



University of the  
West of England

## Health: The Design, Planning and Politics of How and Where We Live

- **Paper / Proposal Title:**

A place to die. The importance of place analysis in youth suicide preventive work.

- **Format:**

Written paper and presentation in-person.

- **Author(s) Name:**

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- **University or Company Affiliation:**

PhD-student, Department of Architecture and Civil Engineering, Chalmers Technology of University.

- **Abstract (300 words):**

In Sweden approximately 40 adolescents under the age of 20, commit suicide every year. In contrast to the older age groups, where suicide decrease, adolescents' suicide shows a tendency to increase. This circumstance indicates that adolescents don't respond on the implementation of preventive measurements in the same way as young adults and adults. This paper is based on a study conducted as part of my PhD-project and aims at investigating the choice of suicidal places. In the paper I will not only present the study, but also highlight methodological and ethical challenges in relation to these types of studies.

Earlier studies on suicide have shown that changes in the physical environment or product design is an effective prevention strategy against suicide (for example: Mayhew et. al, 1976; Clarke & Mayhew, 1988; Clarke & Lester, 2013). This strategy is also applied in

praxis, such as fencing bridges, product modifications or changing the concentration of lethal ingredient in products. In the paper I will describe the importance of the place for suicidal acts and categorize them as: known places, accessible places, symbolic places, strategic places and effective places. I argue that by analyzing the place elements, a more effective preventive strategy can be developed targeting "youths in suicidal crises." Even though suicidality is triggered by internal psychosocial factors, the action is dependent on external factors, such as place and/or accessibility to lethal products.

• **Author(s) Biography (200 words each):**

Charlotta Thodelius has an MA in Criminology from the University of Gothenburg and is a Doctoral Student in Architecture, Chalmers University of Technology. The PhD-project is aiming at exploring and elaborating suitable preventive strategies to decrease the amount of adolescents' injury events by using strategies based on modification of the physical environment. The PhD project is a part of an interdisciplinary research project called Arch Safe, founded by Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB). ArchSafe focusses on injury events in residential areas, aiming at finding certain risk groups and/or risk environments of injury events and developing effective prevention strategies by modification of the physical environment.