers or the practitioner working at schools or other institutions in the areas. The riots could be regarded as symptoms and manifestations of young peoples' hopelessness when they are not getting a job, living on social allowance and are being seen as a burden for society. Discrimination on the labour market and in general from society is a structural problem that colours the everyday life for young people in Malmö. As the economic polarisation and welfare transformation continues, we should not be surprised if we see new riots in the cities.

A key for changing the situation, according to the young people we have met, is social relations. In order to re-establish the relations between young people in socially excluded areas and the society, meetings and mutual trust is needed. Young people are in need of meaningful relations with adults who listen, understand and care about what young people have to say. Shutting young people out of potential meeting places further decreases their opportunities for enlarged social networks, not only with friends, but also with adults and representatives from the society. These kinds of contacts can help getting a job or a place to live, or just feeling empowered by being listened to and taken seriously. Thus, structural changes of the societal systems as well as innovative ways of re-establishing a mutual trust between young people

characterised by social exclusion and the representatives of society are needed to change the development in Malmö.

Finally, this report might paint a somewhat dark picture of Malmö. There are definitely inequalities that strike young people in Malmö. At the same time, the young people have a lot of competences, potential and often show creativity in dealing with their own situation. There are also a large number of players in Malmö, in the public administration and within the civil society, that are combatting the causes and effects of inequalities together with young people. A lot of great things are happening. Malmö has to build on this potential.

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