

Housing context and legitimacy in the transformation of a stigmatized estate: the case of Rosengård

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Abstract Large housing estates built in the post second world war era have been the object of extensive debates and research in Europe and in North America, due to their social and maintenance challenges but also their high symbolic value. A wide range of regeneration strategies has been employed in addressing issues of segregation and stigmatization of these estates. This paper examines the role of local housing and public management in the selection of regeneration strategies. The paper starts from the concept of housing context as means of explaining the selection of regeneration strategy. The paper is informed by a case study of regeneration efforts in Rosengård, where a minor regeneration effort, the Bokals, led by the municipal housing company, crystalizes a new integrated approach in regenerating the estate. This sets the stage for subsequent developments. We argue that legitimacy, in the sense of management being perceived as a credible agent of change, is critical in the cumulative strengthening and shaping of the regeneration strategy in Rosengård. We put forward the notion of legitimacy trading to capture the mutual and instrumental public support of the main actors. The main contribution of the paper is to demonstrate how including aspects of management legitimacy can develop the concept of housing context, by extending the range of applicability and broadening the range of regeneration strategies that can be accounted for.

Keywords Housing context · Large estates · Legitimacy · Municipal housing · Regeneration strategies · Rosengård · Social transformation · Stigma

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1 Introduction

The large housing estates built in the post second world war era have been the object of extensive debates and research, due to aspects such as its social and maintenance challenges but also their high symbolic value (Ristilammi 1994). Research has pointed out how varied these housing estates are, across different contexts and in terms of physical qualities and the role they play in their particular urban settings (Dekker et al. 2005). Some of these estates are however highly segregated and stigmatized. Addressing such stigmatization may be a challenging task for a housing company or the city in which the estates are located. Estates that are particularly challenged in terms of exclusion and unrest thus persistently call into question issues of housing and urban governance.

Different strategies have been deployed to address deprivation, socio-economic problems and the low attractiveness of large-scale housing estates. These strategies include physical and tenure restructuring, upgrading by gradually increasing standards, socio-economic empowerment strategies for tenants and to a lesser extent strategies to affect the image of a stigmatized area (Andersson et al. 2010; Elander 1991; Pettersson and Öresjö 2005; Uitermark 2003). National urban and housing policies have an important role in enabling and constraining the deployment of different strategies, but local housing market conditions also play an important role. Moreover, local public and housing management mediate connections between private and public interests in the specific housing context and thereby influence the specific form of regeneration (Van Gent 2010).

This study aims to develop understanding of the management's role in shaping urban regeneration strategies. The paper is based on the formulation of housing context, as developed by Van Gent (2010). We argue that the actions of management within the housing context can be better understood by including considerations of legitimacy. This allows for a broader range of housing contexts to be addressed and enables understanding of how a broader range of regeneration strategies becomes relevant. To illustrate this argument, we explore the regeneration strategy 'Rosengårdsstråket' in the city of Malmö, Sweden. We argue that legitimacy, in the sense of being perceived as a credible agent of change, is a critical in shaping the regeneration strategy. We develop a concept of legitimacy trading to capture the character of mutual and instrumental public support that is established between the main actors and how this furthers the regeneration effort.

In the following, we will discuss different strategies of regenerating segregated and stigmatized estates and the concept of a housing context. We then discuss legitimacy as a possible means of developing the concept of housing context. In section three the research design is presented. Subsequent sections describe Rosengård and its housing context. The Bokal project and Rosengårdsstråket are described in section six, where we also discuss the concept of legitimacy trading. The final section elaborates on the main conclusions that can be drawn and on the contributions of this paper.

2 Strategies to address stigmatized and segregated estates

Strategies for regenerating stigmatized and segregated estates employed by public officials and housing corporations may be broadly grouped as focusing on (1) restructuring; (2) upgrading; (3) service-partnering; (4) socio-economic empowerment and (5) image building.

Restructuring entails attempting to transform an area by means of demolition, reconstruction and transforming forms of tenure, often with the stated aim of social mixing. Social mixing builds on the assumption that if different groups are co-located there will be direct and indirect interaction that benefit less privileged groups (Elander 1991; Uitermark 2003). This strategy of restructuring has contributed to a gentrification of some estates, and enhanced the marginalization of estates that were not attractive for investment (Elander 1991). The assumption that social mixing will lead to social interaction has also been discredited by recent studies (Chaskin 2013; Graham et al. 2009; Lees 2008; Musterd and Andersson 2005). On the contrary this may cause the breakage of social capital linkages supporting less-privileged communities, and lead to other socio-economic problems. Other critiques point out that strategies of social mixing are basically ignoring that people choose to locate close to people that they can identify with, and that the intention to create heterogeneous housing areas is more of a planner's myth than a socially-credible or desirable reality (Musterd and Smakman 1999). There is also some evidence that even extensive reconstruction may fail to change the image of an area (Musterd and Ostendorf 2005; Wassenberg 2004b). The 'bricks and mortar' approach thus seem inadequate in terms of creating social change and even risky when it comes to addressing stigmatization.

Upgrading approaches take their starting point in addressing the physical upkeep and in the creation of amenities and public spaces. The process may be geared specifically toward increasing the attractiveness of the area for middle class residents and thereby gentrify it, but it is less visible in terms of physical renovation than restructuring approaches (Van Gent 2010).

A service-partnering approach refers to changes in the role of the municipal housing company and trends towards greater citizen involvement in the future of the housing estates. One of the strategies adopted in Sweden, during the 1980s, was 'tenant determined maintenance', whereby the tenants have a greater say in how their housing areas are to be maintained and which tasks are to be given priority (Elander 1991). The new approaches to urban renewal emerging in the UK throughout the 1990s can also be seen as a consequence of the realization that the problems of disadvantaged neighbourhoods cannot be dealt with by a sectorial and governmental approach, but require a broad range partnership that involved local communities, businesses, and different governmental departments. The expertise of local communities is recognised, or acknowledged. The local inhabitants' role changes from being the passive recipient of many of the redevelopment programmes, towards becoming the local experts. Although in theory this seems a very promising approach it may in practice be difficult to achieve results (Van Bortel et al. 2009). The service-partnering approach also relates to recent work on co-production (Ostrom 1996), although co-production is more concerned with bottom-up efforts to address for instance inadequate public services, and requires a higher degree of community organization (Bovaird 2007; Foster 2011; Verschuere et al. 2012).

A socio-economic empowerment approach seeks to address how people in low status areas can be empowered to take part in the wider society. The relative concentration of certain groups such as newly arrived immigrants can be seen as a reason to start programs that increase information about and access to certain kinds of services necessary to participate in the wider society (Pettersson and Öresjö 2005). Socio-economic empowerment and area-based approaches have been widely adopted in Sweden. The effects of these efforts are however hard to measure (Andersson et al. 2010) and may not have a lasting effect on the area due to processes of selective migration. In other words those who benefit from the efforts or otherwise manage to achieve higher and more secure incomes tend to move from the stigmatized area thus perhaps even strengthening segregation (Bråmås and

Andersson 2005). The seeming inability to address problems in a given *area* by means of socio-economic empowerment programs has at times given rise to a certain frustration for housing corporations (Van Gent 2010).

Image building refers to a strategy to improve the image of a stigmatized area. The approach may have different forms but builds essentially on promoting positive and alternate images of an area as spread by different actors such as media, developers, real estate agents and residents (Eshuis and Edwards 2012; Hastings 2004). Research in this field has sought to understand and explore the production of images of different urban areas. Image building efforts have been described as both the result of neoliberal practices invading the field of policy-making (Hedin et al. 2012) and as an intentional strategy used by municipalities and public actors in municipal housing areas (Lees and Ley 2008; Lees 2008; Uitermark et al. 2007). There are reasons to be wary of image building approaches as these may distort or obscure social challenges but there may also be sound reasons for counteracting prejudiced images of an area (Wassenberg 2004a).

By and large issues of dealing with the negative effects of segregation and stigmatization of large housing estates have thus been addressed by focusing on physical structures and tenures, public space and amenities, partnering and networked development, socio-economic empowerment of the residents or on re-shaping the image of stigmatized areas. Each strategy has limitations but the selection of strategy or mix of strategies has important implications for residents on the estates and for urban development insofar as segregation impacts the city as a whole.

2.1 The housing context and selection of regeneration strategies

Based on comparative case studies of regeneration of post-war housing estates in Western Europe, Van Gent developed an explanation of why different regeneration strategies are selected. The underlying logic of this explanation is an understanding of local management as a pivotal mediator connecting urban and housing policy with private interests and residents and thereby shaping efforts of regeneration. This shaping of regeneration strategies by management is guided by a preference for control. Thus, when market factors and policy enable it a strategy of restructuring will be pursued as this allows direct control over tangible physical structures and forms of tenure in a defined scope. However if ownership structures or policy constrains restructuring then upgrading is seen to be the next best option as it entails control over physical attributes but with less defined effects (Van Gent 2010).

The term ‘housing context’ refers to the set of factors enabling or constraining management in promoting a particular regeneration strategy. Van Gent identifies four basic factors namely (1) spillover demand for middle-class housing which enables strategies of restructuring or upgrading (2) ownership structures in the estate which may enable restructuring if consolidated and constrain this strategy if dispersed (3) availability of public funding for regeneration which is generally enabling and (4) housing reform policies which may constrain restructuring. This formulation of housing context provides a simplified but powerful starting point for understanding why restructuring or upgrading may be pursued. However restructuring and upgrading do not cover the range of regeneration strategies; socio-economic empowerment, service-partnering and image building strategies may also be important. The housing context in its present formulation does not provide insights as to why these strategies, or strategies integrating several approaches might be pursued. One possible approach in expanding understanding of the housing context would be to include legitimacy as an aspect of management control.

2.2 Legitimacy

In housing and urban studies the concept of legitimacy is perhaps most familiar in the sense of democratic legitimacy (Connelly 2011; Eshuis and Edwards 2012; Kort and Klijn 2013). An exploration of the democratic legitimacy of regeneration is concerned with assessing if policies are developed in accordance with democratic norms. However the concept of legitimacy is also used in organization studies in a more general sense. Legitimacy in this sense is understood to be an important factor in understanding how management is constrained or enabled by notions of what constitutes appropriate action (Deephouse and Suchman 2008; Scott 1995). Suchman defines legitimacy as “a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs and definitions.” (Suchman 1995).

The significance of legitimacy has primarily been researched in organization studies with respect to two related aspects. Attention to legitimacy is based on the premise that organizations are under pressure to conform to norms of appropriate behaviour, that is, be perceived as legitimate by a broader public and in their direct relations. However, legitimacy may also be understood as an organizational resource in negotiating with different stakeholders. In this latter sense research has been concerned with understanding how organizations instrumentally manipulate and deploy evocative symbols in order to garner societal support (Benington and Moore 2011; Suchman 1995). The concept of legitimacy therefore provides a means of linking managerial action with relations to key actors of an authorizing environment.

The legitimacy of management is intimately related to control. Being perceived as legitimate brings freedom from questioning and room to manoeuvre. Being perceived as a credible actor is pivotal in gaining access to potentially available resources (Suchman 1995).

3 Research design

The paper is based on a qualitative case study of a regeneration strategy of a stigmatized large housing estate Rosengård in Malmö, Sweden. The case is pertinent because Rosengård is characterized by low spillover demand and lack of enabling urban policy and as such differs from the cases that provided a basis for the original formulation of the housing context. Moreover the regeneration strategy is mixed including aspects other than restructuring and upgrading. The case thus offers an opportunity to explore possible extensions or limitations of the original formulation.

We focus on the project of the Bokals developed by the municipal housing company MKB. This development, though limited in scope, crystallizes efforts at regeneration based on an integrated approach incorporating limited restructuring, service-partnering and upgrading. The development sets the stage in important respects for subsequent developments both realized and planned in the municipal regeneration strategy Rosengårdsstråket.

To understand the regeneration strategy we brought together different actor perspectives. Nine interviews were conducted with different levels of management of the housing company, and included overall leadership, managers with specific responsibility for aspects of the Bokal development, key persons involved in developing the Bokal concept and first level management on site. A review of documents produced by MKB particularly the

project description, annual reports and marketing materials provided further input in understanding how the housing company described the development effort. The broader development strategy of Rosengårdsstråket, of which the Bokals are a part, was explored in 16 interviews with councilman and municipal planners in charge of redevelopment efforts in the area and traced in municipal planning documents. To understand aspects of service-partnering, 15 interviews were also conducted with resident-entrepreneurs of the Bokals. All of the interviews were conducted in Swedish so quotes provided are author translations.

The housing context is described using the same qualitative material, in particular the perspectives of public and housing managers. Finally, the materials also provide insight into where and how the development is highlighted and thus how different actors use developments to attempt to gain legitimacy.

We recognize limitations in the data particularly with respect to issues of legitimacy that are complex, involving different authorizing environments. A complete description would require extensive data from all these environments for the different central actors. We explore only a small aspect of the legitimacy of the housing company management as a credible agent of change in Rosengård. A fuller understanding might include assessment of the company's performance in wide range of aspects, as well as the legitimacy of municipal housing companies in Sweden generally. Nonetheless the material allows us to capture some relevant aspects by studying where and how the developments are presented and how they are perceived by different key actors in the regeneration effort.

4 Rosengård and the re-invention of Malmö

Rosengård was constructed in the late 1960s and early 70s as part of nation-wide massive housing development programme that sought to create quality housing for workers in rapidly growing cities (Vall 2007). Due to a combination of factors including de-industrialization and movements of the middle class to new suburban areas, the estates often quickly failed to become attractive places to live. Rosengård in particular came to be singled out as an object of critical media attention, perhaps because it was initially hailed as the forefront of modern living (Ristilammi 1994).

Malmö's industrial decline brought on a prolonged crisis of identity. City authorities looked for alternatives in promoting sustainable urban development, and activities linked to a knowledge society. The new approach to urban policy was 'entrepreneurial' (Dannestam 2009; Madureira 2014) and sought to create a new image for the city by working closely together with private initiatives in projects that would attract investment and positive media attention. A key point in the city's apparent success in this transition was the development of attractive public spaces and both symbolic and substantial physical developments. These new physical spaces instantiate a discourse of a re-invented city (Dannestam 2009) But Malmö is still often associated with socio-economic challenges, and that inhabitants in the many pockets of the city cannot access the wealth in the new urban development (Holgerson 2012; Mukhtar-Landgren 2008).

Rosengård is an area located near the city centre but is predominantly residential and with architecture typical of the large estates built at this time. Its stigmatization has complex roots. It seems in part a self-perpetuating process whereby stories may be seen as more newsworthy as they relate to previous stories (Andersson et al. 2007; Ristilammi 1994). There are also social challenges in the area entailed by concentrations of vulnerable groups, namely a very high percentage of residents born in a foreign country, high levels of

unemployment, low income levels, a low percentage of people with a higher education and high levels of child poverty¹ (Salonen 2010). Riots in 2008 made international news and the image conveyed was one of a city and a welfare state under considerable strain. At least for a period it is arguable that Rosengård was more known internationally than any other part of Malmö. Reports from unrest in Rosengård tended to accentuate an ethnic dimension but often failed to see causes related to the labour market, housing market and media itself (Hallin et al. 2010).

Over the years many initiatives have sought to ameliorate the social challenges made visible by and perhaps strengthened by economic and ethnic segregation in Sweden (Andersson et al. 2007; Grander and Stigendal 2012). These efforts have largely employed a socio-economic empowerment approach. While these efforts may have had important effects on individuals they have not changed the situation of segregation and stigmatization on the estate. It therefore seems to have become evident for politicians and public management that Rosengård needed to be reinvented and brought in line with the new image of Malmö.

5 The housing context and regeneration in Rosengård

There was a shared understanding among interviewed public managers involved in developing Rosengård as to the main factors underpinning problems in the estate. An overarching issue was the lack of employment but specifically for Rosengård a small set of key factors were identified: selective migration; a narrow range of housing options; the closed physical structure of the area; a perception of problems in schools and the area's stigmatization. These factors were perceived to be mutually reinforcing and underpinning a downward spiral of the area.²

Despite being centrally located in Malmö, Rosengård does not have spillover demand for middle class housing. This is understood by public managers to be due to the factors noted above but particularly to issues of stigma and a narrow set of housing alternatives.³ A nearby area of small houses is an attractive middle class housing option.

The ownership structure in Rosengård is actually diverse, as is the area itself. However the issues described as problematic are associated with the large areas dominated by rental apartments. The ownership structure can be understood as consolidated as MKB owns 43 % of the rental units in the area (Malmö Stad 2008). State funding for physical developments has not been available for some time.

MKB is wholly owned by the city of Malmö and run as an independent company. Its board consists largely of elected politicians. The company has a politically set directive that MKB should work towards maintaining rental as an attractive form of tenure and that a rental option should be available in every part of the city and for different groups in society. MKB is also not allowed to sell properties without expressed approval from the city council. Housing policy relevant to the area thus constrains options of tenure restructuring.

¹ See Malmö Stad (2008).

² Interviews MC1. Councilman with executive responsibility for physical and infrastructural development in Malmö. Jan. 13, 2011. MPM1: Interview with public manager responsible for Rosengård city district. Jan.18, 2011 and MPM2: Municipal urban planner with responsibility for development in Rosengård. Feb. 17, 2011.

³ Interview MPM1 see above.

The housing context in Rosengård is thus characterised by consolidated ownership, lack of spillover demand, lack of enabling urban regeneration funds and with restrictive housing policy. This is not a context in which the original formulation of housing context would lead us to expect any regeneration at all. The context does not offer managers any obvious means of effecting regeneration but forces a continual exploration of alternatives for garnering support and attracting investment.

The challenge is understood to have two parts. First there is a problem associated with property owners that have taken a speculative and short-term approach to rental housing, often seriously neglecting upkeep (Blomé 2011; Hallin et al. 2010). This quickly undermines the sense of a legitimate housing option in the area. Second, there is a challenge of attracting support and investment to effect structural changes. As a councilman explained:

If the property owners do their job and provide a housing option of normal Swedish quality then that is a basis from which we can work but if they do not, then it probably does not matter what we do.⁴

The role of the municipality is limited but certainly not negligible in effecting change in the area.

There has to be market interest, people who are willing to invest money if there is going to be any structural change in the area. Not one house will be built in the area, unless someone finds it an attractive investment. Our elaborate plans will be irrelevant. BUT, one could also say that a precondition for anyone wanting to press the gas pedal is that we intimate how we might be part of a process... that we identify possible developments, that we make explicit how we are going to work with public space, public investments and how we will try to attract different forms of public funding and stimulus funds.⁵

It is this complex linking of private and public interests that can create credible change. However the specific forms depend on negotiations with different actors.

6 The Bokal project

The Bokal project was developed by the housing company MKB. IT may be seen as one of a long line of efforts to transform Rosengård. However it is also a turning point where socio-economic empowerment strategies were toned down in favour of integrated approaches that included elements of restructuring, service/partnering and image building. A representative from MKB expressed this turning point by stating: “there was a pent-up frustration, this can not just be just another social project”.⁶

The word Bokal derives from the verb ‘bo’ meaning ‘to live’ with ‘lokal’, meaning ‘workspace’. The idea underpinning the project was to take eight existing apartments of 2–5 rooms and extend them outward to create a space for shops and small businesses comprising not more than 50–75 square meters of shop floor space. Two additional shops were also built thus creating a row of ten semi-public spaces along a route extending from the city centre to Rosengård. The creation of this line of shops and meeting spaces was highlighted by a distinctive, oriental- inspired design of the roofs that introduces an eye-

⁴ Interview MC1, see above.

⁵ Interview MC1 see above.

⁶ Interview MKB1: Interview with manager and concept designer of MKB May 7, 2012.



Fig. 1 The Bokals, July 2014. Photo: News Øresund—Johan Wessman © News Øresund (CC BY 3.0)

catching element in the otherwise somewhat monotonous rectangular architecture. The storefronts themselves have windows reaching the ground and even when closed some light shines out from the stores from the conjoined living quarters.

The development of Bokals seemed to answer to several needs in the area including creating spaces for local entrepreneurs, helping to create a more vibrant and urban atmosphere, providing a sense of direction and connection with the city centre and providing a highly visible indication of the housing company's intent to develop the area.

A key goal was to enable and highlight local entrepreneurship in an area profoundly marked by unemployment. At the same time the Bokals introduced a kind of actor that may be understood to be a key node in local social networks and in developing a lively city space—the resident shopkeeper. Similar kinds of shops could have been created, and were created in the area, less formally and less ostentatiously, by using basements of houses. This kind of development however does not create a concentration of lively interaction, mutual monitoring and connection with the public space outside that the Bokals enable (see Fig. 1). By singling out resident-entrepreneurs, MKB sought to harness a particular kind of local and 24-h commitment in the creation of a concentrated, lively and yet ordered public space.

The cost of development of the Bokals as physical structures was substantial but certainly not large in MKB's terms. This cost is not expected to be recaptured in rents from the conjoined apartments and shops. Rather the expectation is that this investment will be recaptured by long-term appreciation of MKB's properties in Rosengård. The Bokal project may be understood as an investment in public space but also a signal of commitment: "there would have been a cost of not doing anything as well" as an MKB manager expressed it.⁷

The Bokal development brings together many different approaches to regeneration. The project entails very small scale restructuring. People in the original apartments were moved and forms of tenure transformed albeit not into ones of tenant ownership but to a new form

⁷ Interview MKB1 see above.

of rental linking residence and business. The project also has an element of upgrading in that the development is understood as creating value in public space and potential returns for MKB in increased rents. It also has socio-economic empowerment aspects in that the local entrepreneurship is supported for instance by low rents and informal support.⁸ The Bokal development also builds on and further extends forms of partnering and service with the entrepreneurs displayed as role models but also functioning as gatekeepers. Finally there is an important image building aspect as the initiative is highly visible and used to signal a novel approach in the area and to promote it in a positive light.

To understand this integrated development effort it is necessary to unpick relations between the resident-entrepreneurs and MKB and between MKB and the city of Malmö.

6.1 Legitimacy trading: MKB and the resident entrepreneurs

For resident-entrepreneurs the Bokals provide a highly visible space, well equipped with amenities. The rent for the combined apartment and shop is low. MKB has also taken steps to reduce the financial risk of entrepreneurs by allowing contracts to be terminated on 3 months notice. The significance of the particular space of the Bokal development for the entrepreneurs is also much greater than what might first be recognized. The businesses have a distinct element of ethnic entrepreneurship and are highly dependent on the specific space. Thus several of the entrepreneurs expressed that they were interested in starting a business in Rosengård but that they were not interested in alternate locations that MKB offered.⁹ The reason for the significance of this particular space lies in the closeness to family and others sharing similar backgrounds. This proximity translates into easy access to a market segment and access support networks for dealing with unexpected problems that might arise in the business or at home. Many of the entrepreneurs explicitly state that they would rather attempt a completely different line of business than move to a different location. In fact several of the entrepreneurs are new to their line of business and have embarked on this specifically to fit the particular space and MKB's criteria.

about three years ago I started this business selling meat... It was a wholly new concept, new to me that is. Meat, I knew nothing about meat, but I learned. Why meat? Well I don't know really I just saw that there might be a need for it here and I knew one of these shops was going to be free soon. I was pretty much out of work and really wanted to make it on my own¹⁰

The Bokals thus enable the resident-entrepreneurs to utilize specific local resources in developing business and provide an easily recognizable form.

MKB has also extensively marketed the Bokals and the shops in brochures, flyers, and webpages as well as in regularly organized study visits. The Bokal entrepreneurs are on the whole appreciative of this and state that it helps their businesses. MKB has also promoted interaction in the area by means of different events, such as showing World Cup Soccer games on big screens in collaboration with resident-entrepreneurs in efforts to market the area and support businesses that could cater to the spectators.

In return for providing the resident-entrepreneurs with affordable, functional and well-located premises and by lavishing attention on the Bokals, MKB receives a set of individuals highly committed to developing a public space characterized by a degree of social

⁸ BE1: Bokal entrepreneur Aug 26, 2014.

⁹ Interview MKB2 Interviews with three managers of MKB July 4, 2012.

¹⁰ Interview BE1 see above.

interaction, liveliness and order. This is to an extent built into the contractual forms and selection processes for those wishing to rent a Bokal.

The particular physical and contractual forms developed for the Bokals entail that the resident-entrepreneurs demonstrate a high level of continuous local commitment simply because they live and work in the place in a highly visible manner. Applicants to rent a Bokal are evaluated based on several criteria including an assessment of contribution to an overall attractive mix of shops, and that they cater to local visiting customers. MKB thus declined proposals to establish offices, a pottery workshop and a day care centre because it was deemed that these activities would not sufficiently contribute to creating a strong link between the Bokals and the surrounding public space. Thus contractual forms and selection criteria create strong relations with the immediate surroundings. In interviews with the entrepreneurs it was also evident that local networks were often important in resolving disputes, for instance, with youth in the adjacent public space.

Phrased somewhat starkly the basic relationship between the housing company and the resident-entrepreneurs may be understood as MKB purchasing the mobilization of the social networks of the resident-entrepreneurs for the development and defence of an attractive public space. A representative of MKB stated that for her the primary indication of the success of the Bokal project was an article in the dominant Malmö newspaper, which brought up the juice bar in a Bokal as one among many good places to go in Malmö. For her this was an indication of success because Rosengård was treated like any other area in the city, not singled out and stigmatized, but appraised in terms of what it has to offer.¹¹

The Bokal entrepreneurs support MKB's efforts to raise the status of the estate by being able to showcase a lively and diverse public space and where diversity is an asset. This support occurs both in daily interaction around the Bokals and by participating in MKB's showcasing of the area. The Bokals thereby provide an imagery and media counterpoint to impersonal high rises and newsflashes of unrest. There is also a deliberate form of the public space. It is not only that it is lively but also that it disciplines the entrepreneurial efforts of the residents in roles that are somewhat exotic but easily comprehensible to the wider society.

The relationship between the resident-entrepreneurs and MKB is complex but centrally involves a kind of exchange in which each provides legitimacy for the other. The resident-entrepreneurs are enabled by MKB providing a particular space and form of shop that speaks to norms of appropriateness in relation to a local context of family and social networks but also in relation to a wider society. For MKB, the resident-entrepreneurs provide an imagery of lively and ordered urban public space that serves as a media counterpoint to the 'othering' of the estate. The term legitimacy trading seeks to capture this relationship whereby two seemingly independent actors mutually support each other so that each appears more legitimate within an essential context of their external interaction.

6.2 Legitimacy trading: MKB and urban policy in Malmö

Previously we described how Rosengård had come to symbolize a protracted crisis in traditional welfare state models and how recurring images of social problems seemed to undermine the re-invention of Malmö's as a dynamic, sustainable city of knowledge. In this context the Bokal development takes on a wider meaning. The Bokal initiative provides apparent progress in transforming a highly stigmatized area. The initiative is bold, novel, photogenic and makes Rosengård appear in a different and more positive light. The

¹¹ Interview MKB1 see above.

negative image associated with high-rise rental is to an extent exchanged for stories of small-scale entrepreneurs and colourful local/social interaction. For the municipality, the Bokal project and subsequent developments fit well within the notion of a city that is trying to reinvent itself, to break-away from its past of industrial decline and embrace new opportunities. At the time of the opening of the Bokals, MKB described the effort as a starting point for creating new opportunities and growth in post-war mass housing areas generally, to build anew, counteract exclusion and open the area to the city.¹² The grand opening of the Bokals was attended by the CEO of MKB and Ilmar Reepalu, the head of the city council and key politician of Malmö's urban renewal. The Bokal concept was met with general approval in the local and architectural press. The amount of attention given to the opening of ten small shops in the city is indicative of how politically urgent the topic of Rosengård was at the time and how significant this seemingly small change was seen to be.

The wider importance of the Bokal project in MKB 's efforts to be seen as a credible agent of regenerating Rosengård is evident in the recurring use of the image of the Bokals in promotional self-descriptions such as its annual accounts.¹³ The Bokal development may also be seen in light of how MKB is restyling itself as committed to innovative urban development and increasing Malmö's attractiveness rather than simply providing good affordable housing.¹⁴

The Bokal development was also highlighted as an example of socially sustainable urban development in a national report by The Swedish National Board of Housing, Building and Planning (BOVERKET 2010) and an image of the Bokals appeared in Malmö's draft for a new general plan.¹⁵ It seems therefore that the Bokal development was attributed wider significance for housing and urban policy and has been seen as providing an exemplary way forward.

MKB can be understood to gain legitimacy, to be seen as a credible agent of regeneration, by relating to the trope of a diverse, lively, creative city. This is important as a means of securing property values but probably more importantly in gaining political support. Subsequent urban policy in Malmö has also directly supported the regeneration of Rosengård by underscoring aspects of urbanity and connectivity. This regeneration strategy has been dubbed Rosengårdsstråket and further expands the notion of a path and direction set by the Bokal development linking the estate with the city centre as well as the ideas of active public space. Planned and realized developments along Rosengårdsstråket provide for substantial changes but also for altering the imagery of the area. Major points of this development include a municipally led but externally funded project to upgrade public space to accentuate a pathway connecting Rosengård with the city centre.¹⁶ This included efforts to engage residents in collaborative development of public space, which was also promoted in media and with the explicit aim of changing the image of Rosengård (Listerborn et al. 2014).

¹² MKB's press release Dec. 01 2009. Bokaler—a new way of promoting entrepreneurship and creating spaces for interaction in Rosengård, Malmö. (author translation).

¹³ Annual reports for MKB Fastighets AB 2012 and 2013. The entire front cover of the 2013 annual report is an image of the Bokals.

¹⁴ the shift is most noticeable in the comparison of the short self description provided in the annual reports of MKB Fastighets AB for the years 2008 and 2009.

¹⁵ *Översiktsplan för Malmö 2012: samrådsunderlag/planeringsstrategi*. (2011). ().Malmö Stad.

¹⁶ See the municipal project Rosengårdsstråket headed by the department of streets and parks via www.malmo.se.

The municipality also attracted external funding for a major upgrade of bus lines from the city centre to Rosengård that included the introduction of new, eye-catching, high capacity buses, new bus stops and designated bus lanes. Perhaps more significant is the planned development of a light rail station for a ring line around Malmö, situated on Rosengårdsstråket. This connection is intended to increase the attractiveness of the area in the local housing market and provide a further node of interaction in the otherwise residential area. Both infrastructural developments are closely proximate and architecturally linked with the square in front of the Bokals.

MKB has also subsequently developed plans for extensive and eye-catching infill development between the Bokals and the planned light rail station. The Bokals figure prominently in the marketing.¹⁷

These developments along Rosengårdsstråket, may be understood as substantive input by the municipality in support of the regeneration of Rosengård. However there is also a sense that these realized and planned developments are image building efforts and intended to attract external investment. In fact this intent is explicitly stated in municipal planning documents.¹⁸ As such the developments along Rosengårdsstråket serve both as a bid for MKB to be considered a credible agent of regeneration in Rosengård and as means to improve the imagery of Malmö and the legitimacy of its urban policy.

7 Discussion and conclusions

This paper started from the formulation of housing context, as developed by Van Gent (2010). We argued that the actions of management within the housing context could be better understood by including considerations of legitimacy. Van Gent's initial formulation of the housing context identified local public and housing management as mediating actors connecting public, private and resident interests and thereby playing a pivotal role in shaping neighbourhood regeneration. He also identified key parameters enabling and constraining different strategies.

This paper sought to extend work on the housing context in several ways. First we noted that there is a broader range of strategies deployed in regeneration than the restructuring and upgrading strategies identified in the original formulation. These strategies include service-partnering, image building and socio-economic empowerment. There are also integrative strategies and stepwise developments. Second, we suggested that selection among this broader range of strategies might be accounted for, not by adding further parameters of context, but by elaborating the notion of management control to include aspects of legitimacy. Third, we illustrated how this elaborated understanding of management control is useful in explaining the regeneration strategy in Rosengård.

The case illustrated how, in lieu of private investment or government funds, there was a need for management to establish themselves as credible actors of neighbourhood regeneration and potentially attract market and public support. A first step was taken by MKB in the development of the Bokals that makes visible a commitment to developing the area but also build an alternate image by creating an attractive, bold, yet normalized urban space and by promoting a sense of connectedness with the city centre. MKB thus succeeds in establishing itself as a credible actor for regenerating this stigmatized and segregated estate.

¹⁷ <http://culturecasbah.com> accessed June 20 2015.

¹⁸ Municipal planning document PP6044, City of Malmö.

Efforts by MKB with the Bokals resonate with dominant ‘entrepreneurial’ approaches to urban development by creating an attractive public space and by using physical renewal as a means of communicating a re-invented city. Public managers then amplify efforts to create a sense of connected and active public space and channel public funds in support of concentrated development of public space and connectivity of Rosengård. As a consequence MKB can drive grander plans for developing the area, explicitly also creating a bid for private investment in further regeneration of the estate.

The case in no way refutes the original formulation of housing context. On the contrary all of the factors identified as enabling and constraining in the original formulation contribute to shaping the regeneration strategy in Rosengård. However the original formulation would not lead us to expect any regeneration at all. Considering management legitimacy opens for a cumulative process of attracting public and private investment. This helps to explain the stepwise character of development and why integrated strategies may be selected. The integrated strategy seeks to attract support from different but important sources. This includes public management and private investors but also residential commitment in developing public space to accord with majority society norms.

The main implication of this research is that management legitimacy should be included as an aspect determining strategies of urban regeneration. This allows Van Gent’s framework to apply to a broader range of contexts as well as explain the selection of a broader range of strategies.

There are multiple questions raised by this research that merit further exploration. For instance the management control hypothesis that underpins this analysis seems to imply a very limited scope for resident participation in regeneration. However as the example of the Bokals indicates there are situations in which some degree of resident control provides a means for increasing management legitimacy and therefore control. This is perhaps particularly the case when resident participation involves the upgrading of public space. Although this participation is limited and selective it nonetheless establishes a kind of long-term mutual interdependence. This raises questions about the potentials and limits of this kind of resident influence. Further research might also productively explore how legitimacy affects the shaping of regeneration strategies in different housing contexts, for instance where public funding is more readily available or where ownership structures are dispersed. Comparative research could also contribute to developing a more general understanding of how certain strategies of regeneration come to appear as legitimate or how this is undermined.

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