GENDER RESIDENTIAL SEGREGATION AMONG SINGLE PARENTS IN ÖREBRO?

A feminist investigation of settlement patterns in the wake of the building boom.

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Abstract
With the feminist goal to gain insight into the conditions for single mothers on the housing market in Örebro, and a gender as difference approach, the author of this thesis has investigated the residential status of single parents in Örebro at two different points in time, 2005 and 2014. Analysing secondary data, the aim was to find out whether there has been an increasing gender residential segregation among single parents. The investigation took place against the backdrop of a building boom in Örebro and a meagre economic development among single mothers as compared to single fathers. Applying an intersectional perspective, the author found that single mothers decreased in most districts with private housing, and increasingly reside in the older large public housing districts of Örebro, where the median disposable income is lower than the median in the municipality, where there are large shares of foreign born inhabitants and where levels of education are lower or much lower than the average in Örebro. Meanwhile single fathers generally have risen in numbers in suburban districts. Most of these districts share characteristics, which is a 90 percent proportion of Swedish born inhabitants, a level of education close to the average in the municipality, or higher, and a median disposable income which is higher than median disposable income in Örebro. While single mothers have increased in 20 out of 48 districts, single father families have increased in 30 districts, indicating that the increase of single fathers is distributed more uniformly than the single mother-increase and that single fathers have a larger freedom of choice when acquiring housing in Örebro.

Keywords: single mothers, lone mothers, single fathers, housing, public housing, living arrangements
1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

For several years there has been a growth of residential construction in Sweden (scb.se 2018e). The demand has however surpassed the availability, and prices have risen to levels beyond reach for many people in search of housing (Alestig 2017). The Swedish building society SBAB (2018) published a report in the summer of 2018 stating that women in the metropolitan areas, and in several mid-sized cities in Sweden as well, cannot afford to separate from a partner due to prices on housing being too high for them. SBAB came to this conclusion after having made an investigation where an exemplified woman in her 40’s with two children and a median income (for women) applies for a mortgage in order to buy a three bedroom apartment. Based on the premises that there was a shortage of rental apartments in these cities, and that the woman did not have any savings, she would not be able to get a mortgage in any of the 20 mid-sized municipalities in Sweden, because her income was too low. For a father of two, in the same situation, it would be easier; in nine out of 20 municipalities he would be given the opportunity to borrow enough money to buy a three bedroom apartment. Among the municipalities investigated was my hometown, Örebro. According to the SBAB-report a single father with a median income in Örebro would be able to buy an apartment for himself and his children, while a single mother would not (s bab.se 2018). Reading this I argued that this unequal situation can also possibly take a spatial expression in that single mothers and fathers live in different socioeconomic parts of the city. Even though the local building of housing has surpassed most Swedish cities in quantity (Iversen et al., 2014, lansstyrelsen.se/Orebro 2017, Nilsson et al., 2016, P4 Örebro 2017, Åkergren 2016), there has also been a large inflow of new inhabitants in Örebro; Swedes as well as migrants or refugees (Gimberger et al., 2017, scb.se 2018d). And in spite of there being a growing supply of housing, there has been a shortage of dwellings in Örebro (lansstyrelsen.se/Orebro 2017) and sharply rising prices on new housing in Sweden in general (Höjer 2017, scb.se 2018c).
For the past few years I have had a misgiving that while local policy makers and frequent headlines cheerfully talk about the fast growing city of Örebro (Bock 2010, Jernberg 2016, Nilsson et al., 2016, P4 Örebro 2015), there are structural changes in urban space which affect women’s lives unjustly. Applying a feminist approach in a case study of Örebro, I want to investigate whether this local development on the housing market have been paralleled by a development in the residential pattern among single parents that has been unjust towards the single mothers. With this motive I can join those feminist geographers who have brought awareness within the discussions on global and regional economic transformations, government policies and settlement patterns (Dixon et al., 2006). Ever since feminist geographers started their work, they have had a focus on the everyday activities of women and I consider a woman’s, and a man’s, choice of housing to be fundamentally important in the organizing of their everyday activities. For many young men and women about to have their first children, the future will carry periods when they are on their own, with a single income to support the family. This includes finding affordable housing. I want to shed light on this difficult situation and how it might affect mothers and fathers differently depending on their gender.
1.2. Aim and research questions

The aim is to do a case study of Örebro and to illustrate possible different developments in the settlement patterns of single mothers and single fathers in Örebro and to see whether these developments contribute to gender residential segregation and spatial injustices towards single mothers. The investigation will include an intersectional perspective as well, since segregation often is related to a person’s country of origin, education and income (Bodström 2013, Knox et al., 2010, 2014)

The questions to be answered are:

1. In which districts of Örebro did single mother families and single father families increase or decrease between 2005 and 2014, and how much did they increase or decrease in numbers and percent compared to all families in the districts and the municipality?

2. How high was the median disposable income for single parents in Örebro during the period 2005-2014 and how can the relation of the development between this income and the residential settlement among single parents be described?

3. How can the districts where there is a significant increase of single mothers and single fathers be categorized from a housing type and socioeconomic perspective? The socioeconomic categories being income, country of origin and education.

4. Has the development of the distribution of single mother families and single father families from 2005 till 2014 in Örebro contributed to gender residential segregation among single parents?

The first question aims at studying where single mother families and single father families increase and decrease, if they increase in the same districts or not.

The second question aims at exploring how the distribution of single mothers and single fathers can be related to background (Swedish or foreign), class/income and education.

The answer to the third question should point out what type of housing dominate in the districts where single mothers and single fathers live and how this is related to background (Swedish or foreign), class, education as well as gender.

The fourth question aims at investigating if there is a development in the distribution of single mothers and single fathers that increases gender residential segregation.
1.3. Delimitation

While the data I have used, which was available at Sweden Statistics, covers single mothers as well as single fathers, I have not found much literature on the subject of single fathers and their housing situation. This makes the literature overview rather imbalanced since it was easy to find articles on the subject of single mothers, their situation and experiences on the housing market. However, single fathers are included in the beginning of the literature chapter when I present the prevalence of single parents in Sweden, Europe and the USA. Then, they are generally absent in the rest of the literature overview, only to return when results from my investigation of Örebro are presented.
2. LITERATURE AND THEORY

This chapter starts with an account of the Swedish and the European context in which we will find single mothers and fathers, to various extent. Concerning single mothers in Sweden, there will be an account of their economic situation and how it has developed over years. This account is followed by a literature review, an exposé of the residential situation for single mothers in various parts of the world. Lastly, there is an overview on feminist theory. After this chapter I turn to method which is followed by the results and a discussion before the thesis ends with a summary.

2.1. Single parents in Sweden

The number of single mother families in Sweden was in average 17 percent in 2016 with another 5 percent of all families being headed by a single father. The numbers are higher in big cities and metropolitan areas. In Stockholm single parent families represent 27 percent of all families. Among seven municipalities with approximately 120 000 to 160 000 inhabitants, the share of single parent families varies between 17 percent (Jönköping) and 24 percent (Örebro and Norrköping) (scb.se 2018a). The sharp rise of single parents households in Sweden occurred between 1975 and 1990 when their share increased with 25, 9 percent (scb.se 1990a). Data from 2014 indicate that during marriage or cohabiting, seven out of ten couples in Sweden live in privately owned houses, while after divorce or separation, single fathers’ and single mothers’ choices of housing differ. Among single mothers, 58 percent have a rental apartment, 21 percent own a private apartment and 19 percent have a private house. Meanwhile, 44 percent of the single fathers live in a rental apartment, a third of them live in a private house and 18 percent of them own a private apartment. Thus, single fathers are more likely to live in their own house, compared to single mothers (Ljungqvist 2014).
Fig 1.2 Share of families in percent headed by a single parent 2016

Source: scb.se (2018a)

A possible reason for this difference in choices of housing is the fact that Swedish single mother families have a disposable income in average 33 percent lower than nuclei families, whereas single father families have a disposable income only 15 percent lower than the average nuclei family (Lavie 2016). Also, the economic situation for single mother families has deteriorated due to cut downs in subsidies aimed at single parents (Ritzén 2009). The monthly maintenance allowance from the Swedish Social Insurance Agency (Försäkringskassan) for a single parent only rose with 100 Swedish kronor between 1997 and 2014, from 1173 to 1273 Swedish kronor (Nyman et al., 2014). While single fathers increased their incomes with 37 percent between 1999 and 2010 and nuclei families increased their incomes with 42 percent, single mothers had incomes which rose with 23 percent (Johansson et al., 2012). 19 percent of the children 0-17 years old, living with a single mother in Sweden were considered poor in 2015 (scb.se 2017a). And the share of poor families among single mothers has increased more, compared to other types of families (Johansson et al., 2012).
2.2. Single parents in Europe

The European Community Household Panel Survey (ECHP) from 1996 indicated that 12 percent of all European families were single parents at that time, and 90 percent of these parents were mothers. Among parents below 30 the lowest proportion could be found in Italy where only three percent of them were headed by a single parent whereas in Great Britain 20 percent of these young families had a single parent. At that time between 25 and 40 percent of single parent families in the southern part of Europe belonged to an extended family with whom they shared a household. The poorest single parents could be found in Anglo-Saxon countries whereas in Scandinavian countries, single parents at that time were “no more affected by poverty than other types of households". (Chambaz 2001) That is an interesting remark as we just learned that nowadays single mothers in Sweden have significantly lower disposable income than single fathers (Lavie 2016) and find it difficult to make ends meet (Ritzén 2009). However, there are more recent data on single parent families in Europe but they do not include housing data.

Table 1 Share in percent of various family types within EU28 in 2011.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Capital region</th>
<th>Married couples</th>
<th>Registered partnerships</th>
<th>Consensual unions</th>
<th>Single parent families</th>
<th>Single mother families</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EU-28</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>67.8</td>
<td>61.5</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>71.6</td>
<td>65.2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>15.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>69.8</td>
<td>63.4</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>67.8</td>
<td>51.4</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>30.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estonia</td>
<td>75.1</td>
<td>63.1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>17.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>52.5</td>
<td>51.6</td>
<td>23.7</td>
<td>23.6</td>
<td>23.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>69.7</td>
<td>64.6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>14.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>73.6</td>
<td>68.6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>14.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>64.7</td>
<td>56.6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>20.9</td>
<td>25.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td>78.9</td>
<td>74.7</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>40.5</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>78.5</td>
<td>70.1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyprus</td>
<td>83.0</td>
<td>63.9</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latvia</td>
<td>53.6</td>
<td>51.4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lithuania</td>
<td>67.0</td>
<td>65.8</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luxembourg</td>
<td>74.8</td>
<td>74.8</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>65.3</td>
<td>60.6</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>16.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malta</td>
<td>80.1</td>
<td>76.6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>69.6</td>
<td>59.8</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>25.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria (1)</td>
<td>70.0</td>
<td>63.6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>74.9</td>
<td>68.5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>73.8</td>
<td>64.6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>15.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>60.2</td>
<td>77.0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovenia</td>
<td>64.0</td>
<td>62.1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>10.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovakia</td>
<td>72.0</td>
<td>70.8</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>66.0</td>
<td>62.7</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>23.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>66.0</td>
<td>57.7</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>64.7</td>
<td>49.8</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>20.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: data for capital regions is based on NUTS level 3 regions.
(1) Same-sex registered partnerships are included under married couples.
(2) Average of Inner London - West (NUTS UK07) and Inner London - East (NUTS UK12).
Source: Eurostat (Census Hub HIC52)

According to table 1, 13.1 percent of all families in Sweden were single parent families in 2011. The Eurostat data also indicate that the EU-countries with the
highest prevalence of single parents are the Baltic States; Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia and also Slovenia while the countries with the lowest prevalence are Cyprus, Switzerland and the Netherlands. After this description we turn to the literature on single mothers in various parts of the world. As I stated in the introduction, there were no articles on single fathers and their experiences on the housing market which makes this following overview rather imbalanced from a gender perspective.

2.3. Single parents in the literature

Reading studies on single parents (or mothers) and their housing situation I found that some themes were recurrent. Thus I have chosen to present the following literature overview according to these themes. It begins as I relate structural changes in the Great Britain and their effect on the attitudes towards single parents on the housing market. The overview then presents the spatial compromises single mothers are forced into (cohabiting) and the discrimination they face on the housing market in many parts of the world, from North and South America to the Far East and Australia. These are themes that might be relevant in the forthcoming discussion when I relate the results to the literature. The overview also covers resistance movements that combat this discrimination in some parts of the world.

2.4. Structural changes and single mothers

In Great Britain, where the share of single mothers is among the largest, and where they are also among the poorest within the EU28, the attitudes and policies towards single mothers went through a profound change in the late 1980’s and 1990’s. Having been regarded as victims and met with sympathy and understanding since the 1960’s, they were then considered a social problem and as parasitizing the welfare system (Jacobs et al., 2003). According to Jacobs et al., (2003) this turnaround indicated how successful neo-liberal thinkers had been in presenting their message which included that access to welfare would develop unwanted behaviour from single parents. Lobbyists pointed at rising costs for social welfare, not least The Housing Benefit Bill which had given single parents priority. In 1996 the Tory government changed the Housing policy thereby giving two-parent families priority. But these neo-liberal ideas and policies were so successful that even when the Labour government came to power in 1997, the depiction of single mothers as a social problem prevailed.
The change in housing policy and attitudes towards single mothers in Great Britain is an example of the structural changes that have taken place in parts of the world since the 1980’s and their consequences for single mothers on the housing market. Social scientists share the view that single mothers are an economically vulnerable category in society, suffering from these global structural changes (Clampet-Lundquist 2003, Gonzalez et al. 2014, Jones et al. 2015, Knox et al., 2010, Levy et al., 2017, Lokshin et al. 2000, Saugeres 2009, scb.se 2017, Shirahase 2014). This issue is even more important as a growing proportion of families in the world are headed by a single parent and that 75 percent of them are mothers (Brownstein 2017). In some places, the mere fact that single mothers have become so many is a structural change, as governments have maintained policies favouring nuclei families (Brownstein 2017, Esteve et al. 2012).

However, the phenomenon of single parent families is more obvious in some places than in others. In countries like China, India, Turkey, Jordan and Israel, less than 10 percent of all children live with a single parent, whereas in western countries like Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark and France one fifth of all children live with a single parent (Chamie 2016). In Russia, 25.5 percent of all children lived with a single mother in 2010 (Churilova 2016) while in the United States the share of children living with a single mother nearly tripled between 1960 and 2016 from 8 percent to 23 percent (census.gov 2016). The numbers are even higher in Africa. 40 percent of all the children in South Africa and 36 percent of them in Mozambique live with a single mother (Chamie 2016).

Social scientists agree that part of the reason for this increase of single mothers is due to the many children who are born out of wedlock (Brownstein 2017, Chamie 2016, Esteve et al., 2012, Lokshin et al., 2000, Mulroy et al., 1992). Within the OECD (The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) approximately 40 percent of all children were born by an unmarried woman in 2014 compared to 11 percent in 1980. And the share of children born out of wedlock is expected to rise in some OECD states with approximately a quarter until 2030, which would make them 50 percent of all children in these countries (Brownstein 2017). But how does the increase of single mothers affect their housing situation? As mentioned earlier in the United States the share of children living with a single mother nearly tripled between 1960 and 2016 from 8 percent to 23 percent (census.gov 2016).

In the wake of this structural change in American family life the government started to withdraw from the housing market in the 1980’s. The Department of Housing and Urban Development had their budget cut by 76 percent during the Reagan era. Governmental support to builders who provided the market with affordable housing was abolished (Mulroy et al., 1992). One hundred low income households had to
compete for every 40 affordable apartments. During the 1990’s some American public housing districts have been either demolished or renovated in order to create a social mix in the neighbourhoods, but the result was that the number of affordable apartments decreased (Clampet-Lundquist 2003). Meanwhile, during the last decade the share of single parent families in the USA has been stable and their children represents 27 percent of all children in the country although there are some variations depending on the parent’s country of origin. Single mothers dominance prevail (Chamie 2016) as in fig 2.1.

![Fig 2.1 Percent of children in the USA in single parent households](image)

Source: US Census Bureau (2016)

A similar development took place in many other Western and Eastern countries, like Canada where structural changes included rapid urbanization, increasing share of single mothers, reduced federally subsidized housing meant for poor families leading to an affordable housing shortage while the rents on the private housing market have risen (Jones et al., (2015). Japan has gone through the same structural changes as the USA and many other western countries in the sense that there is a growing income gap, an increasing number of single mothers, and limited public economic support to families. Between 1993 and 2011, the number of single mothers increased with 55 percent and more than half of all single parents in Japan are poor (Shirahase et al., 2014).

African women were heavily exposed when the continent suffered from a global economic crisis in the 1980's and the World Bank and IMF launched austerity measures that hit the public sector hard. This meant reduced job opportunities for
women while the HIV-epidemic forced them to spend more time at home taking care of family members (Raniga et al., 2014). The HIV-epidemic together with job related migration to the cities have made single parent families more prevalent (Raniga et al., 2017). From a western perspective it appears as if the concept of household has a fluent meaning in southern Africa. But it is the result of structures that the Africans themselves seldom had any power to influence. During the apartheid era in South Africa, there were restrictions as to where people could set up a home, or just pass through, depending on the colour of their skin, and in the end this also affected the living arrangements for family members. Thus, male spouses often work in the cities while the rest of the family lives far away in rural areas (Sibanda 2011).

The rough circumstances in many African countries are reflected in the share of African women in Örebro municipality which has risen from 1.8 percent in 2005 to 3.5 percent of the total population in 2014. In one particular district, Vivalla, where 34 percent of the families with children had a single parent in 2014, the proportion of African women of all women, have risen from 12.7 to 34.5 percent between 2005 and 2014 (orebro.se 2018).

### 2.5. Cohabiting

One of the important contributions that feminist geographers have made, is to put focus on the spatial context in which women and their families lead their daily life. It is particularly interesting to investigate the various ways in which single mothers around the world arrange accommodation for their families when their income is too low in relation to the housing they need. While cohabiting with parents, or living in an extended family, is rather unusual in northern and Western Europe, it is very common in Latin America (Esteve et al., 2012). For the past decades between 70 and 80 percent of all single mothers in 13 Latin-American countries have been sharing housing with other adults, and most often with their parents. However, there are socioeconomic differences in the sense that it was more common among well-educated single mothers to live in an extended family compared to single mothers with little education. Esteve et al., (2012) draw the conclusion that well educated single mothers have a stronger social network whereas the less educated single mothers have parents who cannot afford to provide for their daughter and her child.

As the number of single mothers in Russia increased in the last decade of the 20th century, as well as the risk of them becoming poor, a rising share of these mothers moved in with their parents. In 1989 13 percent of single mothers in Russia were living with other adults and the number was rising at the time. Younger single
mothers often lived with their parents or siblings while older single mothers, with older children, lived by themselves (Lokshin et al., 2000). A recent study indicates that in 2007 and 2011, 15 percent of Russian single mother families consisted of one mother, one child and one relative (Churilova 2016).

Research on single mothers have often focused on income and related welfare policies while ignoring the significance of living accommodations and intra-generational family support. However, to share housing and economic resources have become increasingly important for poor single mothers. In Japan, a country that shares many structural features with western nations like the USA in the sense that there is a growing income gap, an increased share of single parent households and limited public economic support to families, intra-generational living is seen as normal and in accordance with Japanese historic traditions. This is a strategy often used by Japanese families as to mitigate the effects of an array of social and economic structural changes, like the fact that most women are part of the workforce nowadays, shaky conditions on the job market, not least for young people and a growing number of elderly people to support. In 2011, 39 percent of single mothers in Japan lived with another adult and in 75 percent of these cases, it was her parents. This number is significantly higher than in most other countries. The study in Japan indicated that poverty was less prevalent among single mothers who lived with their parents compared to single mothers living by themselves (Shirahase et al., 2014).

![Graph](image)

**Fig 2.2 Share in percent of single mothers living with their parents**

Source: Shirahase et al., (2014:552)
There is no data indicating that cohabiting is a strategy often used by single parents in Sweden nowadays, as a mean to avoid poverty. However, applying a historical perspective, data show that cohabiting was not unusual in some parts of the country a few generations ago. Indeed, literature on the situation for unwed mothers in the 19th and early 20th century Sweden suggest that the children of these mothers often ended up in foster homes or children’s homes. Such was the stigma surrounding the unwed mother (Ericson 2012, Sköld 2018). But data also indicate that the weight of this stigma varied depending on where in the country the illegitimate child was born. In rural Norrland, there were many babies born out of wedlock in the late 19th century and early 20th century. This was partly the result of the Northern rural population consisting mostly of working class with a more relaxed attitude towards sex before marriage, than the bourgeoisie in the big cities (Ericson 2012, Sköld 2018). It was also, supposedly, the result of the railway being built in this part of the country with numerous railroad workers arriving from the south who on their spare time also became intimate with local women before they eventually moved on to work somewhere else (Sköld 2018). Eckeryd (2017) found that in the years between 1860 and 1940, a large share (between 48 and 65 percent) of a group of maids working in private households in the Northern cities of Sollefteå, Nordingrå and Nordmaling, moved back home to their parents’ house after becoming pregnant, or shortly after giving birth to an illegitimate child.

2.6. Single mothers and public/social housing

Research indicate that the housing markets in liberal countries like Australia, USA and Great Britain have a bisectational character. There is a dominant private housing market whereas the residual housing is social in its character, stigmatized and eligible for the most impoverished. The housing policy in Australia emanates from the patriarchal family type, the “bread winner” model, where the father works full time while the mother stays at home and takes care of the children. As women’s (and men’s) housing standard is a result of their access to paid work, the amount of pay they receive and their position in the family, this structure will put the woman, single or not, in an unfavourable position (Saugeres 2009).

Many Australian single mothers are stigmatized from being single, unemployed and living in public housing. To live in public housing is stigmatizing in itself. Still, many single mothers prefer to live in public housing as the rent is affordable and as they have confidence in the landlord. But the housing policy can be a poverty trap since it is only permitted to have occasional jobs or the landlord will put the rent up. And if the income reaches a certain level, the single mother will have to start paying taxes
and she will lose parental and children benefits. To get by, the single mother would have to work fulltime and get well paid. But that is hardly a realistic goal to her due to the health problems that many single mothers suffer from, and the responsibility for their children. To stay in public housing and not work is often the easiest way out for a single mother in Australia (Saugeres 2009).

In some states or cities in Canada single mothers have come to personify the phenomenon social or public housing (Jones et al., 2015, Lessa 2002) in spite of housing authorities creating regulations aimed at keeping the share of single mothers down. In the 1960’s Ontario Housing Corporation, OHC, decided that no more than 20 percent of its tenants must be single mothers or their presence would contribute to segregation. However, the negative publicity this distribution policy created, when it became known, led to it being dissolved and in due course regulations allowed many more single mothers in the OHC, not least women with children who had to flee a violent husband (Lessa 2002).

Meanwhile in the Republic of Singapore in 2017, where 80 percent of the population lives in public housing, single mothers are not allowed as tenants before they turn 35, unless they are widows or divorced, making unmarried mothers an utterly exposed category on the housing market, even at risk of becoming homeless (Brownstein 2017). We will return to the situation in Singapore when I give an account of the discrimination single mothers are exposed to.

2.7. Discrimination

It is necessary to apply an intersectional perspective when reading about the situation for women in Brazil. The socio-economic inequalities in the city of São Paulo, are among the largest in the world and even if the pre-conditions on the housing market are harsh for women in general, compared to men, they are even harder for coloured women. As coloured women often work in the informal sector, earning about half of what white women in the formal sector make, when they clean the houses belonging to the upper class, they seldom manage to save enough money to be able to buy their own dwelling. Neither will they be able to borrow money from the bank. Furthermore, until recently, a man’s name was needed on the tenancy agreement, a regulation that led to women having to leave the apartment, or the house, in case of separation (Levy et al., 2017).

This discriminating regulation was changed as a result of a housing movement that women joined in São Paulo in the late 1990’s, a metropole where 13 000 people are homeless, many of whom are women. They demanded affordable housing for the
working class and a more inclusive urban planning. As many single mothers got involved in the housing movement, it grew and raised a new planning paradigm called “Gender and cities” observing that women constitute a majority of the population in need of housing and that relevant policies were missing. As a result, in 2004 there was this new housing policy in the municipality of São Paulo approving of new family types in public housing. This implicated that single mothers received the right to rent housing in their own name. The Brazilian government has, however, chosen to view the housing problem as something that should be solved by the market and the political majority does not consider social housing necessary (Levy et al., 2017).

Many single mothers in the USA also face discrimination not only for being single mothers, but for being Hispanic or Afro American (Clampet-Lundquist 2003). And even if there are laws against discrimination it is quite easy to steer away not wanted tenants to some other neighbourhood and it will be hard to claim it was discrimination. Studies indicate that in spite of single mothers usually living in central city areas, most of them would like to live in a green suburb. But when they look for housing in these areas, they are often excluded by landlords considering single mothers as deviant, immoral and not representing family ethics. (Mulroy et al., 1992).

Being a single mother thus appears to be a liability in itself while searching for housing. A survey in the Canadian city of Kelowna among 30 single mothers indicated that apart from the problems with finding affordable housing spacious enough, they also had to deal with gender related discrimination directed specifically towards single mothers on the housing market. This might lead to single mothers settling in certain neighbourhoods with no possibility to make an advancement on the housing market. A questionnaire which was sent to landlords in Canada indicated that single mothers received fewer positive answers than single fathers or couples, especially in areas where many single mothers already were living. Least answers were received by single mothers momentarily living in shelters after having fled a violent partner (Jones et al., 2015).

As mentioned earlier, the Australian welfare policy is based on the ideology of the ‘male breadwinner’. Saugeres (2009) argues that the government has not been consistent when they do not encourage all women to have children, or support all women who already have children. The government has reduced the Parenting Payment Single which used to support single mothers until their youngest child was 16. Now single mothers have to get a job when their youngest child turns eight, or she will have to rely on unemployment benefits which will render her less money than the Parenting Payment Single did. Meanwhile, the government encourages
married or cohabiting women to stay at home when they have children by offering tax reduction. Single mothers in Australia also have difficulties when applying for private housing as landlords do not want people on welfare among their tenants (Saugeres 2009).

In Singapore, where 80 percent of the inhabitants live in public housing (they can choose to lease for 99 years, or to rent), single mothers who are not widows or divorced, are not allowed as tenants until they turn 35. Apart from this, there are several welfare and tax benefits awarded to nuclei families but not to single mothers in Singapore. The government is candid in its position and emphasizes that the nuclei family is the social norm (Brownstein 2017). This kind of open discrimination has become one of the targets for AWARE (Association of Women for Action and Research) in their campaign for gender equality. In 2013 this group managed to push a new law entitling fathers to one week paternal leave in Singapore. After pursuing a questionnaire with 55 single mothers and three single fathers in Singapore, AWARE also delivered proposals for a non-discriminating approach towards single mothers who turn to the official Housing Development Board (HDB) for assistance in their search for housing. The proposals include general alleviations in the restrictions for single mother-applicants but also offering loans to single mothers who wish to have a 99 year lease. AWARE then suggested improved personal treatment of single mothers who apply for housing, since they had experienced indifference and prejudice from the staff at HDB (Brownstein 2017). This campaign relates well with the main purpose of feminist geographers, that of exposing the processes behind the spatial oppression of single mothers, improving the lives of women and documenting plans for resistance.

2.8. Summary

This literature overview indicates that single mothers, apart from having grown in numbers worldwide, also have faced growing difficulties in finding accommodation. This is due to structural economic changes like decreased welfare support and a shrinking market for affordable housing. Also, conservative governments are discriminating single parents, making it hard for them to combine work with having sole responsibility for the children. Single mothers who are coloured face even greater difficulties due to their origin. In some countries single mothers find housing support from their parents with whom they and their children can live, to lighten their economic burden. In countries with public or social housing, single mothers tend to gather in these types of dwellings. In some places there have been organized
movements to support single mother in their struggle for right to accommodation on the same premises as married couples.
2.9. Theory

This chapter on theory starts with a review of a theme which is central among feminist geographers, that of situated knowledge, and the possible implications for this theme when working in the field. No feminist can claim that the knowledge he or she produces is universal. Many feminist researchers, being white and middleclass, also has to reflect on their approach towards those feminists who opposes the idea of being represented by them as white, academic, hetero, middleclass feminists, since being feminist also could imply being black and/or lesbian and from non-academic contexts (Rose 1997, Valentine 2007). The identity of the researcher, as well as the researched, is a combination of all their experiences, from various settings, filtered through their gender, sexuality, race, religion, country of origin, age, language, health, class, social networks and so on (Madge 1993, Marshall et al., 2016, McDowell 1997). In order to situate their knowledge feminist geographers have put a lot of effort into the art of reflexivity. The aim is to prove that they do not claim to be neutral, nor do they produce universal knowledge about women (Marshall et al., 2016, Rose 1997).

McDowell (1997) suggests the following questions to the reflexive feminist researcher:

1. Who are the women involved in my research?
2. Under what circumstances are they and why?
3. Why is this particular group interesting to investigate?

Haraway (1991) describes how the knowledge of the oppressor is presented as universal, as if the oppressor sees everything from nowhere in an ambition to gain power…”but of course that view of infinite vision is an illusion, a god-trick.” (P.188-189 in Rose 1997:308) In contrast, feminist geographers choose to view knowledge as subjugated, critical, partial and bound to the situation in which it is produced (Rose 1997). Mattingly et al., (1995 in Rose 1997) argues that to situate oneself as a researcher one should be open and not attempt to be invisible. Several feminist geographers support this approach where the research process and the knowledge production are visible and spatialized.

In Rose’s (1997) interpretation, feminist researchers believe that if they are reflexive enough, they will become transparent and all their motives will become visible. However, Rose considers this to be an illusion, as it is impossible to reach complete knowledge about ourselves or the context in which we do research. Instead she recommends that the researcher poses questions about the difference between
him/herself and the participant. How did this difference between them emerge and why does it lead to an imbalance in their relation?

The possible differences, tensions and conflicts occurring must not be seen as problems but political opportunities. For example, when an academic interviews a local and their respective language differs and cause uncertainties, these uncertainties can create new insight, challenge the researcher’s conviction that her language is clear and distinct (Smith 1996 in Rose 1997). The researcher’s knowledge is enriched by new knowledge rather than by her ongoing reflexivity. Thereby the researcher admits that the power resting with her/him can be punctured (Rose 1997).

Thus, whereas researchers practicing a traditional objectivist method convinced that they are detached from the phenomenon they are investigating, and in control of the research process, some feminist researchers practice relational ontology, where the subject and the object are unified in a progressing process, or embodied feminist objectivity where the researcher and the researched each have their situated knowledge and partial perspectives. In the field, feminists then try to build a relationship with their participants based on the research project, common interests, empathy and respect. This is supposed to give the researcher a more profound understanding of the everyday lives of women, thereby giving feminist knowledge political credibility. Using the embodied feminist objectivity allows the researcher to interact with someone socially marginalized as the method implicates that the two of them produce research together, thereby decreasing the possible distance between an educated scholar and a person who might see herself as coming from a different social category (England 2006).
3. METHOD

3.1. A feminist approach

This chapter begins with a presentation of the approach and method I have chosen for this thesis. Then there are some reflections on my own position as a researcher and the women whom I relate to as a collective, not individuals. Also I describe how I have related to and dealt with the secondary data that I retrieved from scb.se and the municipality database. Lastly, I present some concepts which are frequent in the thesis.

The approaches commonly applied within feminist geography studies are gender as difference, gender as social relation and gender as social construction (Dixon et al., 2006). For this thesis I would like to apply the approach gender as difference which is useful when focusing on the differences in single parents’ residential pattern. Instead of asking “where do people live?” I will ask “who lives where?” thereby getting a better understanding of the spatial dimensions of the gender division of the housing market. Further, I will investigate the characteristics of the various spaces in which single parents reside to see whether there are differences in income, education and background (foreign or Swedish) associated with gender division of the housing market (Dixon et al., 2006). Applying this approach in a quantitative case study, I want to investigate the settlement of single mother families and single father families in the municipality of Örebro at two different points in time, 2005 and 2014.

There is a need to take on a feminist approach on housing studies in order to reveal possible inequalities since there have been very few such investigations recently (Saugeres 2009). Single parents are generally considered as being economically marginalized and this often imply being marginalized spatially as well (Knox et al., 2010). Also, it appears to be a significant shortage of research on the subject of single parents and their housing conditions in Sweden during the past decades. Searching for scientific articles where this subject is investigated in a Swedish setting proved to be fruitless.

The choice of a quantitative study seems like an adequate method to initiate this investigation. With necessary data available, I can map out the residential pattern of single parents in Örebro and eventually, this thesis could be succeeded by a qualitative study where single parents can elaborate on their choice of housing, if they really had a choice. Since the 1980’s, feminist geographers have tended to practice qualitative methods even though there are some arguments proposing the use of quantitative methods, especially since longitudinal studies can describe a trajectory and even predict future possible events (England 2006). In later years
feminist geographers, have stated that it is really not the method that matters for a feminist geographer, but how the method is practiced and if the right method is applied for a certain question (England 2006, McDowell 1997). England (2006) argues that sometimes a feminist geographer’s view of the world is best described with a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods. Then an investigation can include statistical analyses on various social issues completed with interviews or questionnaires making it possible to answer the questions “how many?” as well as “why?”

Apodaca (2009) applies a traditional positivist approach and argues that quantitative methods offer opportunity to answer questions concerning policies that either improve or worsen the possibilities for women to practise their economic, social and cultural rights. She insists that using numbers and statistical analysis is no less feminist than any other methodology, since the universal goal is to improve women’s and children’s socio-economic condition. Besides, numbers and statistics have proved to be the best way to convince those who tend to listen with disbelief, as often is the case within patriarchal systems. Apodaca argues that there is a potential to influence politics and eventually change laws as she and her quantitative fellow scholars use statistics to identify discrimination, poverty, violation of human rights and sexual harassment. Also, there is the reminder to use detailed statistics on the conditions for women not just from a gender perspective but also from an country of origin and urban/rural point of view, since there can be large differences within a women population (Apodaca 2006).

Through the years since I became a human geographer I have become quite familiar with the municipality database in Örebro. In my second term studying social geography we were instructed to find out as much as possible about a certain district in Örebro and then write a paper about it. I found that quite intriguing and since then I have returned to this database many times while writing a paper or thesis. Generally official statistics have the advantage of being non-reactive as the researcher has not been taking part in the collecting of the data and could not possibly have any influence on that part of the process (Bryman 2014). From a feminist perspective I do agree with England (2006) that a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods gives the researcher an opportunity to ask “how” as well as “why”. In this case it could mean asking “how are single mothers and fathers distributed in the districts of Örebro municipality and why are they distributed in a certain way?” I prefer to answer the first question only. Then, as I said earlier, having the result I think it would be interesting to know what single mothers and fathers have to say about the reason for living in a particular district? Early on I could see that single mothers were decreasing in most districts of Örebro even though the total number of them was actually increasing somewhat. Why is that? But to ask that question I
needed to make a thorough investigation of the distribution of single mothers in Örebro and what is more, I found it necessary to compare the result with the distribution of single fathers. And in the end, I realised that I had to compare the numbers of the single parent families with all families too, since many districts in Örebro had a large growth in population during the period investigated. With this database I was able to get all the necessary data. I would also like to argue, just like Apodaca (2009), that quantitative studies with numbers are efficient when trying to influence policy makers. At least, I hope so.

The indicators I chose for this thesis are country of origin (Swedish born or foreign born), education and income as they were available in the municipality database and as they are often used when researchers apply an intersectional perspective (Madge 1993, Marshall et al., 2016, McDowell 1997). The variables Swedish and foreign born I found in the population statistics, while number of, and income for, single parent families I could find in the income statistics. Education statistics were also presented. These data were broken down to the level of districts. However I could not combine the variables country of origin, family type and education at the same time so I could not decide the level of education among foreign and Swedish born single parents separately. Neither could I combine the variables country of origin, family type and income in order to present the income, among foreign born single parents and the Swedish born single parents separately.

3.2. Positionality

It is important for me to state that I am not neutral in relation to the women I am studying in this investigation (Marshall et al., 2016, Rose 1997). I have experiences from being a white, heterosexual, middleclass and single mother searching for housing. These are experiences that I am going to share with the reader in order to critically analyse my own position in relation to the women I am studying (Pini 2003). I want to be open about my own experiences as a single mother on the housing market (Mattingly et al., 1995 in Rose 1997). The analysis will be intersectional as I reflect on the different indicators income or class, sexuality, country of origin and gender and how they shaped my path on the housing market in Örebro (Madge 1993, Marshall et al., 2016, McDowell 1997).

The first time I managed to acquire a dwelling for me, as a single mother, and my two year old child, was when I separated from the father of the child. We had recently bought a row house with a small garden. The lady at the bank insisted we should sell the house and each find ourselves new dwellings when we separated. She considered our incomes too low for any of us to keep the house. However, I persuaded her to let
me keep the house. She had been my contact at the bank for six years and my husband did not know her that well. My relation to her obviously helped me to keep the house.

About ten years later I was in another house, in a relation with T whom I was about to leave. I had no regular income at the time but I got a one bedroom apartment quite quickly through a friend of mine who was an executive a private housing company. He never asked for my income but apparently had trust in me paying the monthly rent. The social relation meant everything for me in that situation.

A one bedroom apartment was all I could afford. My child got the bedroom and I slept in the living room. There were no more single mothers in the house, but mostly single men and women and they all had Swedish names.

After some time I met a new man, B, and we began talking about finding a larger apartment where we could live with my child. I had been queueing at the public housing company for many years and was able to acquire a modern apartment with three bedrooms in a City centre-district. When I was going to sign the contract, the company would not approve of me as a tenant since I had no regular income. I was angry for not being accepted. The man I was going to share the apartment with had to put his name on the contract as he had a regular income high enough. Income was crucial at that moment, but I am quite sure that was all that stopped me from signing the contract myself. In that house we got neighbours who had foreign names but they were one couple out of ten Swedish couples living in that house. There were no single parents.

After living together for three years I decided to move and let B keep the apartment. I had recently landed a regular job. No high income, but I also had some money on the bank from the time when T bought me out from a house we had bought together. And since then I had been living with B, a generous man, for two years, letting me keep that money from being spent.

I began looking for a house cheap enough for me. I found one about ten kilometres outside Örebro. It was not very fashionable but everything I and my teenager needed was there. I was able to lower the price and the lady at the bank agreed to lend me the necessary money, even though I did not know her at all. My former bank lady had retired. So social relations with staff at the bank did not matter. The regular income and the cash on the bank account did. And having shared a house with T for ten years while we paid off a lot of our mortgages together with housing prices rising during that time, led to me getting a large sum of money when I left the relationship. And T had paid a lot more than I had due to his income being much higher than mine. A close relation with a white, high income man had made me quite prosperous. Also, the next man B, was a high income man letting me keep most of my money at the
bank while he paid the rent. Had I been a lesbian, how likely is it that I would have had similar relationships? These relationships are very much the result of traditional gender relations where men help women to a better living standard when women cannot afford much of the housing available.

3.3. **The women in my research**

McDowell suggested that the feminist researcher should ask herself “who are the women in my research?” As this is a quantitative study based on secondary data I will never know the single mothers or fathers whose residential status I will investigate. This implies that I cannot, as Pini suggested “avoid separating subject from object” (Pini 2003:423). Nor can I say anything about the circumstances under which they live. But I have a clear view of why I think the residential status of single parents is interesting to investigate (McDowell 1997). I want to see if there is growing gender residential segregation among single mothers and single fathers and whether this segregation also is related to, and reinforced by, country of origin, education and income (Apodaca 2009).

3.4. **Statistics**

As the results are presented in this chapter it is important to clarify that the main sources in this thesis, Statistics Sweden, and the municipality database with local data on population, income and education, have different definitions of children living with their parents. Thus, according to Statistics Sweden, there are 19 024 families with children in the municipality of Örebro (scb.se 2016), while the municipality database allows a total number of 17 874 families with children (Orebro.se 2017). Statistics Sweden defines a child as someone under 21 living with one or two parents, while the municipality set the limit at 18 years, thereby excluding some of the individuals classified as children in the data from Statistics Sweden (Dolk 2018a). Children are registered at one address, even though they share their time between their mother and father living separately, whether the data is originating from Statistics Sweden or the municipality data base (Carlsson 2018). I have chosen to investigate the residential status of single parents between 2005 and 2014 because that was the longest period of time available in the database at the time for my research. No data before or after these years were available.

The purpose of the municipal data base is to make relevant statistics available for the inhabitants of Örebro. Data comes from Statistics Sweden and the Employment Service (Arbetsförmedlingen). Over the years, the municipality database has been complemented as to meet requests from the public (Dolk 2018b). According to the website of Statistics Sweden, their “main task is to supply users and customers with
statistics for decision making, debate and research… (…) Statistics Sweden is responsible for official statistics and for other government statistics.” (scb.se 2018)

3.5. Validity

In order to make the result of this investigation valid I have considered which method is most suitable to answer questions concerning the numbers of single parents in the municipality and I argue that a quantitative method where secondary data is retrieved from trustworthy authorities is appropriate (Bryman 2014). To state the numbers of single parents in the various districts of Örebro I have chosen the necessary data from the municipality database, where data is retrieved from Statistics Sweden. Statistics Sweden retrieve their data from the Swedish Tax Agency, the authority responsible for the population register within the country. The Swedish Tax Agency describes the objective with the population registration being that it should mirror the actual residential status of the population as well as their identity and civil status (skatteverket.se 2018).

3.6. Reliability

Reliability concerns the trustworthiness and correctness of the measuring of the data in the investigation (Bryman 2014). Data on the number of single parents in Örebro and the income, level of education and ethnicity of the inhabitants in the different districts of Örebro, are originally from Statistics Sweden. Some of it has been adapted by statisticians at the department of statistics in Örebro as to fit the demand of local statistics from the public in Örebro. In this case study, I assume that those who are registered as single parents really are single parents, but I cannot be 100 percent sure about that. Some single parents might be living together with a partner even though this partner is not registered at the address of the single parent. As mentioned earlier children are registered at one address only, even though they share their time between their separated parents. Consequently, this study is somewhat unfair towards all those single parents who have their children living with them 50 percent of the time, but are registered as singles without children in the population register. As most children to separated parents are registered with their mother this means that a lot of single fathers are missing from this study and I will not be able to include their residential status either, which is a shortcoming of this study.

The data in this investigation was produced by the calculation service on the municipality homepage for statistics. The data in the tables is transferred directly from the municipality homepage. Then I have calculated the development between
2005 and 2014 in numbers as well as percent. Data on population offers the variable ‘country of origin’ but not ‘family type’ since one family can have members of various background. On the other hand, data on income offers the variable ‘family type’ but not ‘country of origin’. Therefore I have not managed to calculate the share of Swedish born and foreign born among single mother families in the various districts of Örebro. When characterizing the various districts, the characteristics of education and country of origin will thus not aim at single parents but the collective living in that district.

One aspect of importance in this study is the categorizing of the districts of Örebro. There are 48 districts in Örebro and this numeric division is made by the Planning department at the municipality office. I refer to them on the maps. But then I have labelled all these districts in a certain manner. Is this labelling trustworthy? At first, I chose rather established concepts, like ‘public housing’, ‘suburbs’ and ‘garden city’ which are concepts often used within the human geography (Forsberg 2013, Ramberg 2013, Bodström 2013). But these concepts might be value laden. Therefore, I wrote an e-mail to the town curator and invited her to comment on my categorizing of the districts. She corrected some of the categories. As a result, the districts I have labelled ‘public housing’ keep this epithet. These districts are historically associated with the concept of public housing. They have their origin in the years between 1946 and 1975 when the apartment blocks were built there to lessen the enormous housing shortage for families with children at the time (obo.se 2017). There are few houses in these districts which are not public housing.

The districts I first labelled ‘garden cities’, I changed after having read the e-mail from Ek (2018), the town curator. She considered these districts not really garden cities as this epithet presupposes that the districts are rather independent with shops and other types of amenities but that is not the case with these districts in Örebro. So Ek (2018) suggested they would be labelled ‘garden suburbs’ instead. We then agreed that ‘suburbs’ could be labelled suburbs. The central districts of Örebro have the epithet ‘city centre’, as Ek (2018) suggested. The conversation with the town curator strengthens the reliability of my categorizing of the districts (Bryman 2014). I will soon explain why I wanted to make the categorization of the districts.
3.7. Concepts in the thesis

3.7.1. Intersectionality

In everyday life, gender is always intertwined with other social or cultural oppressive structures, like class, sexuality, education and country of origin. This thought was coined *intersectionality* by the American civil rights advocate Kimberly Crenshaw in 1989 in order to describe how race and gender moulded the job experiences of black women. She argued that race and gender can only capture these experiences when applied together, not separately. To use the concept of intersectionality properly one should always reflect on how these social or cultural oppressive structures interact and reinforce each other (Connell et al., 2015). However, as this study does not include any experiences from the single mothers or single fathers, it is not possible for me to draw any conclusions whether the residential status of these women is a result of any kind of experienced oppression. The possibilities to apply an intersectional perspective are also limited since the only socioeconomic indicator I can combine with family type is income. Neither country of origin nor level of education can be combined with family type. What I can do is to apply an intersectional perspective and use indicators like country of origin, education and income when describing the districts. Then I can relate varying numbers of single mothers and fathers to specific socioeconomic types of districts.

3.7.2. Segregation

Segregation refers to “situations where members of a minority group are not distributed uniformly across residential space in relation to the rest of the population.” (Knox et al., 2010:167) Spatial segregation can be understood as a way to avoid conflict between social groups while at the same time it strengthens the identity and lifestyle within each group, as certain social rules give the members the possibility to exercise control over each other in these groups. Segregation can lead to people only marrying people belonging to the same social group, or settling in a neighbourhood where only members live with whom they share country of origin and religion. Among the characteristics that can decide whether a person will be accepted in a social group is class, culture, gender, sexual orientation and race. To be spatially isolated as a minority group can also be the result of discrimination on the housing market where members of this group have the opportunity to settle in a limited numbers of districts. This kind of spatial discrimination is maintained by real estate agents, mortgage financiers and private land-lords. Part of the reason for minority groups being huddled together in certain districts can also be the fact that
they often consist of large families in need of spacious apartments not available everywhere (Knox et al., 2010). Gender segregation is not often associated with residential status. When describing segregation, the indicators are often income, religion and country of origin (Bodström 2013, Knox et al., 2010, 2014) while gender segregation is often associated with the labour market or education (Blackburn et al., 2003, 2006, McGrew 2016).

3.7.3. Types of housing

As I mentioned earlier, the categorizing of the districts in the municipality was the result of an e-mail conversation with the town curator of Örebro. I have divided the districts into the categories public housing, suburbs, garden suburbs and city centres. This is because I have a wish to group the various districts into larger categories that can be associated with certain socio-economic groups. Knox et al., (2010) argue that our dwellings have a sort of built-in wealth leading to speculations on a housing market where peoples’ needs and aspirations are matched to certain types of housing, what he calls housing submarkets. As I have an intersectional perspective including the indicators class, or income, education and country of origin, I can investigate how certain levels of these indicators can be associated with certain housing submarkets. Having a gender as difference approach will also make it possible to see if single fathers and single mothers can be associated with certain housing submarkets.

3.7.4. Public housing and social housing

While doing research on single mothers and their living arrangements, the concepts of social housing and public housing are frequent. There is no clear-cut definition of the concept of social housing. Bacinska et al., (2016) argue that it rather represents various sorts of attempts from municipalities, trusts, non-profit organizations or even private companies to offer housing to people or families who lack the prerequisites to acquire a house or a flat by themselves. There is no real equivalent to social housing in Sweden since public housing (Allmännyttan) never was meant to offer housing just for low-income families. Still, from a European perspective and in social scientific research, Swedish Allmännyttan is also considered social housing (Bacinska et al., 2016). Thus, public housing in Sweden, is known as Allmännyttan. Founded in the 1940’s as an answer to housing shortage and overcrowded miserable housing for the working class, Allmännyttan practised new rules on the housing market. Apart from raised housing standard, rents became regulated, housing subsidies were introduced while no profits were allowed for the public housing companies owned by the municipalities. And even though the original idea of public
housing was to offer the most poor and exposed families decent living accommodations, when the public housing companies came in to operation the aim was to provide all families with proper and suitable housing (allmannyttan.se 2018). Allmännyttan can be found in nearly all Swedish municipalities and comprises in total nearly 825 000 flats (Ohlin et al., 2016). Approximately 30 percent of the population in Sweden live in Allmännyttan (sabo.se 2018).

The public housing company in Örebro, Örebrobostäder, has 22 532 apartments and 43 000 tenants. My impression is that Örebrobostäders apartments are distributed all over the city, in all socio-economic spheres, but the largest share of their apartments constitute low income housing districts built in the 1950’s and 1960’s in the Western part of the city (obo.se 2017, Orebro.se 2017). Some of the apartments are available for tenants on welfare, others are not (Beckmann 2015). In that sense, Örebrobostäder could be described as public as well as social housing.

Recent research indicates that many of the 300 public housing companies in Sweden have tightened their requirements and demand that tenants have an income three or four times larger than the monthly rent. Four out of ten public housing companies also refuse to accommodate tenants who are on public welfare. But what is more is that new groups who do not have social problems, nor are they poor enough to be offered housing by the Social Services, do not qualify for an apartment within public housing. And among these new groups are single mothers who still might not have the economic or social resources needed to acquire a dwelling by themselves (Jando 2017).

The share of social housing within the EU varies from 30 percent of all dwellings in the Netherlands to 6% in Germany (Bacinska et al., 2016). In most EU-countries there is an income limit deciding who could be a tenant within social housing. But in some countries, the rules are fairly generous, like France where two thirds of all households, and Germany where 80 percent of all households, are eligible to public or social housing. If social housing used to be subsidized through government support to housing investment or credit guarantees, these days support is often handed directly to the tenants as housing benefits (Bacinska et al., 2016).

The image of social housing is divided, whether it is exclusively for low income households or if it is public housing for a larger group of tenants. According to Bacinska et al., (2016) subsidized housing in the Netherlands or Austria is a well-integrated and respected part of the regular housing market whereas in the USA, where the housing market is almost completely privately owned (Clampet-Lundquist 2003), the image of public or social housing has been unambiguously negative. Public housing is the final destination for someone who has failed in life (Blokland 2008). The image of a public or social housing area is also divided in the sense that
its tenants might not agree with outsiders who consider their neighbourhood stigmatized (Beckmann 2015). Stigmatized or not, a neighbourhood can offer a sense of community and safety if its inhabitants share country of origin or social background, whereas moving to a neighbourhood populated with people who are better off than yourself or have a different skin colour, might expose you to loneliness, racism and prejudice (Gonzalez et al., 2012).

3.7.5. Suburbs, Garden suburbs and City centre

As results are presented further on in this thesis the concept of suburb will appear frequently. The suburb is a phenomenon which developed as cities were being restructured in the 1900’s, due to new technological inventions, like the car. With a car families could live on some distance from jobs, schools and shopping in central cities. But the comfort of having a car has never been as common among women as men, nor has public transport been able to meet the needs of women living in suburbs. Life in the suburbs is even more complicated for a single mother as she is on her own and have to consider her children’s needs, including school and leisure activities, making it nearly impossible for her to work full-time (Knox et al., 2010). There are various examples of districts that can be characterized as suburbs in Örebro municipality and they are situated between 10 and 30 kilometres from the city with populations ranging between 200 and 2000 (Orebro.se 2017c).

There are also near central districts which could be characterized as a Swedish version of the garden city, (egna hems-områden), i.e. privately owned houses with gardens, for example Almby, Hagaby and Rynninge. These garden city-inspired districts are the result of a Swedish movement in the early 20th century where the state offered people from the working class cheap loans as to encourage them to build their own small houses (Jeppsson 2016). However, these districts differ from garden cities in that they do not function independently from the larger city. There are no shops or amenities but only dwellings. Therefore I have been advised by the town curator of Örebro to label them garden suburbs (Ek 2018).

The last category of district being named in this thesis is city centre, (kvartersstad), which can be defined:

The classic city has houses placed next to each other in blocks more or less closed…(...) The exterior of the house is solid with no gaps. This is the traditional city pattern which is common in most cities from the late 19th century and onwards… (Fransson 2016:5)
The present town curator of Örebro advised me to label these districts city centre (Ek 2018). The decision concerning what category a particular district should belong to is my own but I did find it important to discuss this matter with someone who has a professional attitude towards the categorizing of the municipality and Ek (2018) agreed with me on that matter. Deciding which districts should belong to the category public housing I relied on the website of Örebrobostäder, the public housing company, where there was a map indicating where their apartment blocks are situated (obo.se 2018). Örebrobostäder do have apartments distributed all over the municipality, but in the districts I have labelled public housing, they are the only, or the principal, landlord.

Deciding which districts should be considered garden suburbs, I relied on an article about the growth of the garden city-inspired egna hems-rörelsen in Örebro (Jeppsson 2016). Considering which districts should be labelled city centre, I relied on the definition of kvartersstaden by former town curator Eva Fransson (2016). The districts labelled suburbs are all situated outside the city centre districts and the garden suburb districts, but there are still at least 200 people living in the villages or communities in the districts I consider suburbs (Orebro.se 2017c).

As I present the results I have divided the municipality into the very same districts as the City Planning Office in Örebro, see fig. 4.1 and 4.2. Also, I use the names of the districts in these maps.

3.7.6. Median disposable income

As results are presented, the expression ‘median disposable income’ is used. The definition of disposable income is: The sum of all incomes, taxable or not, minus tax and any other negative transfers. The disposable income indicate the economic standard of the household rather than the family’s income (Orebro.se 2017). When data on disposable income is presented, the concept of family means a household with one member or more. Consequently comparisons of disposable income will be made irrespective of the number of grown-ups in the family (Orebro.se 2017).

3.7.7. Single parents

In this thesis the concept of single mother is a person who the Swedish Tax Agency has registered as being the only parent in a particular household. This can imply that the person is single and in no relationship, but it can also imply that she has a relation with a partner who stays at the address, but this partner is not registered at the same address. The same goes for the concept of single father.
4. RESULTS

In this chapter I will present how the residential status of single parents in Örebro have changed between 2005 and 2014. I will relate this result to the development of the total population in each district and to the median disposable income among single parents and the median disposable income in each district and the municipality as well. Early in the chapter there are two maps, one over the municipality of Örebro where the reader can see that this is a city with an urban and a rather large rural area too. There are several small towns in this rural area (p.31, fig 4.1). The second map shows the urban part of the city where red lines indicate how the city is divided into districts (p.32, fig. 4.2). The following results are then divided as to present single mother families and single father families separately. The results are presented in tables where the reader can compare the number of single mother/father families with the total number of families in each district. Noteworthy is that households consisting of one person only, also are registered as a family in the data. Some of the districts have grown considerably in population during the period due to new settlements which is why it is important to study the relation between the number of single parents and the total number of families. Following the tables are two separate figures giving an overall view of the increases and decreases of single mother and single father families respectively in all 48 districts. When compared the figures indicate the difference in spatial distribution between single mothers and single fathers. The figures are then followed by a presentation and comparison of the socioeconomic characteristics of the districts with the largest increases of single mother and single father families.

The research questions to be answered in this thesis are:

1. In which districts of Örebro did single mother families and single father families increase or decrease between 2005 and 2014, and how much did they increase or decrease in numbers and percent compared to all families in the districts and the municipality?
2. How high was the median disposable income for single parents in Örebro during the period 2005-2014 and how can the development of the relation between this income and the residential settlement among single parents be described?
3. How can the districts where there is a significant increase of single mothers and single fathers be categorized from a housing type and socioeconomic perspective? The socioeconomic indicators being income, country of origin and level of education.
4. Has the development of the distribution of single mother families and single father families from 2005 till 2014 in Örebro contributed to gender residential segregation among single parents?
Fig 4.1 The municipality of Örebro, 48 districts

Source: orebro.se (2013a)
Fig.4.2 Districts in urban Örebro.

Source: Orebro.se (2013b)
Table 1. Districts with the highest number of single mother families in 2005 in Örebro municipality and the development 2005-2014.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Type of district</th>
<th>Number of single mothers/all families 2005</th>
<th>Number of single mothers/all families 2014</th>
<th>Difference in number, single mothers/all families</th>
<th>Difference in percent, single mothers/all families</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Vivalla</td>
<td>Public housing</td>
<td>332/2673</td>
<td>447/2908</td>
<td>+115/+235</td>
<td>+35/+9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Brickebacken</td>
<td>Public housing</td>
<td>180/1877</td>
<td>192/1967</td>
<td>+12/+90</td>
<td>+7/+5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Väster</td>
<td>City centre</td>
<td>177/3476</td>
<td>123/3528</td>
<td>-54/+52</td>
<td>-30/+15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Ladugårsängen</td>
<td>Suburb</td>
<td>145/1057</td>
<td>100/1464</td>
<td>-45/+407</td>
<td>-31/+38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Rosta</td>
<td>Public housing</td>
<td>141/1731</td>
<td>144/1895</td>
<td>+3/+164</td>
<td>+2/+9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Bromsplan</td>
<td>City centre</td>
<td>125/2193</td>
<td>124/2225</td>
<td>-1/+32</td>
<td>0/+14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Baronbackarna</td>
<td>Public housing</td>
<td>112/1160</td>
<td>133/1189</td>
<td>+21/+29</td>
<td>+19/+2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. City</td>
<td>City centre</td>
<td>105/3521</td>
<td>98/3968</td>
<td>-7/447</td>
<td>-7/+13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Varberga</td>
<td>Public housing</td>
<td>104/1746</td>
<td>158/1766</td>
<td>+54/+20</td>
<td>+52/+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Norr</td>
<td>City centre</td>
<td>104/2495</td>
<td>125/2874</td>
<td>+21/+379</td>
<td>+20/+15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Tybble</td>
<td>Public housing</td>
<td>102/1407</td>
<td>115/1337</td>
<td>+13/-70</td>
<td>+13/-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Markbacken</td>
<td>Public housing</td>
<td>79/1091</td>
<td>123/1307</td>
<td>54/216</td>
<td>+56/+20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Almby</td>
<td>Garden suburb</td>
<td>63/2184</td>
<td>94/2988</td>
<td>+31/804</td>
<td>+49/+37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48. Rynninge</td>
<td>Garden suburb</td>
<td>13/393</td>
<td>40/985</td>
<td>+27/+592</td>
<td>+208/+150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Örebro municipality</td>
<td>All housing types</td>
<td>3722/68722</td>
<td>3775/75560</td>
<td>+53/+6838</td>
<td>+1/+10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Orebro.se (2017)

Studying this table there are trends which are obvious. First, it is noteworthy that the increase of single mother families in the municipality is rather modest, only one percent. So much of the changing numbers in this table is a case of redistribution. The public housing district of Vivalla had the largest number of single mother families in 2005 and with an increase of 35 percent up to 2014, Vivalla has
consolidated that position. Several other public housing districts have also had large increases of single mother families, like Varberga, Baronbackarna and Markbacken. But in Markbacken there has been a general rise in population, although not as large as the rise in percent of single mother families. If there is a trend among single mothers to move to public housing districts, the opposite can be said of the districts with privately owned housing and where the population has grown significantly during the period due to new settlements. In these districts, that is Ladugårdsängen, City, Sörby and Adolfsberg V, there are large decreases of single mother families, if not in numbers, at least in proportion to all families. On the other hand, there is one central district, Norr, which has had a rather large increase of single mothers, but then the total number of families have risen too. Another trend is that a yet quite small, but growing, number of single mother families live in the garden suburbs of Almby and Ryninge in 2014. The increase of them since 2005 is high in percentage even if the numbers are comparatively modest. So while most of the redistribution of single mother families leads to considerable rises in numbers as well as percent, in several public housing districts, there is an emerging group of single mothers in two garden districts as well and in one city centre district. On the next page there is a figure showing all 48 districts in the municipality with increases and decreases of single mother families in numbers. In all, single mothers increased in 20 districts and decreased in 28 of them. Further on, there will be a similar figure showing the same changes in single fathers’ residential status and a comparison will be made.
Fig 4.3 Increases and decreases in the number of single mother families in the districts of Örebro municipality, 2005-2014

Source: Orebro.se (2017)
Table 2. **Districts with the highest number of single father families in 2005 in Örebro municipality and the development 2005-2014.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Type of district</th>
<th>Number of single fathers/all families 2005</th>
<th>Number of single fathers/all families 2014</th>
<th>Difference in number (single fathers/all families)</th>
<th>Difference in percent (single fathers/all families)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Vivalla</td>
<td>Public housing</td>
<td>55/2673</td>
<td>47/2908</td>
<td>-8/+235</td>
<td>-14/+9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Östernärke S</td>
<td>Suburb</td>
<td>44/2075</td>
<td>35/2143</td>
<td>-9/+68</td>
<td>-20/+3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Sörby</td>
<td>Garden suburb</td>
<td>33/1989</td>
<td>40/2507</td>
<td>+7/+518</td>
<td>+21/+26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Väster</td>
<td>City centre</td>
<td>33/3476</td>
<td>33/3528</td>
<td>0/+52</td>
<td>0/+15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Axberg N</td>
<td>Suburb</td>
<td>26/1308</td>
<td>20/1340</td>
<td>-6/+32</td>
<td>-23/+2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Bromsplan</td>
<td>City centre</td>
<td>24/2193</td>
<td>22/2225</td>
<td>-2/+32</td>
<td>-8/+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. AxbergHovsta</td>
<td>Suburb</td>
<td>23/1140</td>
<td>24/1211</td>
<td>+1/+71</td>
<td>+4/+6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Norr</td>
<td>City centre</td>
<td>21/2495</td>
<td>26/2874</td>
<td>+5/+379</td>
<td>+24/+15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Ladugårdsängen</td>
<td>Suburb</td>
<td>21/1057</td>
<td>26/1464</td>
<td>+5/+407</td>
<td>+24/+38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. AxbergLillän</td>
<td>Suburb</td>
<td>19/1203</td>
<td>19/1305</td>
<td>0/+102</td>
<td>0/+8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Adolfsberg Ö</td>
<td>Suburb</td>
<td>19/1328</td>
<td>27/1347</td>
<td>+8/+19</td>
<td>+42/+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Almby</td>
<td>Garden suburb</td>
<td>19/2184</td>
<td>29/2988</td>
<td>+10/+804</td>
<td>+53/+37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Garphyttan</td>
<td>Suburb</td>
<td>17/1349</td>
<td>33/1454</td>
<td>+16/+105</td>
<td>+94/+8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Marieberg</td>
<td>Suburb</td>
<td>17/1167</td>
<td>27/1299</td>
<td>+10/+132</td>
<td>+59/+11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34. Oxhagen</td>
<td>Public housing</td>
<td>13/1085</td>
<td>27/1171</td>
<td>+14/+86</td>
<td>+108/+8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43. Vintrosa</td>
<td>Suburb</td>
<td>8/862</td>
<td>20/888</td>
<td>+12/+26</td>
<td>+150/+3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48. Rynninge</td>
<td>Garden suburb</td>
<td>5/393</td>
<td>12/985</td>
<td>+7/592</td>
<td>+140/+150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Örebro municipality</td>
<td>All housing types</td>
<td>850/68722</td>
<td>964/75560</td>
<td>+114/+6838</td>
<td>+13/+10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Orebro.se (2017)

The table indicating in which districts there are the highest number of single father families contains more districts than the table for single mothers. This is because there were several districts with small numbers, but high rises, when counting single father families. In all, the number of single father families in Örebro increased more than twice as much as the single mother families, but then from a distinctively lower level. In 2005, Vivalla had the largest number of single fathers.
but contrary to the development among single mothers in Vivalla, the single fathers decreased, in spite of there being a general growth of population in this district. The increase of single father families is distributed much more evenly in Örebro municipality, compared to the single mother families, a situation which is obvious for the reader when comparing the figures 4.3 and 4.4 on pages 36 and 39. Single fathers did increase in 30 out of 48 districts while single mothers increased only in 20 districts. The housing type-district labelled ‘suburb’ is prevalent in table 2, presenting the single fathers, while it is scarce in table 1 of the single mothers. There are six districts where the increases in numbers of single fathers are double figured and all of them except for Oxhagen, are suburbs or garden suburbs. Oxhagen is a public housing district. There are no districts in table 2 where there has been a general growth in population and where the number of single fathers have decreased, as was the case in some districts in table 1. A comparison between the developments in residential settlement for single parents in Örebro during the period 2005 to 2014 indicates that single mothers have had the largest increases in numbers in the public housing districts while single fathers rose most in numbers in suburbs or garden suburbs. However, there is a smaller but yet distinctive trend among single mothers to reside in the garden suburbs of Rynninge and Almby. Also there is a smaller but opposite trend among single fathers to gather in Oxhagen which is not a suburb but a public housing district. Thereby I have answered the first of the research questions. On the next page there is a figure indicating the increases and decreases of single father families in Örebro municipality. Then follows a chapter where I describe and compare the characteristics of the districts with the largest increases of single mother and single father families.
Fig. 4.4 Increases and decreases in the numbers of single father families in the districts of Örebro municipality, 2005-2014
Source: Orebro.se (2017)
4.1. Characteristics of the districts where single mother families rose most in numbers between 2005 and 2014

In this chapter I will focus on the districts with the largest increases of single mother families. The characteristics are presented in order to give an account of the socioeconomic situation in the districts.

4.1.1. Country of origin

There are distinctly larger shares of foreign born inhabitants in the public housing districts than in the city centre, garden suburbs and also in the municipality.

![Figure 4.5 Share of Swedish born and foreign born 2014](image)

Source: Orebro.se (2017b)

4.1.2. Level of education

Figure 4.6 on the next page will indicate the level of education among the inhabitants in each district, but not among single mothers specifically. In all the public housing districts the share of inhabitants with only elementary school background is between 20 and 40 percent. In Vivalla, this share has increased since 2005 implying that the general level of education has dropped. In Almby and Rynninge the share of inhabitants with elementary school background only, is 5 percent or less, in Norr the share is 10 percent, which is close to the average in the municipality, see fig. 4.6
The share of inhabitants with post-secondary education is larger than the average in Almby and Rynninge, close to the municipality average in Norr and below, or well below, the average, in the public housing districts (Orebro 2017a).

Fig. 4.6 Levels of education 2014
Source: Orebro.se (2017a)

4.1.3. Median disposable income

Overleaf, in fig 4.7, there is the development of the median disposable income in the districts where single mothers grown most in numbers. This figure includes all families, not just single mother families. All districts except for Rynninge is below or well below the median disposable income in the municipality in 2005 as well as in 2014. While the median disposable income in the municipality rose from 187 000 kronor to 259 000 kronor, a rise of 72 000, or 38 percent in nine years, the equivalent in Vivalla is 15 percent, and in Rynninge 30 percent (orebro.se 2017). The median disposable income becomes more disparate when comparing single mothers only, and the development in the districts of Vivalla and Rynninge, as in fig. 4.8, overleaf. It is noteworthy that in Vivalla, there were 447 single mothers in 2014 while the number of them in Rynninge in the same year was 40. In the municipality that year, there were 3775 single mothers.
Fig 4.7 Median disposable income in districts with the highest increases of single mothers 2005-2014

Fig 4.8 Median disposable income gap between single mothers in Vivalla and Rynninge 2005-2014

Source: Orebro.se (2017)
4.2. Characteristics of the districts where single father families rose most in numbers between 2005 and 2014

4.2.1. Country of origin

The districts where single father families have increased the most, share characteristics. With the exception for Oxhagen, which is a public housing district, they all have a proportion of foreign born inhabitants which is 10 percent or less.

![Graph showing the percentage of Swedish born and foreign born inhabitants in various districts](https://example.com/graph.png)

**Fig. 4.9 Share of Swedish born and foreign born 2014**

Source: Orebro.se (2017b)

4.2.2. Level of education

The share of inhabitants with elementary school education only (fig overleaf), is in general 10 percent, or less, in these suburban districts, which is approximately the same as in the municipality. In Oxhagen nearly every third inhabitant has studied in elementary school only. The share of inhabitants with post-secondary education vary between 35 and 70 percent in the suburban districts, while in Oxhagen, 25 percent did finish a post-secondary education (Orebro.se 2017a).
4.2.3. Median disposable income

Compared to the districts where single mothers rose most in numbers, the districts with the largest increases of single fathers display a greater diffusion on the income scale, when presented in the fig. 4.11, overleaf. But all of them, except for Oxhagen and Almby, had distinctly larger rise in median disposable income than the median in the municipality. Between 2005 and 2014, in Marieberg, the rise was 143 000 or 53 percent, while in Oxhagen, the rise in median disposable income was 38 000 kronor or 23 percent. But when comparing the number of single fathers in these two socioeconomic counter poles, they are the same, 27, in 2014. The same comparison between the corresponding districts of single mothers indicated that the district with the lowest median income had more than ten times the number of single mothers. Thus, the socioeconomic characteristics of a district has no implication for the number of single fathers residing in the district. Meanwhile the number of single mothers is generally high in districts where levels of education and income are below or much below, the average, and where the proportion of foreign born inhabitants is larger than in the municipality. Overleaf, fig. 4.12, presents the development of median disposable income for single mothers and single fathers in Örebro municipality between 2005 and 2014. Following the figures on the next page, I will relate the development of median disposable income to the residential pattern among single parents in Örebro.
According to fig 4.12, the gap in median disposable income between single father families and single mother families in Örebro has increased from 27 000 to 51 000 kronor, which means it has almost doubled in nine years. Meanwhile there has been
a redistribution of single mothers within the municipality, mostly from the city centre districts and the suburbs into the public housing districts. Single mothers increasingly depend upon public housing and have significant difficulties competing on the private housing market. In several districts with new settlement and significant growth in population, single mothers have decreased in large numbers, or in proportion to all families in the districts. All in all, they have decreased in 28 districts and grown in numbers in 20 districts. Single father families, on the other hand, as they have increased the economic distance to the single mothers, they are distributed more uniformly spatially in the municipality, but the trend is distinct: they reside in suburbs close to the city or in the rural part of the municipality. They have increased in 30 out of 48 districts. Thus, there has been a growing gender residential as well as economic segregation in Örebro among single parents. Thereby I have answered research questions 2, 3 and 4.
5. DISCUSSION

Last summer a report from a building society stated that women in several midsized Swedish municipalities cannot afford to separate since their wages are too small compared to the mortgage they would need for housing for themselves and their children. Örebro was among these municipalities (sbab.se 2018). Inspired by feminist geographers who strive to improve the lives of women by investigating their everyday activities (Dixon et al., 2006, Forsberg 2013, Hopkins 2014, McDowell 1997) I began this thesis in order to investigate the spatial relation between single mothers and single fathers on the housing market in Örebro. I have chosen a gender as difference approach to investigate the residential status of single parents in Örebro municipality at two different points in time, 2005 and 2014. The aim has been to see whether the settlement patterns developing over time among single parents, contribute to gender residential segregation, and to make visible possible spatial injustices towards single mothers on the local housing market.

The result of this investigation indicates that while the city have grown in size and number of inhabitants, there has been a growing gender residential segregation among single parents, as single mothers rose most in numbers in public housing districts while single fathers rose most in numbers in suburbs. During the period investigated, the gap in median disposable income between single father and single mother families have also nearly doubled, from 27 000/year to 51 000/year. There is a clear tendency that single mothers gather in larger numbers in districts where income and level of education is lower, and with a greater proportion of foreign born inhabitants, than in the municipality. Meanwhile, the distinctly growing number of single father families are distributed more uniformly in suburban districts, where the median disposable income is higher and where the share of foreign born inhabitants is lower than in the municipality. This difference in distribution and its’ relation to the increasing income gap between single mothers and fathers, a gap which is also obvious within the group of single mothers, can be described as follows: the number of single fathers was the same in 2014 in two districts with opposite socioeconomic characteristics (Marieberg and Oxhagen). Meanwhile the number of single mothers in the socioeconomic top district (Rynninge) accommodates less than a tenth of the number of single mothers in the district where they are most prevalent, and where they also are most poor (Vivalla). The deteriorated financial situation for single mothers, as compared to single fathers and nuclei families (Johansson et al., 2012, Lavie 2016, Nyman et al., 2014, Ritzén 2009) which is thus acknowledged in this study too, and the increasing gender residential segregation also described here, can to some extent be compared to the situation for single mothers in USA, Great Britain and Canada for the past decades, where there have been less subsidies to the building...
of affordable housing, sharply rising prices on housing and abating welfare support to single parents (Clampet-Lundquist 2003, Jacobs et al., 2003, Jones et al., 2015, Mulroy 1992).

In Great Britain there has been open criticism towards Housing subsidies to single parents from neo-liberal lobbyists leading to policies being changed to the detriment of single parents (Jacobs et al., 2003). In Örebro, such criticism towards vulnerable groups was never heard. But there has been a tendency for the local policymakers to look the other way, to focus on the good news that the city of Örebro grows with thousands of new apartments and small houses for all the new inhabitants, while the same policymakers are ignorant of whether or not the inhabitants who need a dwelling can afford the high standard housing on offer. In the literature overview there were several examples of single mothers being discriminated on the housing market by governments, as well as landlords (Brownstein 2017, Clampet-Lundquist 2003, Jones et al., 2015, Levy et al., 2017, Mulroy 1992, Saugeres 2009). As this is a quantitative study presenting single mothers’ and single fathers’ residential status at two different points in time, there is no data on whether any of these individuals have experienced discrimination on the housing market. But the result of the development of the housing situation in Örebro under the period, is no doubt a prioritization of the well-to-do families, which is the nuclei families and single father families. The expansion of the housing market has excluded most single mothers, a statement confirmed by the results in this thesis, indicating that single mothers decreased in large numbers or in proportion to all families in some districts where there were new settlements during the period investigated. Further research should include questionnaires or interviews among single mothers and fathers, inquiring them about their experiences from their search of housing, an investigation which could bring insight into the different terms and conditions for single parents on the housing market.

As the number of single mothers have risen distinctly in public housing districts of Örebro, parallels can also be drawn to countries like Canada, USA and Australia where single mothers are very much associated with public housing ( Jones et al., 2015, Lessa 2002, Saugeres 2009). However, there is a large difference between these Western societies and Örebro: while the housing market in those countries is predominantly private with just a small public sector (Clampet-Lundquist 2003, Saugeres 2009), the public housing company in Örebro is a giant accommodating more than every fourth inhabitant in the municipality (obo.se 2017) and people from all socio-economic spheres. Still, the result of this investigation confirm strong associations between single mothers and certain low income districts with public housing in Örebro.
This investigation indicated that single mothers decrease in nearly all suburbs. It is probably not related to single mothers being deviant, immoral or not representing family ethics. It is probably truer what Knox et al., (2010) stated: life in the suburbs was never easy for single mothers, with children to pick up from schools and activities, while also having to work full time in the city to run the house with heavy mortgages, by herself. And women do not own a car as often as men do. The result of this investigation points at the growing income gap between single mothers and single fathers as a probable reason for the decreasing prevalence of single mothers in a majority of the districts of Örebro, while single fathers rise in numbers in a majority of the districts. Or as Knox et al., (2010) argue: being economically marginalized often imply being marginalized spatially as well. And this is what I consider an injustice: that during times when new housing districts pop up continuously for two parent families and for single father families, most single mothers appear to have increasing difficulties competing for affordable apartments in districts with private housing. Being reflexive about my own experiences also made me aware of all the indicators, like gender, class, country of origin and sexuality which intersect each other and influence the possibilities to acquire a dwelling.

For me as a feminist it is obvious that single mothers’ vulnerability on the housing market is made less visible by the social norm implying that a mother should be cohabiting with a partner. According to this norm, the problems single mothers experience when they search for housing, are related to them being single, and not to the insufficient building of affordable housing. Social norms prioritizing nuclei families are evident in states on most continents (Brownstein 2017, Clampet-Lundquist 2003, Levy et al., 2017, Mulroy et al., 1992, Saugeres 2009) and having investigated the settlement pattern of single parents during a period when there was a building boom, I argue that this norm is valid in Örebro too. The chance for a single parent to acquire a fairly new dwelling is dependent on how close the income of this single parent is, to the total income of a two parent family.

5.1. Conclusion

Investigating the development of single parents’ settlement pattern in Örebro municipality during the period between 2005 and 2014 indicated an increasing gender residential segregation. Single mothers decrease in most districts with private housing and instead they tend to gather in low income public housing districts, while single fathers increasingly reside in high income suburbs. There are exceptions from this development as there is a small but emerging group of single mothers who are
resourceful enough to acquire a dwelling in a couple of suburbs, as well as there is one public housing district in which a growing number of single fathers reside.

The tendency that single mothers decrease in districts with new settlements and from districts with private housing, is an expression of the spatial oppression experienced by single mothers on most continents in the world, following discrimination by local policymakers as well as landlords, as indicated in the literature overview. But the literature overview gave no indication of possible gender residential segregation among single parents in the rest of the world as the single fathers were not included. This study thus contributes with important results on the spatial relation between single mothers and single fathers on the housing market, results which ought to be followed up by further investigations on the subject of gender residential segregation in societies, where the single parent family have become a permanent phenomenon.
With a feminist goal to gain insight into the conditions for single mothers on the housing market in Örebro, and with a gender as difference approach, the author of this case study has investigated the residential status of single parents in Örebro at two different points in time, 2005 and 2014. Analysing secondary data from Statistics Sweden and the Örebro municipality database, the aim was to find out whether there has been an increasing gender residential segregation among single parents and whether single mothers are exposed to spatial oppression on the housing market in Örebro. This aim is motivated since data indicate that Örebro is a fast growing city, yet has a shortage of housing, and since single mothers in general have had a meagre economic development compared to single father families and two parent families. Comparing the results with an intersectional perspective the author have also characterised and compared the different housing districts where the largest increases of single parents occurred.

The study indicates that single mother families increasingly reside in the large public housing districts of Örebro, as they have decreased in 28 out of 48 districts, mostly city centre districts, suburbs or garden suburbs. The exceptions are Almby and Rynninge, two garden suburbs, and Norr, a city centre district, where single mother families have increased but where there also has been a general growth in population (Orebro.se 2017). Generally single mother families have increased in districts with lower median disposable income, lower level of education and with a larger share of foreign born inhabitants, than the average in the (Orebro.se 2017, Orebro.se 2017a, Orebro.se 2017b).

Considering the residential status of single father families, the tendency is that they have risen in numbers in the suburban and in the garden suburb districts. In all, they have increased in 30 of 48 districts and they have increased in more distant suburbs like Garphyttan and Vintrosa, and in Adolfsberg V and Marieberg closer to the city. They do not increase in the large public housing districts, with the exception for Oxhagen (Orebro.se 2017). All the districts where single father families have increased, except for Oxhagen, share characteristics, which is a proportion of foreign born inhabitants that is 10 percent or less (Orebro.se 2017b) levels of education approximately the same as in the municipality, except for Almby and Rynninge, where it is distinctly higher and Oxhagen where it is lower (Orebro.se 2017a). The disposable income is generally much higher in these garden suburbs and suburban districts, compared to the median disposable income in the municipality, and compared to Oxhagen. Thus, there is not only a growing gender residential
segregation among single parents during the period investigated, but a growing socioeconomic segregation.
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