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ATTRACTIVENESS IN URBAN DESIGN

ERIK HIDMAN

Abstract

The term "attractiveness" *(attraktivitet)* has been established in the field of urban design in Sweden and is used in policy and planning documents as well as urban design and architectural proposals. Understandings of attractiveness, however, vary due to its development in a diverse range of fields, and its inclusion of economic, social, and physical objectives. The purpose of this study is to further our understanding of the term "attractiveness" in relation to contemporary planning and the field of urban design. The study was based on a discourse analysis of academic and popular publications using the term. According to the analysis, the term attractiveness corresponds to a discourse of urban attractiveness constituting three focuses: urban economics, citizen wellbeing, and urban townscape. The term has, further, a normative character, and tends to exclude places in non-urban, peripheral locations.

Introduction

For several decades, planning practice has become increasingly argumentative and rhetorical in its nature (Throgmorton, 1993). Planning and policy decisions are increasingly taken on the basis of political agendas rather than in line with the results of analytical testing (Fischer and Forester, 1993; Fischer and Gottweis, 2012; Throgmorton, 1996). One implication of the "argumentative turn" is that a seductive planning and policy language is nurtured, which aims to convince audiences of planning objectives and goals (Throgmorton, 1993). This shift can also be explained in terms of a turn to storytelling, acknowledging that decisions are based on ideological as well as analytical narratives (Sandercock, 2010). This viewpoint accepts that authors and readers of planning documents interpret their content differently, and it is argued that planning as storytelling leaves opportunities for adaptation and local narratives when plans are realized (Throgmorton, 2003).

This paper focuses on the term "attractiveness" *(attraktivitet)* as used in the Swedish planning and urban design context and in relation to the task of encouraging urban development. It is however acknowledged that the meaning of the term is multifaceted, and that as an objective, "attractiveness" is imprecise. Pilvesmaa argues that "(t)he word attractiveness has a positive connotation but simultaneously the term can be filled with different meanings depending on whose perspective and objectives are applied" (2005, p.6). In other words, the term lacks a description, and thus becomes contested when applied as an aim in planning and policy documents as well as urban design proposals. Tunström describes this contested nature, arguing that " 'Attractive' is used in a way that hides the conflict between its economic and social aspects" (2007, p.695). The aim of this paper is to further our understanding of the term attractiveness in relation to contemporary planning in Sweden. The purpose is to discuss how the term influences urban design. The question addressed is: In what ways is the term "attractiveness" used in a Swedish urban planning and design context?

The argumentative turn in planning correlates with a change in power in Swedish planning practice, as economists became the frontrunners in the field of urban planning (Engström and Cars, 2013). There has also been a shift in urban planning from publicly regulated to market-oriented development, in line with the integration of neoliberal planning ideas (Engström and Cars, 2013). In Sager's view, neoliberalism is operative within the fields of urban economic development, infrastructure provision, the management of commercial areas, and housing and neighborhood renewal (2011). Neoliberal ideology, according to Sager, takes as its point of departure in the challenges posed by globalization and mobility, and its objectives typically include attracting financial capital, and stimulating privatization and entrepreneurialism. Neoliberal planning policies are, however, criticized for lacking a democratic agenda and

neglecting issues such as inequality, segregation, and exclusion (Sager, 2011). The idea of neoliberalism covers several urban planning agendas, among others urban branding and the creative class movement. Urban branding is a practice that has as its objective the promotion of a city and gaining attention in a field of inter-city competition (Gospodini, 2002). Typical approaches include facilitating investment in mega events, iconic architecture, or signature urban design projects (Ashworth, 2009). The creative class movement instead has the objective of attracting social capital to a place by providing the qualities that attract people who are considered to constitute "social capital." These types of qualities include job opportunities, urban amenities, and convenient transportation, among others. This school of thought has its root in Richard Florida's work on the creative class (see Florida, 2002; 2005).

In parallel to neoliberal planning, a range of alternative discursive ideas exists in contemporary planning in Sweden. Tunström (2007) has reviewed contemporary planning in Sweden and has argued that its terms and concepts together aim to construct the ideal of what she terms "vital cities." She explains the central concepts of contemporary planning to be physical integration and diversity, place identity, vital and attractive urban cores and locations, and a drive to recreate, recapture, and restore as a mean to regain the sense of urbanity lost under modernism. Another characteristic of the contemporary planning discourse, according to Tunström (2007), is a strong focus on "urban" development, an ideal that excludes people and places located in non-urban contexts.

The use of the word "attractive" in relation to the built environment is not a new phenomenon. The Swedish Academy Dictionary, *SAOB* (2017) offers an early example by G. Dahlin (1871), who refers to built environments in defining the word "attractive": "To make this venue (…) even more attractive for the public." Another definition refers to something "that has the ability to attract someone/something" (SAOB, 2017).

One earlier example of the use of the term within planning discourse can be found in the article "The metropolis: Attractive but ineffective" (*Storstaden: attraktiv men ineffektiv*), in which Björkman (1971) argue against strong urbanization tendencies and showed that a more economically efficient approach would be to allocate government jobs to mid-size towns rather than larger cities. Another example is the book *Placehunting International: Om konsten att göra sig mer attraktiv för investeringar* [English: "Placehunting International: On the art of making oneself more attractive for investments"] (Asplund, 1993).

But the meaning of the word "attractive" in planning and policy discussions has changed over time, and other meanings have been assigned to the word. A publication entitled *Staden som attraktiv miljö* [English: "The City as an Attractive Environment"] (Beckman, 1991), summarizes a

seminar series held in Gothenburg between 1989 and 1990. The seminar series consisted of six meetings with different topics aiming to outline a more attractive future for Gothenburg. The topics were: the city as a cultural environment, the city as a workplace, the city's social environment, Gothenburg and the world at large, the city as a built environment, and the city as an ecological environment.

Tunström (2007) describes attractiveness from her sample of articles published between 1988 and 2000 in the *Swedish Journal of Planning*, a non-peer-reviewed journal with contributions by professionals, researchers, and politicians. She describes attractiveness as a concept of making attractive city cores, making use of attractive locations (such as waterfronts), but also a concept of tidiness, preserved cultural heritage, fewer cars, densification, and clearance.

These newer meanings make it relevant to approach attractiveness as a discourse. "Discourse" was first used as a concept by Foucault (1972), who defined it as a range of statements on a certain phenomenon and the rules governing the construction of these meanings. A discourse neglects the direct meaning of the language and instead refers to the use of language as a set of statements, representations and narratives that produce a certain meaning or expectation. Discourses also constitute power as they become narratives of truths and thereby legitimize certain actions and decisions according to the discourse (Winther Jørgensen and Phillips, 2000).

This study focuses on the term "attractiveness" in a Swedish urban planning and design context. The method of study is discourse analysis of a number of academic and popular publications from Sweden that use the term. The publications were found using a so-called snowball sampling method (Merriam, 2009) which resulted in the selection of a range of reports, books, and other publications from government institutions, research institutions, interest groups, consultancy bureaus, and magazines. The selection criterion was that selected publications used the term attractiveness in relation to urban planning and design. The publications were analyzed and sorted into nine different categories. The categorization is sorted in chronological order based on the date of first publication. The categories are the basis for the discursive analysis of the term attractiveness.

Evolvement of the term attractiveness

In this section, the categories found in the empirical publications will be presented. The concepts are presented chronologically in terms of their date of publication, to give an image of how the use of the term attractiveness has evolved. The categories used are: in relation to national economic development (measured by migration patterns and willingness

to pay, aim to attract social capital, aim to provide public places, and quality of life); in relation to regional approaches; in relation to branding approaches; as an objective for integrated traffic systems; as an objective of attracting tourists; and, finally, as an objective relating to place identity and participation.

National economic agenda

In 1998, Andersson published the book *Attraktiva städer – En samhälls- ekonomisk analys* [English: "Attractive cities: A national economic analysis"] (Andersson, 1998). It has been argued that this book introduced the term "attractive cities" in a Swedish context, as another term for cities of national economic significance (Andersson, Mandell and Wilhelmsson, 2015). Andersson (1998) argued that it is in the nature of each municipality to try to increase the attractiveness of its city, and that attractiveness is political and therefore dependent on political will. He argued that in order to achieve the attractiveness that politicians desire, it needs to be defined via clear objectives, and to be made measurable via analytical instruments. National economic analysis and cost-benefit analysis are examples of such analytical instruments, according to Andersson (1998) and Andersson, Mandell and Wilhelmsson (2015).

In his first book, Andersson (1998) set out two generic definitions of attractiveness, thus two possible routes for a municipality to follow: (i) distributed attractiveness and (ii) national economic attractiveness. Distributed attractiveness is explained as increased attractiveness for the people of interest to politicians, with the possible effect of reduced attractiveness for others. National economic attractiveness is explained as increased attractiveness for some, but never resulting in reduced attractiveness for others.

Since Andersson's work (1998), the economic field has developed the term attractiveness to include a number of perspectives, such as positive net migration and reasons for migration, economic potential of certain groups and the potential to attract human capital, along with the potential for urbanization and bringing people and capital together. These ideas have connections to international research about cities, agglomeration effects, and urban amenities. Several sources refer to Edward Glaeser as one of the most influential researchers in this area. His studies focus on cities, the positive effects of agglomerations and the shift from production cities to consumption cities (see Glaeser, Kolko, and Saiz, 2001). Among others, he has proposed four key aspects of the task of building attractive cities that are used as the basis for the national economic argument in a Swedish context: the presence of a rich variety of services and consumer goods, aesthetics and physical settings, good public services, and speed (Glaeser, Kolko and Saiz, 2001).

Housing types, migration and willingness to pay

Bernow, Pleiborn and Strömquist published an investigation in 1996 titled *Nya attraktiva bostäder i Göteborg* [English: "New attractive dwellings in Gothenburg"] (1996). Its focus was to outline future housing development in Gothenburg by looking into the aspects that attract people. In the report, two perspectives on attractiveness were raised: (i) positive net migration as an indicator of attractiveness on an international or national level, and (ii) qualitative living environments as an attractor on a local level. The researchers concluded that whilst the Gothenburg region is attractive for people to settle in because of its job opportunities, people would rather settle in the suburbs than in the center because of living standards. This report made use of the word attractiveness quite extensively in relation Gothenburg's developing housing needs. Only one year earlier, Bernow and Strömquist (1995) published a similar investigation for Stockholm: *Nya bostäder i Stockholm?* [English: "New dwellings in Stockholm"], in which the word "attractiveness" only appears in the discussion section of a chapter about willingness to pay, where it is stated that "it is mainly the qualities of location and neighborhood in combination that creates highly attractive residential environments" (Bernow and Strömquist, 1995, pp.192–193).

The idea of measuring attractiveness in terms of the qualities that people are willing to pay for is recurrent in the literature. This form of measurement is focused on the local scale, comparing neighborhoods and their qualities within the urban structure. Bernow and Strömquist (1995) and Bernow, Pleiborn and Strömquist (1996) compared a willingness to pay with aspects such as building age, renovation or non-renovation, ecological housing profile, and type of tenure. A more recent study in Stockholm by Bernow and Ståhle (2011) investigated 1,000 "aspects" of housing choice in relation to the square-meter price of 7,000 properties evenly distributed around the Stockholm region. Their findings were that eight urban aspects explained about 90% of the price variations in Stockholm: proximity to water, urban structure (block enclosure and entrances facing the street), access to parks, proximity to city center, proximity to public transport (subway, shuttle train, and tram), access to streets, access to urban functions (restaurants, retail stores, and culture), and socio-economic index (Bernow and Ståhle, 2011).

Rådberg (2000) carried out a similar investigation, comparing architectural qualities and form with an attractiveness index, where a higher number equated to a higher number of wealthy people as defined by a socio-economic index. Rådberg (2000) compared urban qualities such as locational aspects, types of block, types of tenure, and building age with the attractiveness index. The study concluded that locational aspects and types of tenure cannot explain the degree of attractiveness; it is rather explained by aspects such as building age (older is more attractive), types of block, and the scale of buildings (where small-scale is more attractive, at least in the suburban areas) (Rådberg, 2000).

At a larger scale (regional/national), attractiveness has been investigated using migration patterns and positive net migration. Mellander and Andersson published a review for the Swedish Road Administration with the title *Ekonomi, attraktivitet och stadsutveckling* [English: "Economy, attractiveness, and urban development"] (2009). In the report, an attractive place (city or region) is explained as being a place that people choose to move to or work in. Niedomysl (2010) derived a conceptual framework for place attractiveness following this idea, which is described in Figure 1. Similar to Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of human needs, the basis of the conceptual framework is a hierarchy of place aspects divided into *needs*, *demands*, and *preferences*. Needs are explained as basic requirements such as a safe and affordable home, demands refer to (more or less) non-negotiable place aspects in the migration decision, and preferences are explained as "something extra." Alongside the pyramidal representation of the hierarchy, two scales are drawn representing *number of choice possibilities* and *degree of place attractiveness*. These scales indicate how the number of places to choose from decreases with increased attractiveness; in other words, the more demands and preferences a person has, the fewer migration options there are (Niedomysl, 2010).
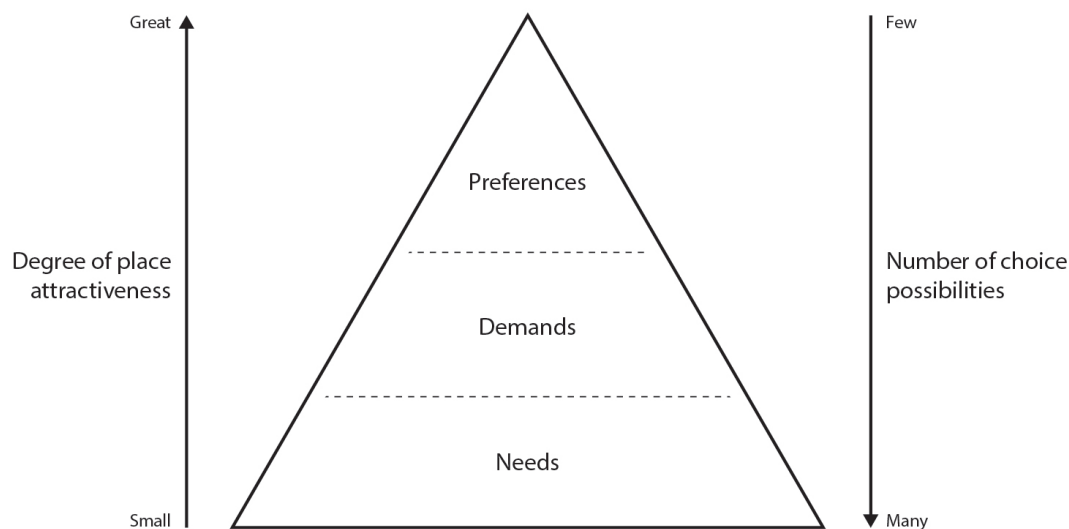
Another viewpoint lies in the investigation of people's motivation to move in order to understand what attracts people to a place. Mellander and Andersson (2009) discussed two motives for moving: the work motive and the consumption motive. A city's attractiveness in accordance with the work motive is determined by the opportunities for well-paid jobs, the variety of employment opportunities and the potential to meet other, well-educated people. In contrast, the consumption motive relates to people choosing to settle somewhere because of consumerist concerns relating to access to products, services, culture, sun, or a sea view (Mellander and Andersson, 2009).

Figure 1
A conceptual framework for place attractiveness, after original by Niedomysl (2010).

Tillväxtanalys (2011; 2012; 2014a; 2014b), a governmental institution investigating Swedish politics and economic growth, has published a number of reports on the topic of attractiveness and migration. For instance, their publication *Orter med befolkningsökning – Exempel på "attraktiva orter" perioden 2000–2010* [English: "Places experiencing population increases: Examples of 'attractive places' 2000–2010"] (Tillväxtanalys, 2011), concludes that larger cities are growing more rapidly than smaller ones, but that smaller cities can also be attractive in the sense of growth if they fulfil a number of conditions. Such conditions are, for example, that they are located close to a larger city or located in a populated region; that the smaller city is a tourist destination; that it is located close to a lake or the sea; or that they are "authentically" small and have a "genuine" village feeling. These results lead to a number of aspects to consider for the place: good infrastructure, good public services, proximity to labor market, attractive residential areas, and good social structure (Tillväxtanalys, 2011).

Kairos Future (2016b), a consultancy bureau specializing in trend analysis and scenario planning, published a report in 2016 entitled "Varför flyttar vi?" [English: "Why are we moving?"]. The conclusion of the survey was seven different career options for moving where the most common reason to move was to make a *place career*, to move to a place that is holistically attractive. They also refer to a *residential career* (moving to a better home), and a *future career* (having better future prospects), which were also seen as quite important; the other "careers" that were less important although still significant choices were *distance career* (being closer to certain amenities), workplace career, the return to home, and relationship career (Kairos Future, 2016b).

In a second report, "Vad är en attraktiv plats?" [English: "What is an attractive place?"] (Kairos Future, 2016a), the aim was to investigate the place career from the first study, and understand what characteristics build such a place. The outcome was presented using a model similar to Maslow's (1943) theory of human needs, see Figure 2. The most important aspects for attractiveness according to the study are *feeling of safety and basic functionality* (found at the base of the pyramid). This layer is followed by *functional* competitive advantages, strong social contexts, lots of people and meetings, and the center – where things happen (that is found at the top of the hierarchy) (Kairos Future, 2016a).

Centre — The feeling of being where it happens

Lots of people and meetings — Lively urban areas, large number of activities, a lot of people in my age, several restaurants and cafes, mix of etnicities, good shopping, many cultural activities, meeting places

Strong social contexts — Proximity to family/friends, adequate educational facilities, close to kindergarten/schools, fellowship in the community, good potential for sports, potential to identify with the place

Funtional competitive advantages — Child-friendly, good schools/kindergarten, good job opportunities, cost effective, close to shops, close to water, sea or lake, good public services, beautiful, several parks/green areas

Feeling of safety and basic functionality — Clean and tidy, close to nature, good communications, safe/low crime rate, good housing, quiet areas

Introducing social capital

The idea of "social capital" as an economically beneficial resource for cities was developed before the increased usage of the term attractiveness (Andersson, 1985; Andersson and Strömquist, 1988). The idea is that in the more global world, with international investors, decisions regarding localization of business depend on factors such as access to qualified employees and the potential for knowledge exchange in certain subject areas. The social capital is explained as the people seen as qualified employees with the potential to contribute knowledge and talent, and this group of people are attracted through distributed attractiveness, as described by Andersson (1998).

Antoni published a chapter called "Attraktiva städer" [English: "Attractive cities"] (2010) in a report from the SOM Institute at the University of Gothenburg. In the introduction section, he explained that the economic situation and development of a place is dependent on creativeness, and that creativeness can be stimulated in two ways: by attracting more creative people to the place or by stimulating existing residents and their creativeness. The latter point is interesting, as he argued that the place and its urban environment are important not only to attract new creatives, but also to stimulate the creativeness of the existing residents. He argued that just as places become successful through their people, people become successful partly because of the place they are in (Antoni, 2010). In the chapter, he classified eight cities in western Sweden according to how creative they were, by looking at aspects such as economic growth, human capital, level of urbanization, culture, diversity, health, community involvement, and how satisfied the residents were with their city (Antoni, 2010).

Figure 2
Different place values sorted with the most important at the bottom, and least important at the top. Swedish original by Kairos Future (2016b), translated by the author.

Public places and quality of life

Olsson (2000) published a working paper with the title *Stadens attraktivitet och det offentliga stadslivet* (English: "The city's attractiveness and public urban living"). In this essay, Olsson directed attention towards public places as being crucial for a city's attractiveness and their potential to attract social capital. People and workplaces are less place-based in modern society and the workforce is therefore relocating to places that interest them. Here, according to Olsson (2000), public places play a key role since a good public life provides qualities that are perceived as attractive. Other authors have also stressed the importance of qualitative public places. Engström (2014) argued for urban environments that provide a convenient and comfortable everyday life with sufficient access to services, proximity to nature and the ability to let children play safely by themselves. The authors of a report from Boverket (2014) argued for urban environments that provide things such as good communication links, green areas and services, and good design and physical qualities.

Olsson (2000) explained why public places have become important by highlighting three characteristics of current society. The first characteristic is, according to Olsson (2000), the symbolic economy, an economy based on cultural production and consumption, where attractive urban life is a substantial part of a town's economic situation. Cars (2006) developed the idea of the symbolic economy in his research report *Kultur, turism och stadsattraktivitet: Kultur som attraktion och värdeskapare* [English: "Culture, tourism, and urban attractiveness: Culture as an attraction and value creator"]. In the report, he argued that currently successful cities could be characterized as offering a rich variety of culture, attractions, and experiences, and that culture is an indicator of attractiveness and competitiveness (Cars, 2006).

The second societal characteristic explaining the importance of public places, according to Olsson (2000), is the wish to participate in urban life; he argued that people live according to the proposition "I am seen, therefore I am" (a reformulation of Descartes' famous epithet). The last characteristic he called the lost city, and refers to works of nostalgia, like Jacobs' *The death and life of great American cities* (1961), and the desire to build traditional European cities (Olsson, 2000).

Antoni, Kruth, and Björnberg's book *Attraktiva stråk och platser: En guide för städer med ambitioner* [English: "Attractive paths and places: A guide for ambitious cities"] (2015) includes a chapter called "Strategic approaches" that explains what a city should provide to become attractive. The aspects listed by the authors are: accessibility to urban life, up-to-date retail opportunities (less products, more services, etc.), culture and retail destinations, places and paths where people can gather (to ensure people visit parts of a city where retail can locate), aesthetics, mixed

uses, an authentic profile, and a communicated vision (as a framework for different actors to utilize, in aiming for the same goals).

Potential generated by a strong region

In a publication from the Swedish Transport Administration that was edited by Engström and entitled *Den attraktiva regionen: En antologi om tillgänglighet och regional utveckling* [English: "The attractive region: An anthology on accessibility and regional development"] (2014), the region was explained as a potential attractiveness creator, especially for smaller places. Writing in this publication, Pettersson (2014) explained that a functional region is a territory with a shared labor and housing market as well as common retail market and meeting places. According to him, a smaller place could benefit from a region to gain accessibility to work places, specialized services, and other supplementary qualities. However, he also stressed two considerations for smaller settlements: the importance of being able to provide basic retail and services within the settlement, and the potential to improve and contribute to the place-based values of a place. On the last point, he described qualities that stem from the natural environment, such as downhill skiing or a sunny climate.

In 2012, Tillväxtanalys published a report titled "Regional attraktivitet: tillväxtmotor i en global verklighet" [English: "Regional attractiveness: The engine of growth in a global reality"] (2012). In the report, the authors explained that as the world becomes more globalized, a competitive region is important for the attractiveness and economic growth of a given place. Regional attractiveness, in the terms set out in this report, is about competence and accessibility, and providing the regional businesses with employees and good infrastructure systems for convenient transportation within the region and surrounding environment (Tillväxtanalys, 2012).

Competing for attention

Attractive urban environments are not only an outcome of built form or social aspects, they are as much about creating a positive attitude towards the place. Mellander and Andersson (2009) explained that the competitive situation between cities results in drives for place branding in order to achieve high scores in ranking lists, which are seen as ways of garnering attention.

Andersson (1998) is among those commentators who have written about the American magazine *Money*'s annual "Best places to live" list as an example of this kind of "attractiveness ranking." In the ranking, qualities such as taxes, education, and healthcare are compared between places as a way of classifying the best places to live. Similar ranking systems are also found in Sweden, for instance in the magazine *Fokus* and their annual ranking "Bäst att bo" [English: "Best [place] to live"]. This

list is similar to that which is published in *Money* but was developed by researchers at Jönköping International Business School – among others, the already cited Charlotta Mellander (Lindwall, 2016). Antoni, Kruth, and Björnberg (2015) discussed another ranking system that is based on trade and commerce, where a high trading index indicates an attractive place. Another type of ranking involves annual awards such as Årets *stadskärna* [English: "City centre of the year"], which is awarded by the organization Svenska stadskärnor to the city that has done most to improve its city centre.

Another tool for competition is place branding. Tillväxtanalys (2011) has highlighted that the term attractiveness could also be used in a normative sense. By labelling something "attractive," it is possible to create the idea that something is attractive. One example of this lies in signage that points towards historical or cultural places, thereby notifying people that these places are of importance. In a report from the Swedish National Heritage Board (RAA), entitled *Attraktivitet – hur och för vem?* [English: "Attractiveness – how and for whom?"], branding and attractiveness are common themes. In this report, Olsson and Nilsson (2005) explained the concept of branding as more than just a selling activity; it consists of both spatial and organizational activities that together develop the brand of a place. Selling activities are explained as the communication of how internal and external markets (people and businesses) can have their needs and desires fulfilled in a place. Spatial activities are explained as physical and spatial co-ordination of different kinds of infrastructure, such as communication infrastructure, residential units, hotels, restaurants, etc. The organizational activities are explained in terms of the co-ordination and division of responsibilities between public and private interests and actors. According to the authors, built heritage is an important aspect in creating attractive urban environments: although not enough in itself to be an attractor, rather it should be used as a starting point. In a broader sense, living environments (including urban environments and buildings), a broad sense of culture, the natural environment, and recreation all constitute important aspects that attract people to cities or regions (Olsson and Nilsson, 2005).

In the same report by RAA, Mossberg (2005) added two perspectives to the concept of branding that are taken from the field of branding, experimental industry, and economy – namely, "functional utility" and "emotional utility." She argued that modern humans have an urge for experiences and adventures, and that people are therefore happy to consume ways to explore, learn, relax, entertain, and to enjoy life. The functional utility of a product or service is still of importance, but products and services do also sell because of their emotional utility. She explained how this change affects business branding, where customers are no longer treated as anonymous and rational, but as unique and affective. Therefore, it is important to understand a customer's behaviors and desires, and to provide tailored solutions for each customer (Mossberg, 2005).

Integrated traffic systems

Mobility is seen as one of the most important aspects of the term attractiveness, in the publications studied. Glaeser, Kolko and Saiz (2001) used the term "time," whereas Mellander and Andersson (2009) explained mobility in terms of "accessibility" through modern infrastructure. The baseline is that people like their freedom and flexibility to travel. To provide for mobility, good communications are key, both within the city (SKL, 2015) as well as in relation to other cities and regions (Mellander and Andersson, 2009; Ranhagen, Troglio and Ekelund, 2015). To be able to travel easily and have a convenient everyday life is a main prerequisite in creating economic and social value for individuals, the business sector, and the community (SKL, 2015).

The first edition of the Swedish handbook "Trafik för en attraktiv stad" [English: "Traffic for an attractive city"] was published in 2004. Since then, two revisions have been published, with the second edition released in 2007 and the third edition published in 2015. In this latest edition, it was explained that the purpose of the handbook was to contextualize the traffic system and bridge the gap between different sectors of community planning. According to the handbook, transportation should be seen as an integral dimension of urban design to create an attractive city for all (SKL, 2015).

This view was shared by Ranhagen, Troglio and Ekelund, who published a report of their research project "Klimatsmarta och attraktiva transportnoder" [English: "Climate-smart and attractive transportation nodes"] (2015). The whole project revolved around urban form, attractiveness, and sustainable transportation, as their aim was to investigate how urban form contributes to energy efficiency and attractiveness simultaneously. Their project aimed to create synergy effects, such as increased use of sustainable transportation and increased attractiveness in living environments (Ranhagen, Troglio and Ekelund, 2015). In this way, attractiveness can also be used as an incentive, as the people that are attracted by the urban environments might well also utilize the benefits of that environment, for example through sustainable transportation options.

Being attractive for tourists

In the report from RAA, Sandell (2005) discussed attractiveness through a model addressing eco-strategies, with attractiveness at the intersection of two scales, see Figure 3. The first scale represents attractiveness as defined either from the outside or the inside; in other words, whether residents of, or visitors to, a place define it. The other scale represents two approaches to achieve attractiveness, either through adaptation and change, or through protection and preservation. These ideas share perspectives with the idea of being attractive for tourism.
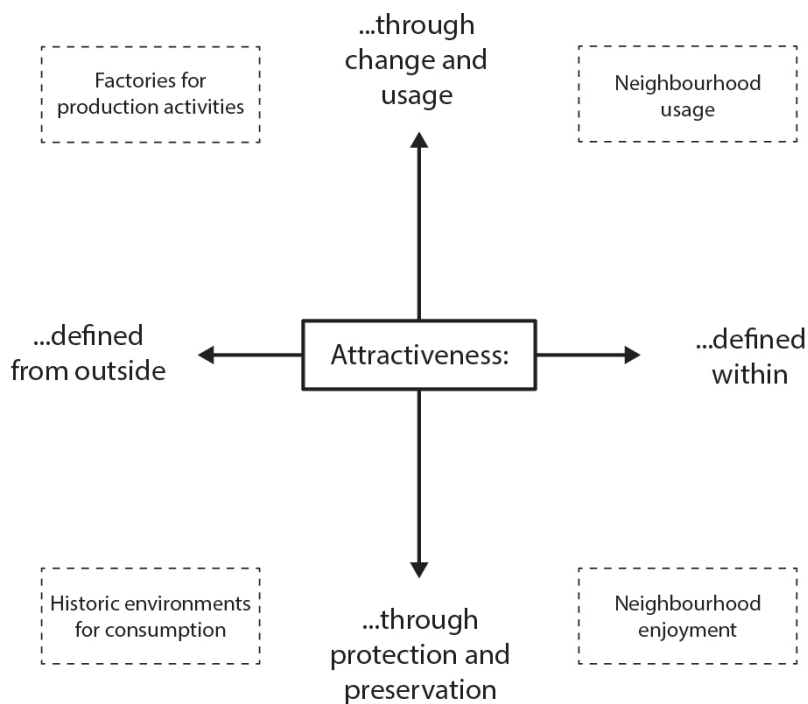
It is argued that being attractive to tourists is of economic benefit since it strengthens the local economy (Tillväxtanalys, 2014a). Cars (2006) has argued that the concept of tourism is a paradox, since tourists are searching for new experiences and authenticity whilst simultaneously appreciating familiarity. According to him, this is also seen in cities striving to attract more tourists, as they tend to become more alike as the same brands and companies establish in all these places. Cars (2006) suggested that places could benefit from tourism by being even more "genuine."

Place and identity, participation and heritage

Several of the authors of the RAA report *Attractiveness: How and for whom?* discussed attractiveness in relation to local characteristics such as nature (Sandell, 2005) and heritage (Braunerhielm, 2005). These aspects are considered important for the perceived attractiveness of places, both in the eyes of local and global visitors (Müller, 2005). Tillväxtanalys (2014a) described this in more general terms, arguing that attractiveness is created through place-specific, holistic approaches that address business, physical attributes, place branding, tourism, and services.

In the Swedish handbook of traffic planning *Trafik för en attraktiv stad*, a similar point was made when defining the term "attraktiv stad" [English: "attractive city"]:

The city becomes attractive through the unique character of the built environment; the social life provided through meeting places; and good accessibility to culture, services, businesses, leisure, and retail opportunities for all. The residents of a city, each with different preconceptions, will thrive, feel safe and be well (SKL, 2015, p.58. Translated from Swedish by the author).

The idea of retaining a place's uniqueness while increasing the attractiveness in general leads to a discussion of increased participation as a way to capture the local architecture and social culture. In a report published by Boverket (2015) it was argued that cultural planning should be used as a method of participation and involvement. Cultural planning was developed in an Anglo-American environment in order to gain understanding of residents' opinions and expectations of sustainable living and urban environments. The authors (Boverket, 2015) argued that cultural planning has the potential to meet social demands, create a feeling of safety, and change the image of an area. It is described as an opportunity for strategists, planners, and property developers to utilize social, cultural, and place-shaping aspects in urban development. Antoni, Kruth and Björnberg (2015) highlighted another more informal tool of participation, that of tactical urbanism. Tactical urbanism is described as allowing for participation and change in the urban environment. It is a spontaneous tool that can be used to populate places and to test new interventions in the city, with the potential to make such changes permanent if they prove successful.

Conclusion

The term "attractiveness," as conceptualized by the publications of this study, could be interpreted and discussed as a discourse of urban attractiveness containing economic, social, and physical claims in relation to urban development. These claims have been interpreted in this essay as three focus areas of the discourse: urban economics, citizen wellbeing, and urban townscape. The discourse takes place at a range of geographical scales, including the region, the city, the neighborhood, the street, and the building.
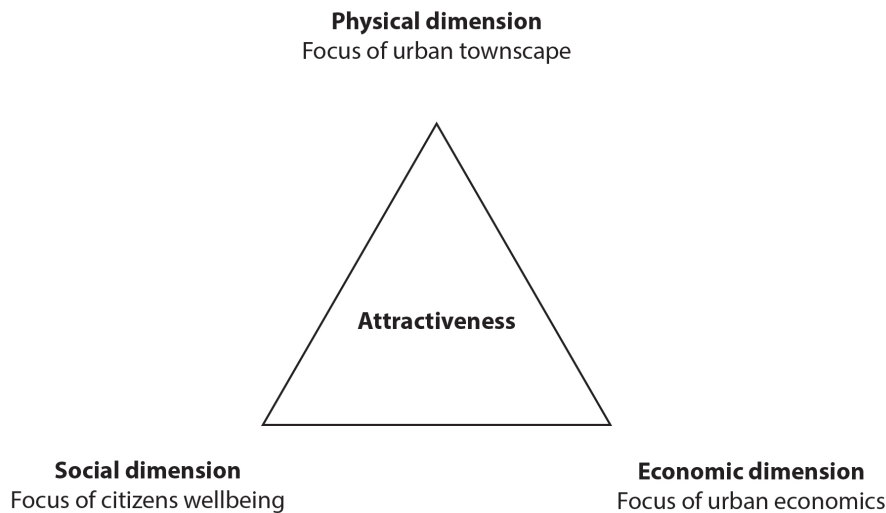
The term "attractiveness" has its origins in urban economic interests, where it has been deployed as an objective that relates to creating places that are economically successful, either in national economic terms or in terms of economic growth. This focus of urban attractiveness includes aspects of national economy, migration patterns, people's willingness to pay for housing, attracting social capital, regional development, urban branding, and attracting tourists. It relates to neoliberal planning ideals (see Sager, 2011) and contemporary inter-city competition (Ashworth, 2009; Gospodini, 2002). Parallels also exist to the creative class movement (Florida, 2002; 2005) and the objective of attracting social capital.

The general discussion in this discourse is however more inclusive, as people *in general* should be attracted rather than specific target groups.

The focus of citizen wellbeing stems from the aim of building places that people enjoy and are attracted to (Bernow, Pleiborn, and Strömquist, 1996; Rådberg, 2000). This focus also has a bearing on economic claims, since more residents and tourists leads to larger tax-base and a stronger local economy. From the publications reviewed in this study, it is possible to describe a shift in focus in the use of the term, from an emphasis on economic interests to a focus on social interests – this change can be explained by a developing understanding of the correlation between places that people are attracted to and places that are economically successful (Mellander and Andersson, 2009). Association with "wellbeing" attracts people to settle or visit a place based on life qualities, rather than general welfare. Maslow's hierarchy of human needs, referred to by Kairos Future (2016b) and Niedomysl (2010), suggests however that it is impossible to reach a state of wellbeing without having a base of security and basic functionality, which is why sufficient welfare must be included in the discourse of wellbeing. Only recently has public participation also been discussed as a potential instrument in better understanding people's needs and building locally adapted places (Boverket, 2015). The social dimension is, however, in general presented as a normative set of ideas to improve life qualities in urban areas.

The physical focus of urban attractiveness is related to how the social and economic claims of the term are also linked to built environments. Here, normative ideas about structure and aesthetics are interpreted as a focus of urban townscapes. The publications discussed in this essay highlight the importance of a built structure with public places and streets where people can gather (Antoni, Kruth, and Björnberg, 2015); that are endowed with "authenticity" (Cars, 2006); that have accessibility to urban life such as culture and retail (Antoni, Kruth and Björnberg, 2015; Cars, 2006; Olsson, 2000), and a built structure inspired by the urbanity of traditional European cities (Olsson, 2000). Tunström (2007) explains the Swedish idea of building the traditional city aligns with the American New Urbanism and the British urban renaissance movement. Some contrasting ideas regarding the focus of the urban are, however, evident in the publications reviewed, where, for instance, the importance of green areas and nature (Boverket, 2014; Engström, 2014) and possibilities for children to move around safely are seen as contributing to making a place more attractive (Engström, 2014). These features characterize functionalistic suburbs rather than urban cores – what Tunström describes as "the anti-city" (2007). Another contradiction is the idea of high trade indexes being a measure of the attractive place (Antoni, Kruth, and Björnberg, 2015), since high trade indexes are often related to external retail areas rather than retail in urban cores.

This conceptualization of the term "attractiveness" can be illustrated by recourse to a triad of economic, social, and physical focus areas, see Figure 4. These focuses are all related to each other, but could as well be considered as counterparts, as contested ideas do occur within the model.

Physical dimension
Focus of urban townscape

Attractiveness

Social dimension
Focus of citizens wellbeing

Economic dimension
Focus of urban economics

The term "attractiveness," as conceptualized and used within the publications reviewed, raises a number of issues that should be addressed. One issue lies in the question of who attractiveness is created for. Beyond the question of whether attractiveness strengthens the social, economic, or physical qualities of a place, we must also understand and specify what residents and actors in a place have and need, thereby specifying what they prioritize and what forms of attractiveness should be promoted. In this prioritization, the term attractiveness runs the risk of going against planning ideas of democracy and equality, approaching the lack that is present in neoliberal planning models (Sager, 2011). Another issue is that attractiveness is used in a normative sense with respect to how places should be and work, with an emphasis of the urban townscape and lifestyle. The term in this sense excludes people and places located in peripheral, non-urban locations. By definition, i.e. something "that attracts someone/something" (SAOB, 2017), these places are "attractive" as well in the sense that people live there and visit them, however by virtue of qualities that are not associated with the term attractiveness at present.

The nine categories found in the analysis of publications describe content of the term. The categories were national economic development; migration patterns and willingness to pay; attracting social capital; providing public places and quality of life; regional approaches; branding approaches; integrated traffic systems; attracting tourists; and place identity and participation. Aside from these content-based categories, a number of generic aspects of attractiveness are raised by the publica-

Figure 4
The term "attractiveness" conceptualized according to the empirical sample.

tions. One such aspect is the idea that attractiveness is "place specific" – it is created through a place, its history and needs. Increasing attractiveness could be a case of building upon local cultures and building traditions, or it could be a question of adding something new that a place is missing. A final aspect that is deserving of mention is the notion that attractiveness is created through a holistic approach rather than single interventions: it is, then, the overall impression that creates the perception of attractiveness.

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