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DIY Performance Culture of Folkets Park, Malmö:

Creative Play, Community and Ownership of Public Space

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Abstract

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This thesis is a qualitative applied cultural analysis of Folkets Park, Malmö: specifically *Do It Yourself* (DIY) creative theatrical performance as a form of playing.

During the summer of 2012, over 1,000 quantitative Social Return on Investment surveys were collected for the city to assess the park's 'value' to visitors compared to the municipal operating costs.

In an effort to compliment this study, I will address the question of 'value' as worth, as benefit and as utility and what this means to the various stakeholders: municipal policy-makers, the community and economic interests.

Using interviews, photos and focus groups as ethnographic methods to compliment the surveys, I review comparative ideologies and policies towards urban commons and public needs and usage. Ethnographic sensorial descriptions of the park space and activities during the summer of 2012 will hopefully also serve as a documentary tool for posterity as well.

What is the value of an urban park? Playful performing creates trust, place-attachment, and symbolic-ownership of space, social cohesion and a sense of community. The balances of prescriptive and implied rules of society are played with on the playfield created by the structures of capital, government policy and the public.

The social capital which is created, like real capital, is being reinvested in the new knowledge and innovation economy by the city of Malmö and the region of Skåne. Analyzing usage and municipal policy, past and present, will help answer the question of what 'value' is in this context and address the future of urban parks and commons.

Keywords: DIY; Performance; Urban commons; symbolic ownership; place attachment; Urban Parks; co-creation; Urban Planning; Social Return on Investment; Gröntorget; neo-Olmstedian; post-Olmstedian; creative play; leisure space; Malmö; Skåne; event management; Knowledge Economy; Innovation; play-scape.

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Table of contents

Abstract	i
Acknowledgements	ii
Table of contents	iii
1. Introduction	1
1.1 The Internship: Entering the field	1
1.2 Aim and Methodology	4
1.3 Park Studies	5
1.4 Theoretical Perspectives	7
1.5 Outline	9
1.6 Ethical Considerations	9
2. Folkets Park: Gröntorget	11
2.1 Entering Folkets Park	13
2.2 The Lawn: Gröntorget	15
2.3 The Summer Stage	16
2.4 The Rose Fountain	18
2.5 The Tivoli (Amusement Park)	20
2.6 The Crossroads	20
2.7 Far I Hatten: No-Man's Land	21
2.8 The Lekplats (Playground)	22
2.9 Grilling	23
2.10 The Plaskdammen (Splash Pool)	24
2.11 The Kiosks	25
2.12 The Chess Club Kiosk	26
2.13 The Terrarium	28
2.14 The End of the Day	28
2.15 The End of the Summer	29
2.16 The Circle of Life	31
3. DIY Performances in Folkets Park	33
3.1 Social Capital	33
3.2 Drum/Dance Circle	34
3.3 Guitarist/Singer	35
3.4 String Quartet	37
3.5 Jugglers	38
3.6 The Tivoli (Amusement Park)	40
3.7 Nighttime	42
3.8 Risk, Trust & Social Capital	43

4. Urban Policies: Olmsted to Innovation	45
4.1 The Victorian Era	45
4.2 Olmstedianism: Museumification	46
4.3 Neo-Olmstedianism: Progressives, Modernism & Mallification	47
4.4 Post-Olmstedianism: Co-creation & Social Capital	48
4.8 Cities for People: Critique of Co-creation	49
5. Discussion: Stakeholders, Ownership and Place-Attachment	52
5.1 Play and the Innovation Economy in Malmö	52
5.2 Symbolic Ownership and Place Attachment	54
5.3 Plurality and Gentrification	55
5.4 Organized Events, DIY Performances & Place Attachment	56
5.5 Paid Performers: Profaning the Sacred	57
6. Conclusion	59
7. References	62
8. Footnotes	65
Appendix A: Applied Suggestions	67
1. Small Stages for Public Access	67
2. ‘C’-Shaped Park Benches	68
3. Real Knowledge: Animal Attractions & Community Garden	69
4. Real Co-creation & Symbolic Ownership	69
5. Outdoor business meetings	69

1. Introduction

What is the use of an urban park? What is its value? The role of urban parks in communities, their form and their function have changed along with the ideologies of urban planners and municipalities. They have been the focus of many statistical studies. The best way to determine their value, or their use, is to study their usage.

The city of Malmö in the south of Sweden has been called ‘The City of Parks.’ Folkets Park is the oldest of them and it is unique in Malmö because of its moderate amusement park rides and animal attractions as well as the several nightclubs that operate on its grounds. The park is located in the neighborhood called Möllevången, which is known for its history as a working-class and immigrant quarter and for its large public square, Möllevångstorget which hosts an open-air market and dense concentration of ethnic restaurants. The area is popular among students and younger people for its nightlife and its reputation for slightly clandestine or black-market activity.

Unlike Malmö’s Kungsparken (The King’s Park) and adjoining Slottsparken (The Castle Park), Folkets Park is *The People’s Park*; a distinction that was pointed out continually by visitors and residents throughout my research. The local neighborhood and the park reflexively affect each other’s character both in atmosphere and in physical attributes.

This thesis will explore the activities of Folkets Park and try to address the questions of usage and value for the public, for the municipality and for the economic stakeholders of the park and also to apply this cultural analysis in the form of suggestions.

1.1 The Internship: Entering the field

Large statistical numbers are hard to move backwards through. They can give general information on large populations, like a city, but to know what small groups of people are actually doing, one must go into the field and observe them and employ other ethnographic research methods. During the summer of 2012, I interned for Malmö stad Gatukontoret, (the municipal streets and parks authority), where I helped conduct a survey study in Folkets Park. Folkets Park is one of Malmö’s many urban green spaces. It has a long history of social conflict but is most associated today with the amusement park, nightclubs and its proximity to Möllanvångstorget: a diverse bohemian quarter of Malmö.

As a department of a municipal government, the Gatukontoret are beholden to the tax-payers of Malmö for their operations budget. Issues of costs, accountability, establishing a mandate and defining progress with regards to Folkets Park were the original aim of the research I helped conduct for them. Sverker Haraldsson of the Arrangemangsenheten Stadsmiljöavdelningen Gatukontoret (the Arranging Unit of the City-Milieu Department) had decided to use a *Social Return on Investment* study to establish the value of the park compared to the costs of operating and maintaining it.

A Social Return on Investment (SROI) study, as the name suggests, tries to put quantifiable monetary values on social and other intangible outcomes of financial investment where no actual monetary returns or profits are available for measurement.¹ (Kumar, 2011; Lingane & Olsen, 2004; Serus, 2010) Since Folkets Park, as a public service, does not charge admission, the city cannot refer to cost-vs.-profit as a yardstick for success or failure or to gauge public preferences.

Quantitative surveys were drawn up targeting various organized events including the outdoor movies screenings (Utomhusbio), Children's Flea Market et al. During days with no planned events, surveys were drafted for people who were just 'Hanging Out.' Along with several check-box questions for collecting demographic information regarding gender, age and various neighborhoods, the following SROI value-questions were included:

6. Kan du försöka uppskatta värdet av en bra dag/kväll i Folkets Park? Hur mycket skulle du säga att det är värt för dig?

10:- 20:- 30:- 40:- 50:- 75:- 100:- Annat: 0:-* Vet ej

*Charmen är att det är gratis, parken förklarar att ni vill

7. Om Folkets Park inte funnits – vilken park eller plats skulle du gått till?

Pildammsparken Slottsparken Kungsparken Rörsjöparken Ribban Låtit bli

Västra Hamnen Annan plats/park:

8. Har du under sommaren 2012 besökt Folkets Park av någon av följande anledningar. (Du kan kryssa i flera rutor).

EM i Parken Utomhusbio För att delta i ett kultur- eller föreningsarrangemang utomhus vid/på Stora Scenen Inget av dem

ta inträde, fy tan för inträde i FOLKETS park

[“Can you try to appreciate the value of a good day in Folkets Park? How much would you say that it is worth to you?” Check boxes with values in SEK. A typical response: “The charm is that it is free, the survey suggests that you will charge admission for entrance into THE PEOPLE’S park, damn it!”]

It was immediately clear to me that this question, the value-question, would be the biggest challenge of the undertaking. Not only was it the crux of the entire project, but it was the most problematic in lieu of an actual event or activity for respondents to compare costs with.

Value, in the SROI model, is quantified and monetized according to a specific formula or algorithm with a predetermined scope and limited data-points so that the information can be entered into an Excel spreadsheet, manipulated and re-collated. A final value of the park was calculated to be SEK 322million/year. Put against the SEK15.3million/year investment by the city of Malmö, the SROI-value of the park was estimated to be 21:1. (Haraldsson, 2013, p.3)

Of course, this is all very abstract and arbitrary. This is hypothetical money that respondents are 'paying.' Also, there is little possibility for qualitative answers and there is no way to factor in contingencies such as how the weather might affect respondents' estimation of the value of their day in the park hanging out. If ethnographers are not enlisted for supplementary research methods and materials during an SROI study, they are crucially needed for the framing and phrasing of surveys like this, at least.

The value-question received responses ranging from confusion, to ridicule to hostility: "Sek1,000,000" "Nothing." "I don't understand the question." "Outrageous, you can't charge entrance to a People's Park!" (Folkets Park Surveys, 2012)

Furthermore, value of money is completely relative to the individual respondents. This calls questions of class, ethnicity, mobility and gender into the formula. Who makes the money, how much money they make, what are their living expenses, and their mobility (to another leisure space if Folkets Park did not exist, for example) are just a few of the many variables.

Finally, how can something that is free, or something that is abstract and intangible like spending a day in a green park in an urban setting, be quantified or monetized at all? David Aisworth, a financial analyst in the UK, tracked criticisms of an SROI study of urban green-spaces in Scotland and another study by a think-tank called *New Philanthropy Capital* working with youth and poverty. In both cases how intangibles are quantified, what is used as input, what is considered an outcome, what is considered impact et al were all cited as issues that affect the utility of the SROI model. (Aisworth, 2008; 2010; 2011) In the case of our

study, an example of these problems would be the process of deciding which responses to the value-question of the survey (above) would be factored in to the final calculation.

This thesis is built on my own field research which I conducted in tandem with the SROI surveys in Folkets Park and it will address the missing aspects of this quantitative study by analyzing Folkets Park from a qualitative ethnographic perspective in addition to addressing the implications of the SROI study itself.

1.2. Aim and Methodology

To explore the question of value, I will start with the basic question: How is the park being used and by whom? Or, from an ethnographic perspective: What is the culture of Folkets Park and how is it enacted in this urban leisure space? Hopefully, this will reveal what differentiates Folkets Park from other parks (because value is relative).

How the park fits in, ideologically and practically, between the urban structures of municipal government policy-makers, urban planning, business and the public will also give an alternate context and definition to *value*: i.e. worth, scarcity, utility and benefit. So, the secondary question is: what is the park's value to the various stakeholders and what does this imply for the future of the park?

Along with the copious amounts of surveys gathered, over 1,000 by myself alone, other methods employed were first and foremost my own observations and unstructured interviews.

Because the surveys were purely quantitative, with limited answers in the form of check-boxes, I had to engage with respondents myself to get qualitative answers. Often, the format of the questions on the survey created confusion, but in the interest of ethics and maintaining the integrity of the answers I gave as little information as possible on the purpose of the surveys until respondents had completed them and returned them to me.

I then filled in my own qualitative notes on the headers, margins and on the backs of the surveys regarding the weather, my own impressions of the respondents and any interviews or conversations we had. Impromptu focus group interviews were common as a result of this. One time I was invited to sit and drink wine with a group of students for an hour during which we discussed the survey and their thoughts on the park and the neighborhood.

Often, the most interesting details of the surveys could not be entered into the Excel spreadsheet along with the data points from the compiled check-boxes. Surveys came back with smiley-faces and hearts drawn on them, 'thank-yous', calligraphy and doodles. I made digital scans of the surveys that had any extraneous information for my own records.

The surveys and my interviews and observations continued throughout the summer and into the autumn after the surveys themselves were done. During the autumn, a telephone survey of 700 homes within 300 meters of the park was commissioned through a telemarketing firm in Stockholm by Sverker Haraldsson who then compiled and collated the entire statistical analysis.

Those without children in Folkets Park primarily hung-out on the main lawn. Of them, 49% were between 20-29 years of age; 25% were between ages 30-39 (i.e. roughly $\frac{3}{4}$ were between ages 20-39) with a ratio of 2:1 women/men. (Surveys conducted by me on behalf of Malmöstad; statistics compiled by Sverker Haraldsson, Gatukontoret, 2012.)

In October, I formed a focus group with as near of a representative sample as I could: 3 women and 1 man ages 23 to 36. One was a musician who regularly performs with a band. Two of the participants had children; two of them did not and were still enrolled in undergraduate studies at Lund University. Three of them lived in the immediate neighborhood of Möllevången; one lived 10 minutes away by foot. Three were native Swedes; one was a recent immigrant.

In the interest of comparative observations, I often cycled over from Folkets Park to Pildammsparken and Kungsparken/Slottsparken or to the beach during the summer to make observations of activity during the day. This was the starting point of my thesis question because the value of anything can, in part at least, be determined by what makes it unique and by what differentiates it.

1.3 Research on Parks and Playgrounds

At the beginning of my research, I came across some compelling pieces of research; one of which was done in Canada. In, *Playground Accessibility and Neighbourhood Social Interaction among Parents*, *Social Indicators Research*, findings indicated that parents often will choose a playground for their children based on networking potential with other parents rather than strictly for the child's preference or the proximity to their homes. (Bennet et al., 2012)

Clearly, there is a value here that is not measurable by the SROI surveys alone (there was no question on our survey that addressed this point at all). It inspired the initial aim of my research in Folkets Park: how to supplement the surveys and provide the missing cultural analysis with regards to community and value.

Further studies done in Sweden, *Playground Planning and Management: An evaluation of standard-influenced provision through user needs*. Urban Forestry & Urban Greening, (Jansson, & Persson, 2010); and studies done elsewhere, *Managing Urban Parks for a Racially and Ethnically Diverse Clientele*, Leisure Sciences (Gobster, 2002) all call for the need of further ethnographic research.

Material regarding Folkets Park itself can be found abundantly in travel brochures or Malmöstad's own website and news-letters. For a more in-depth critical analysis of the park, I refer to '*Striden Ägde Rum i Malmö: Möllevångskravallerna 1926: En Studie av Politiskt Våld i Mellankrigstidens Sverige*'. (Nyzell, 2009) A critical historical analysis of parks and play in general, *Constructing Leisure*, (Spracklen, 2011) was also helpful for background and alternative historical perspectives.

In *Social interactions in urban parks: Stimulating social cohesion?*, through research in two urban parks in Holland, it is asserted that urban parks create social cohesion through two primary functions: place attachment and social interaction. Their research indicated that even slightly negative interaction like asking someone to turn their radio down led to longer and therefore beneficial interactions. (Peters, et al., 2010, p.97)

Though not specifically referenced, they do seem to agree with Erving Goffman, and my observations regarding play and trust; as indicated here:

“Respectful interactions enable citizens to have rewarding social interactions and to develop social networks that are sustained by trust. These in turn support a wider social sphere that is characterized by peaceful coexistence, prosperity and inclusion.” (Peters, et al., 2010, p.99)

However, they delineate their study more ethnically and go on to say that, in general, these interactions are initiated and sustained differently by Dutch compared to non-Western migrants. There is not much ethnographic description of space and activities or of how park activities actually relate to the space and place-attachment, or to other people and social interaction.

Mark Francis, in *Control as a Dimension of Public Space*, also claims that real and symbolic ownership of space plays itself out through routine usage. (Francis, M., 1989, p.164) Control for the meaning of a public leisure space, like Folkets Park, in this discussion must include the symbolic: the ritualistic aspects of community usage of public space. I submit that this points towards the missing qualitative aspect that should be considered in studies and surveys of urban park usage.

In my own analysis of Folkets Park, I do not focus specifically on age, race or gender, but rather on place, or space, and activity in relation to trust and inclusion. As John Law (1994, p.23) asserts, the material world is “messy and heterogeneous” in its entirety: materials, spaces and actors. So, as the demographics of the park change in the future, hopefully there will still be some salient aspects of this thesis that apply and an ancillary *value* of this thesis will be an ethnographic documenting of Folkets Park, which can be re-analyzed as the ideologies of policy makers and of the public change over time.

1.4 Theoretical Perspectives

In his conclusion of *Deference and Demeanor*, Erving Goffman (1956) suggests that the societal rules of deference and demeanor are embedded in location: into physical spaces. These implied rules, the environment, the space and all the actors are interdependent upon each other and are crucial to analyzing mixed-use spaces.

In relation to urban parks and streets, there are clearly different implied and prescribed rules of behavior. Biking is strongly encouraged on the streets but discouraged in the park. Drinking beer is illegal on the streets, but tolerated in the park. Levels of dress, dog-leashes, singing, dancing, people-watching: all the rules change sometimes just by taking a step beyond the border in either direction.

Agreeing with Goffman, in *Performance*, Jon P. Mitchell (2006) posits that through ritual performances, space, materials, subjects and objects all transform each other. Mitchell explores the theatrical elements of rituals and the ritualistic elements of theater. Theatrical performances as activities of creative leisure, such as playing musical instruments, dancing and juggling were more commonly observed by me in Folkets Park than in the other parks or beaches around Malmö: performance in the literal sense of putting on a show for other visitors to see and hear. I will be focusing most of my analysis on these activities.

By practicing guitar in public rather than at home in private, this form of play becomes a theatrical performance and thus a way of entering the social-sphere of Folkets Park in a specific role as a creative person. According to Mitchell (2006), although everyday performance rituals transform people, places and things, he writes, “Attention should be paid to the interrelationships of everyday and extra-ordinary performances, and particularly the extent to which transformations in the latter effect transformations in the former.” (p.384)

In the context of theatrical performing as creative play, the *everyday* and the *extraordinary* are indeed, recursively linked. A park visitor who plays guitar and sings, for example, evokes the sublime spectacle and experience of a rock-concert; perhaps even a concert of the artist whose music the visitor is playing himself. As a sort of imaginative role-play, it sanctifies mundane routine space and creates symbolic ownership. (Mitchell, 2006, p.396; Francis, M., 1989, p.164)

Creative play and theatrical performance also gives community members the opportunity to physically engage with, and thus publicly affirm their association with, their community (Goffman, 1956, p.477). It is the process and the point at which “I” becomes “we;” the point where a city, or neighborhood, transforms and becomes a subject (Certeau, 2011, p.94). In the case of Folkets Park, “we”, the community and neighborhood, means ‘*creative people like us*’ according to my focus group participants. (Focus Group, 2012)

Analyzing the significance of play itself, I refer to Stuart Brown, Founder of the National Institute for Play (U.S.) who suggests that play helps create “responsible community participant[s] with a sense of belonging.”² (Kadlec, 2009, p.9) Thus, impromptu, spontaneous theatrical performances not only have ritualistic elements within themselves, but they serve the two primary functions of *place-attachment* and *social-interaction*. (Peters, et al., 2010, p.97)

The formation of community through ritual activity as theorized by Victor Turner in *The Ritual Process* (1969) helps put trust and the value of social-interaction into perspective within the setting of Folkets Park and the observed activities. The physical and psychological danger of exposing one’s sacred ‘inside to the outside world’ in performance rituals (Mitchell, 2006, p.396) can be applied to the analysis of spontaneous theatrical creative play in a public setting. Liminal spaces of ritual, according to Turner, are the arenas where *communitas* is created through the disruption of the mundane and of routine. The communal sharing of the physical and psychological danger (ridicule and humiliation, in the case of performing, for example) that is inherent in breaking the security of mundane routines helps create trust and

thus a vector of social capital. The value of this is an open-ended question which I hope to address with regards to the applicability of this thesis.

1.5 Outline

In the first half of the thesis, beginning with the next chapter, I will detail my observations of Folkets Park on an average day as I conducted the surveys. I will attempt to paint a picture of the park during a typical summer day along with the sensorial attributes that create the context for the culture of community and play.

In Chapter 3, I will analyze the observed activities and sensorial aspects from an ethnographic perspective. I will attempt to present examples of the park's culture of performing and explore the ways in which leisure-time activity creates social capital by a community engaging with each other in an urban space. I will reflect on how sensorial cues enact implied rules of symmetry of deference and demeanor which creates trust and fosters community by claiming space and symbolic ownership.

In the second half, beginning with Chapter 4, I will compare ideologies of policy-makers and urban planners, historically and presently, and in relation to the SROI study. I will briefly explore present-day civic and economic interests with regards to my findings and how they relate to, and exploit, the social capital created by community.

In Chapter 5, I will discuss the implications of my analysis with regards to the stakeholders of Folkets Park and how the changing ideologies of urban space relate to the culture of DIY theatrical performance as a form of play in Folkets Park.

Finally, in an Appended chapter, I will briefly review some of the applied suggestions for Folkets Park in relation to my analysis based on my findings regarding performances and symbolic ownership.

1.6 Ethical Considerations

Statements and information taken from Malmö city's internal memos were cleared for usage by their authors.

Photos taken by me were not retouched or altered. Photos taken from Malmö's Kultur arkiv which are presented as current depictions of the park were not taken during the summer

of 2012 (e.g. there is no Ferris-Wheel in the park anymore). These photos were used by me because of their clarity of resolution and in cases where photos taken with my own 2 mega-pixel mobile-phone camera were not specifically integral to illustrating my discussion.

Although all park workers were made aware of my role as a researcher and of the project aims itself (mirandized at the beginning of my project), they were not always specifically told they were speaking on the record before every discussion. In cases where consent was not explicit at the time of an interview, I refer to them as '*park worker*' or '*park visitor*' only and not by name or job. All other interviews, where names are used, informants were advised that they were on the record and quotes are attributable.

Audio recordings of the focus group were edited for sound quality only and were segmented by discussion-topic and ultimately included with all deliverables to the client: Sverker Haraldsson, Malmö stad Gatukontoret.

Translations from Swedish to English by me are paraphrased rather than literal. Knowing how impoverished words on paper can be, I as a researcher try to interpret and be faithful to events as they happened, to give a reflexive nod to my involvement and to replay the tapes again. Quotes containing analogies, slang, colloquialisms and pop-references can have a very short shelf-life. They can lose their original meaning over time. A researcher should be prepared to reinterpret their materials according to need and context in the future in order to preserve the integrity of the project. Their obligation to provide thoughtful in-depth qualitative research for their client is synonymous with their own ethical integrity. If, as John Law asserts, we cannot control the self-generating process of the stories we have told, we can control how we retell them ourselves. (Law, 1994, p.14)

2 Folkets Park: Gröntorget

The chaotic, permeable boundaries of Folkets Park allow festivals, events and normal summer activity to spill seamlessly between the park and the adjacent streets. An aerial photograph of Folkets Park shows a park completely embedded into the surrounding neighborhood. The buildings' courtyards and trees make it hard to distinguish the borders of the park at first glance and even the local Coop supermarket almost becomes part of its interior. The management of the park, Malmöstad's Gatukontoret, even influenced the supermarket to set-up an ATM bank-machine on their exterior wall for the convenience of the park visitors: the park is invading a commercial space rather than simply the reverse. Cultural identity markers, such as musical instruments, bathing suits, shorts, tattoos, stuffed-animal carnival prizes, ice-cream cones and the smell of hashish also move through the streets and spread the park outward and into the homes.



(Norraparkgatan; the street as Folkets Park's permeable border; Folkets Park embedded and integrated into the neighborhood shaped by housing, business and the municipality. Source: Malmö stad)

By comparison, Pilsdammpark in Malmö, has five times the area, has large well-kempt lawns, smartly sculpted trees and bushes, fountains, bramble paths and even a designated quiet zone. But, there is no immediate neighborhood or community surrounding Pildammpark. In an almost modernist fashion, the park is bordered on 3 sides by broad streets with automobile traffic and virtually no bicycle or pedestrian traffic. It is not fenced in like Folkets Park is, so visitors can enter the large park anywhere they wish, yet the sidewalks are often quite empty.

Devin and Pernilla, both in their mid-20's, claimed that Slottspark/Kungspark (both parks are part of one large park) feel more closed-off because it is "fenced in". On the other

hand, they perceived Folkets Park as “more open” and only acknowledged the iron fences once had I pointed them out. This could be because of their overall perception of Folkets Park as a “spontaneous” and “festival feeling” part of the “working class Möllevången area” whereas Kungspark/Slottspark is “closer to upscale areas.” (Muller, Survey Interview Notes, 2012-08-13)

The large lawns of Pilsdammpark give ample room for visitors to spread-out, retain their privacy and even play sports, unlike the small, intimate and densely packed lawn of Folkets Park. Perhaps because of this, from the foot-path in Pilsdammpark, I never observed musicians playing and it would have been hard to hear them if there were.



Pilsdammpark: The 2nd choice among those surveyed. "There is no there there."

2.1 Entering Folkets Park

Walking in through the north head-entrance (Huvudentré) of Folkets Park from Amiralsgatan during a summer day, surprisingly, does not feel like walking into a whole new milieu at first. The Yellow Brick Road footpath, as Mårthen calls it, starts here at the north entrance. The name evokes the scene from *The Wizard of Oz* where Dorothy steps out of the black-and-white world of Kansas and into the bright Technicolor Land of Oz. There is no immediate, stark transition here though. It does not feel as though I have left the city and entered an entirely new and peaceful green oasis. Rather, it feels like I am gradually transitioning away from the automobile, bicycle and pedestrian traffic of the streets into just another part of the city. The atmosphere of the neighborhood flows in and out of the park like the ebb and flow of tidal waters. At times, the entrance loses the liminal tension one would expect to feel at a spot which delineates what are usually such opposing settings within a city.

It is often hard to sense the difference between when the park energy is flowing outward and when the street energy is flowing inward. Like musical notes in a scale which always either leading off of, or onto one another. One could almost wander into the park unknowingly if it were not for the iron gates and playful bulletin board and map which greet you and announce the entrance.



(Folkets Park map at the head-entrance: colorful, playful, borderless.)

On a busy day, cyclists do not get very far into the park before they are forced to dismount and walk their bike. With all the activity going on it, I must look hard to find the people who are only passing through to the grocery store or who are going to and from work. One could move faster and bump into less people walking on the quiet residential streets around the park, but that would be missing the point. Walking through a park during a daily commute offers a chance to mentally and physically remove oneself from a routine that is often less than enjoyable. A short necessary journey which can be solitary and dull is broken for a moment and one can vicariously, at least, partake in the relaxed free expression of a community at leisure, leave the workday at the entrance and carry their transformed self out through the exit and on to home.



(North entrance –Huvudentré: Follow the Yellow Brick Road. Photo: Ian Muller)

Not far through the main entrance on a summer day, following the Yellow-Brick Road, one is greeted by Latin music from the Cuba Café followed immediately by the modern rock

music of the club Debaser and quite often the drum circles and boom-boxes which blend together in a cacophony of competing soundscapes. Standing in one spot and closing one's eyes, the songs change one after another, the volumes spike and drop, tempos, rhythms and timbres rise and fall so that one can easily forget where they are standing. Behind me, the sounds of the streets still come in waves with the alternating traffic lights.

2.2 The Lawn: Gröntorget

Ahead of me, the hiss of the nearby Rose fountain and the laughter and chatter of children and other visitors are the only reminders that I am indeed in a green space. It is hard to imagine what this part of the park would feel like if there was a ban on radios and only soft chamber music was piped over loudspeakers.

The sounds move through the air like ripples in a pond of water: spreading out from their centers, mingling, colliding, joining force and overlapping. Sometimes they lap gently at our ankles and sometimes they splash about making white-water: white-noise.

The Yellow Brick Road and the fountain separate three pieces of the lawn. There are many people who lay by themselves in the middle of the busiest section during the busiest times of the day wearing headphones with their eyes closed and an open bag of personal items sitting next to them. Lying out in so vulnerable of a state, blind and deaf or unconscious to the immediate surroundings in public, suggests a high level of trust and comfort with the community. In fact, respondents to my surveys would often leave the forms filled out with personal information lying on the grass if I did not collect them before they left.

There are fast-food picnics but no bbq-grilling on the lawn. It is one of the few prescribed rules, but for practical reasons. Disposable grills cannot be disposed of until they cool down and are therefore a hazard. Visitors generally tend to pick-up after themselves, so it would not seem to be an issue of littering. The city provides many bbq-pits around the park and they are used frequently throughout the warmer months.

The faint smell of dried earth and grass are only noticeable if one pays attention. The occasional hint of hashish in the air is only striking by virtue of its clandestine baggage. Even in this environment, a strong whiff of it turns people's heads and evokes smiles and nods amongst some of the visitors. Of all the surveys and interviews, there were only a few mentions of drug use as an issue in the park; about half were in favor of it.

3. Vad har du/ni gjort idag, och vad tror du att du/ni kommer att göra innan ni går från parken idag? (Du kan kryssa i flera rutor).

Umgåtts & kopplat av Grill/picknick Läst bok/tidning Spelat schack/boule
 Tagit en fika Handlat i kiosk Spelat minigolf Gå på någon av klubbarna i parken Äta på någon av restaurangerna i parken

Annat: Supa, isking, knark, knulla

4. Vilket eller vilka av dessa ställen i parken har du någon gång besökt:

Cuba Café Debaser Far i Hatten (2010-12) Far i Hatten (före 2010)
 Äventyrsgolfen/Malmö i våra Hjärtan/Ben & Jerrys Moriskan (2010-12)
 Moriskan (före 2010) Nöjesteatern Amiralen (2010-12) Amiralen (före 2010)

5. Folkets Park är en av Malmös stadsparker, och den kanske mest välbesökta. Hur viktiga tycker du att stadens parker är för Malmöbor och besökare?

1 (helt oviktiga) 2 3 (så där) 4 5 (mycket viktiga)

6. Kan du försöka uppskatta värdet av en bra dag/kväll i Folkets Park? Hur mycket skulle du säga att det är värt för dig?

10:- 20:- 30:- 40:- 50:- 75:- 100:- Annat: In oändligt Vet ej

There is a distinct lack of sports being played. It is understandable considering the dense collection of people and children sitting scattered on blankets and the relatively small size of the lawns compared to the other main parks in Malmö. A football or a Frisbee would be a hazard, or at least a nuisance, to sunbathers and would probably not be much fun for the players either. A demographic breakdown of the surveys I collected showed an almost 2:1 ratio of young women to men. Perhaps the men would be found on the football pitches and basketball courts elsewhere in the city or in Pildammspark. Vigorous physical movement is primarily exhibited by children in the Rose fountain. This section of the park is for ‘hanging-out’ and it is where I handed-out over 700 surveys to people who came to do just that.

From Malmöstad’s news-letter *Stadsliv*, paraphrasing Mårthen Gunnarsson, Verksamhetsledare Folkets Park Gatukontoret, (the operations manager of Folkets Park) “Mårthen jämför Folkets park med en stor utomhusgalleria, där kommunen står för själva gallerian, men ett antal aktörer fyller den med innehåll.” (Jangmark, 2012, p.7)

The lawn is the ‘human gallery’ section. This is also the music section of the park. This is the see-and-be-seen section of the park. This is the side of the park with the highest concentration of young adults. The music and the DIY, *do-it-yourself*, theatrical performances create a very distinct atmosphere compared to the south side of the park where the playground and amusement park offer pre-made attractions. The attraction here on the north side of the park and the lawns is the visitors themselves.

The main open-lawns often have the characteristics of a *Gröntorg*, a green town-square as described in the International Journal of Sociology and Anthropology, in *Does Public Space Create Social Capital?*

“An old square that is an organic part of its community usually serves present social needs better than a new space ordained by a planner or developer.”

“Public spaces are micro-cosmos of urban life, offering excitement and repose, markets and public ceremonies.” (Ijla, 2012, p. 52)

A community performing together creates the space together; whether it is paved or sodden.

2.3 The Summer Stage

To the left of the Yellow Brick Road is the section of the lawn where the summer stage and rows of benches are set up. The grass is in poor condition as a result of the spectating crowd. There are large bare, dusty patches that kick-up in the wind. There is one tree for shade, which sits just outside the park operations trailer and one at the south corner by the pathway. The visitors who sit on this side of the park when there is no event planned clearly want a little privacy; they rarely sit near each other. If the local homeless or drug-addicts sit on the lawn, they usually sit up against the hedges in this section. They often wave to me.

On the days when an event is planned for the summer stage, such as the outdoor films or concerts, stagehands and technicians move back and forth setting up their gear and go mostly un-regarded by the regulars until the sound-check starts and the whole operation becomes abundantly visible.

A few rows of benches often get moved around during the day and used for a hang-out. The arrangers work around this group of visitors until the last minute. When they are asked to shut off their boom-box and move the benches back into the seating formation, the group does so without complaining. Their performance is co-opted by the arranged event; real-ownership trumps symbolic-ownership. The battle for control of the soundscape of the lawn ends in a rousing defeat. There is no competing with the public address system of the stage; it's not a fair fight. Ironically, there is an Allsång today; a stage-event where professionals perform and the audience participate in a sing-along. Needless to say, loud concerts and crowds of spectators completely take over normal activity and stifle the spontaneous DIY performers of the park.

Regular visitors seem otherwise unimpressed or uninterested in the ‘backstage’ activities of the arranged events. It is not what they came for. If, as Jon P. Mitchell and Erving Goffman posit, the setting for the performance, the context, completes its meaning, then spectators who walked backstage (and ‘pay attention to the man behind the curtain’ so to speak) would break the Wizard’s spell of the ritual.

Coming to an event, like an outdoor film in the park rather than staying home on your couch and watching on video, is also a way of engaging your community. People show up with wine and blankets and spread out picnics. Yet it is relatively passive. The community is not the star of this show, but rather sits facing all in the same direction like a classroom unified by the singular ordering of the media. Any loud conversations, dancing or other disruptive performances would likely be disagreeably met by the rest of the visitors.



(Left): A lone, un-regarded back-stage technician makes ready our evening’s entertainment;

(Below): the Allsång organized sing-along.

Photos: Ian Muller



2.4 The Rose Fountain

Standing in the middle of the main lawn is the giant pink Rose fountain. The hissing and splashing sounds of the fountain and the laughing of children who play in its spray greet me as I move past the drum circle. It is only once I feel the spray of the Rose fountain and see kids and adults in bare feet that I feel I have actually left the city behind: although never far

behind. It is hard to hear the sounds of traffic from the street. Only an occasional police-car siren penetrates this deep into the park.

But, the buildings that surround the park loom close by and one never actually forgets that they are still just a step away from leaving this play-scape. Kansas is never far away. The transformation of the neighborhood and the park is recursive. Just as visitors bring the park out onto the streets into the neighborhood, the buildings standing over the tree line and the pedestrian commuters bring the neighborhood into the park.

The modernist tension between pastoral and urban, between buildings and trees, between pavement and grass is always lingering and threatens to escalate through municipal, economic or citizen actors. Some residents of the area stand vigil on the wall of this conflict. During the SROI study, when locals were asked what they estimated the park was worth to them, and what they would do if it were not there, often they became very defensive, almost hostile, and jumped to the conclusion that the park was under threat of development. During the phone-surveys of homes within 300 meters of the park, some residents contacted the newspaper *Sydsvenskan* to tip them off that demolition and a subsequent housing project was planned for the park. Even after the newspaper published an article explaining the real purpose of the surveys, the comments thread for the on-line article showed 51% of respondents voting that they were 'angry.' (Fürstenberg, 2012)

To the left on the Yellow Brick Road near the Rose fountain are a series of standard straight park benches which are usually occupied during the busiest times of a warm day. Elderly people sit and talk or watch the activity of the comings and goings of the busiest pedestrian section of the pathway just in front of them. Here in this spot there is often a collision, or bottleneck, of children, pedestrians, bicycles, young and old adults in what would seem random inexplicable chaos if not for the brick pathway built by the city that had led them all to this spot.

The benches and the stone wall that circles the fountain are cluttered with prams: the home-bases for the small children who dart back and forth across the pathway from their parents to the water. Though a sign by the park entrance politely asks that we not ride bikes, there is no penalty prescribed for lack of compliance. I tried once to slowly ride my bicycle through this section just to see what reactions I would get. Without anyone actually admonishing me, it became very clear that this was not a good idea. The small children have not yet learned to look out for vehicles and why should they start today? This is their park; this is their time. They own this space while they are here and I must look out for them. The

laughing and running are the markers of ownership and the rules of behavior in this space are implied by them via their parents and the more broadly accepted meta-social rules of Malmö with regards to children's safety.

It is not just children who enjoy the fountain. Unlike the Plaskdamm (splash pond) near the playground, the Rose fountain is surrounded by all age groups and visitors without children. Young couples often playfully spray water on each other or push each other into the water jets laughing. The fountain is meant for use unlike the water features and ponds of Kungspark/Slottspark and Pildammspark, where bathing is prescriptively forbidden. In the heat of the summer, the Rose is a regular pit-stop, a soothing oasis for me during my rounds of survey gathering.

2.5 The Tivoli (Amusement Park)

It is not always possible to hear the roller-coaster over the music and laughter from the lawn, but the first ride of the amusement park is already visible over the tops of the trees. Young adults typically only pass through the amusement park. The rides are not big or thrilling enough. They are mostly for smaller children who wave for photos taken by their parents or grandparents sitting on the benches or standing just outside the safety fences. The mechanical chugs and clunks would seem worrisome and totally out of place if they were not accompanied by shrieks and laughter. This is the spot where more often than not, people would seem annoyed at being handed a survey and would put it down on the bench, offering to fill it out later. They would look past me towards their reason for being there that day: the child who was waving and screaming while whizzing by in a colorful gondola. As I continue further on my rounds, I see the Ben & Jerry's ice cream stand at the crossroads ahead and I wonder if I've walked enough yet to have earned a treat that day.

Like much of the activity in the park, the Tivoli is solar-powered (so to speak) and seasonal. Many of the rides are taken away and moved at the end of the season. Though they are an out-sourced temporary amusement park, the space is more-or-less permanently claimed by them. Debris and disused rides remain behind fenced-in areas over the winter after the Tivoli is closed. Neither the public nor anyone else may use the rides or the space at this point.

2.6 The Crossroads

The smell of hotdogs, frying oil and ketchup permeate the air like a sticky hand that taps you on the shoulder or tugs at the hem of your shirt. I feel the urge to wash my face and hands every time I walk through and talk to people here. The excitement of the amusement park takes on a distinctive flavor in this area of low-blood-sugared guests, tired and thirsty parents, cranky or jubilant kids and the promise of an ice cream in one of the playfully colored kiosks.

Disappointed exclamations of “*no, I don’t want that!*” or “*can I have that?*” punctuate the murmur of conversations mixed with the pings and dings and hurdy-gurdy music of the nearby rides and carnival booths.

There is no shade in this area outside of the umbrellas at the hot-dog stand. Frans Suell’s original Jaktpaviljon (the hunting pavilion of the industrialist who donated this land as a public park) sits on a large rock overlooking this crossroads of the park. The new park operations office is being erected nearby. The large east entrance, the yellow brick road going north-south, and a path cutting east-west through the park all converge here. It is the largest patch of pavement in the park.

It feels like the neighborhood is literally driving into the park here. The residential buildings across the street are at their nearest and most visible point through the gaping entrance and looming above the hotdog stand. The asphalt will pull us out into the street if we let it and it pulls motor-vehicles into our space, which visibly annoys visitors sometimes.

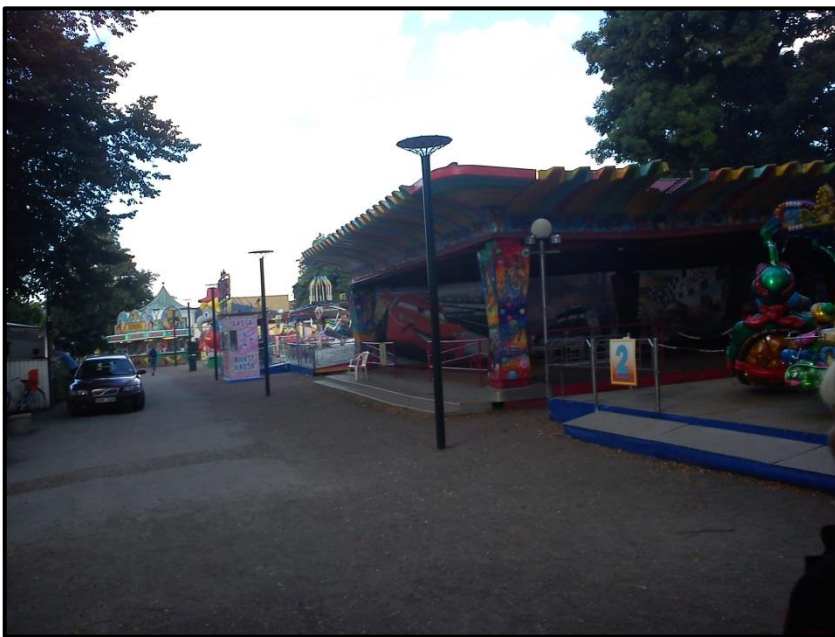
It is rare to see young adults or *hipsters* eating here. If they live close by, they can eat at home or they know where to get a decent kebab or pizza just outside the park. This is also the crossroads and borderland between the lawns to the north and the family area to the south. Ticket coupons are sold here, hotdogs are sold here, ice-cream is sold here, chances to gamble for sweets are sold here, kids put money into machines that operate small cranes and mechanically grab at small stuffed animals in an attempt to violently snatch them from their glass cage here. Without the buildings and the gaping entrance, it would be easy to forget which area of the city you were in.

2.7 Far I Hatten: No-Man's Land

Just to the south of the crossroads is Far I Hatten, the beer-garden and restaurant and it was a fairly active spot for all age groups until it shut down in mid-August. The center of gravity, the balancing-point, the median of the age groups in the park, moved north when the restaurant closed. Without the beer and music from Far I Hatten, there were less of the younger crowd here compared with the lawn on the north side.

The entrance to Far I Hatten is in the middle of a narrow, almost claustrophobic section of the pathway at the end of the amusement park. This section of the path has no yellow bricks. It is only part asphalt, part gravel and dirt and it is shady and dark. The noise from the bumper cars mixes with the piano player or the accordionist who sits at the restaurant's entrance and the noise from the large playground to the south can already be heard. It feels very dissonant with such polar atmospheres competing for attention.

Whose space is this? The bumper cars are not very popular: a deal-breaker for any potential customers, because they really aren't much fun without a lot of participants; are they? The raucous sounds of children at the playground draw the center of gravity and attention southward and once Far I Hatten closed, this section became a no-man's-land, an afterthought, a transitional area of foregone amusement. This section is not private enough to be private, not active enough to be active, not enough hipsters to be hip, not enough families to be familiar. There is no grass or benches. It has not been sanctified by any performance and remains an unclaimed mundane space. The playground beckons just beyond the hedges.



(Empty no-man's-land between the Tivoli and the Lekplats. Photo: Ian Muller)

2.8 The Lekplats (Playground)

The crowded rancor of the playground is dominated by shrieks of children. There is a large tree with low-hanging branches near the fence on which children often swing despite the array of elaborately designed jungle-gyms and climbing-ropes which someone clearly had put a lot of thought and research into. Often, there is not much sun through the tall, broad trees, but it is daytime and the elaborately designed Louis Poulsen street lamps stand overhead ignored by the adults.

Although parents do mingle in small groups, they often share benches without conversing. Some parents are very focused on their kids while others talk with adults. The surveys and observations taken over the summer show the overwhelming majority of daytime park attendance to be parents and children here at the playground and splash-pool. Of them, 48% were between 30-39 years of age with an almost 2:1 ratio of women to men who come from various parts of Malmö (Haraldsson, 2012). This seems to support research done in Canada where parents chose playgrounds based on the networking potential with other parents rather than for the park's proximity, the playground attractions or the children themselves. (Bennet, et al., 2012) The park is not just jungle-gyms and swings, but holds place attachment for an engaged community: performed to the playful soundtrack of laughter and tears of children.

It is not often clear whose kids are whose until someone skins a knee, or is hungry, and they make a bee-line to their parents. Or, just as often, the parents will call out and warn them to stop what they are doing or to play nice and share.

2.9 Grilling

Just to the side of the playground, in the southeastern-most corner of the park is the picnic-grill area. Two men in their 20s were roasting an entire lamb on the first large grill pit. It is interesting that such indoor, backstage behavior can be so openly observed. Public-dining at the hotdog stand entails the ordering and eating of food which has been prepared out of the customers' view. Restaurants that prepare sushi or other food at tableside were once considered a novelty; even then it is a sort of paid performance. Roasting an entire lamb in a public park takes many hours and brings the kitchen, the heart of the house, to the outdoors claiming space as far as the breeze can take the smell for the time it takes to cook and subsequently eat.

To roast and entire animal in public, surrounded by strangers in one of the busiest sections of the park, the playground, is yet another performance that is rich with cultural markers. There is a primal sensory aspect to the smells of burning fat and the violent sight of a slaughtered animal spinning on a rod which digs below cultural layers as well; a tacit reminder of our pre-civilized roots and a vivid connection to our sustenance.

To the other side of the playground is the Ark petting zoo. There are bbq-grills and picnic tables as well as another hotdog stand, but the grills are not big enough to hold an entire animal complete with head and legs. One wonders what sort of reaction the children might have if they were to see a baby lamb roasting just next to the petting zoo. Although the Ark got favorable values on the surveys, it never seemed to be very popular. Through the fence I could sometimes see parents holding children in their arms and pointing to animals, but never as crowded as other attractions in the park. The pony-ride starts at this spot as well. Parents will walk alongside the pony taking photos as their children take a short tour around the Plaskdamm. The smells of manure from the riding club and from the Ark mix with the smell of burning bbq-charcoal. The ground is always soft and damp and I end up carrying a bit of this section with me on my shoes when I leave. From this spot I can see into the Plaskdamm and the whooshing noise from its fountain starts to blend with the ruckus of children playing.

2.10 The Plaskdammen (Splash Pool)

The activity at the Plaskdamm is centered on the shallow wading-pool rather than spread out like the Lekplats. Families set down blankets around the perimeter on high sloping banks facing the center unlike the beach where people all face outwards towards the sea. The hedgerows around the entire area create a natural divider from the rest of the park. It has the appearance and feel of a protective ring around the children where the parents can watch the children in the pool as well as each other: a sort of “*Playground Panopticon*.” (Blackford, 2004) The ownership of this space is immediately clear.

Parents network with each other in the water near the children rather than in scattered groups as they do at the Lekplats. It forms an interesting dynamic. The water surrounds and connects all the parents and children to each other in a tangible, physical way. Children and parents who stand in the water share part of themselves with each other; they leave part of themselves, their skin and sweat and their dirt, in the water and in turn carry each other's on

themselves back to their respective blankets and perhaps into their own homes. Water is rich in religious and ritual symbolism. It cleanses, it nourishes, it provides life and it hides danger and mystery under its surface. In nature, it is a sublime and primal element of both calm serenity and of violence and destruction. In a city, it makes life possible for dense populations and at the same time is a vector for pollution and disease.

The lack of clothing and bare feet creates a more intimate milieu than the playground as well. The children's frenetic activity creates regular physical, sensory disruptions to conversation which complements the usual noises. Laughter and calls to their parents are mixed with splashing water. Their voices are not only carried through the air, but can also be felt as the drops or sprays of water interrupting adults' conversations just below their waistlines. The children's energy is tangible: not just audibly, but visible and palpable in way that cannot be detected in the air alone but is supplemented by the medium of water.

Parents tend to carry more with them to the Plaskdamm as well. Many bring elaborate spreads of food as opposed to the families at the Lekplats who mostly brought simple snacks. They also bring towels and extra dry clothing for the children. It is therefore more of an ordeal to come here than to the playground where one can stop by on the way to somewhere else. Coming to the splash-pool is a destination, an event in itself, and people stay longer because of it. It requires more preparation and less spontaneity and they end up bringing more of their homes with them. Combined with the lack of clothing, this is the most domesticated of areas in Folkets Park.



(Plaskdamm: Panoptic Amphi-theatre; the children put on a show. Photo: Malmö stad.)

2.11 Kiosks

Across the pathway from the Plaskdamm, older folks tend to sit and watch the activities of the pool and the pony-ride. There is a series of kiosks which house a free book exchange and knitting and sewing circles. Just off the side and facing the path, displays of hand written notes, small knitted or crocheted pieces, and arts-and-crafts projects are displayed in a gallery of living artifacts: evidence of summer days spent working together with their hands turning colorful materials into small expressions of creative leisure. The regulars sit and chat and openly invite passers-by to join them. I suddenly feel as though I have walked into a small town where everyone knows each other and I would not be surprised to be scolded for lighting yet another cigarette so soon after I've put out the last one or perhaps to be interrogated as to when I will finally get married.



(Folkets Park arts and crafts: A tight-knit community. Photos: Ian Muller)

Circling back northward, just passed the kiosks are the western Gammal Entré, the original main entrance, and the reflecting pool and waterfall. The pathway disappears here and there are only wide areas of dirt and gravel. The long reflecting pool with a waterfall is flanked by benches which are spaced far apart. It is a quiet area of privacy. Individuals and couples sit alone and it would feel invasive to sit and share a bench with them. At the end of the pool, behind the waterfall is the gazebo where there are as often prams and new mothers reading or feeding their babies as there are homeless or drug addicts. It is the most secluded and private place one can sit in the park and I often felt I should ask permission to enter and hand out my survey or interview those that sat there.

2.12 The Chess Club Kiosk

In the area just inside the old entrance on the west side by Frans Suell's house is the chess club kiosk. Typically there are up to a dozen senior men sitting at the small folding tables playing or watching each other play. During the summer this spot has the most shade and because there is no grass, very few people lay blankets down and hang-out here. Despite its proximity to Norra Parkgatan's busy bicycle and foot traffic, it is the most tranquil area of the park. I feel myself tip-toeing through the area. I never interrupted a match to interview or survey the players. With all the bustling activity, splashing water, screeching children, careening roller-coasters, thumping Latin music and motor traffic just on the periphery, this pensive circle of strategy and cerebral wrangling is almost a blind-spot. As a person who could never manage even a footling's expertise of the game, it is an atmosphere of wizardry and mysterious deep thought to me: a world where I am not regarded or able to make significant contribution.



(Chess club battle mano-a-mano for control of their section of the park. Photo: Ian Muller)

This space is often transformed by the occasional Barnloppis (children's flea-market) and small stage productions in the outside theater behind the Moriskan pavilion. During the

Barnloppis the community reuses and shares each other's memories and personal items: pieces of their childhood and their children's lives are inspected, bartered for and given a new life. Objects are not discarded but are reclaimed and re-owned. The physical, tangible pieces of their lives, steeped in memories, get traded and taken into each other's homes.

Off to the side is the smaller west-gate which faces down Friisgatan, a main hub of activity in the neighborhood which leads one directly to Malmö's Triangeln station. Despite the fact that it has become one of the busiest entrances to the park, it is an employee parking lot. The refuse bins from Moriskan and delivery vans and private cars sit directly on the main fairway. It almost feels like I am trespassing when I come through here.

2.13 Terrarium

Just to the side of the entrance is the Terrarium which sits adjacent to club Debaser. It is home to a few small wallabies, rabbits and turtle that shuffle about and graze in the small outdoor cage. Some people stop and look, but mostly from the street side. The cage is also more visible and gets more attention from pedestrians on the sidewalk outside the park on Norra Parkgatan where bicycles coast back and forth and slalom around the broken glass which often decorates the street: evidence of the nightlife which the clubs attract.

"They look so pathetic," said Tommy, 44 years old, commenting on the animals who mope about scrounging for their lunch. (Muller, 2012)

It is also home to the parrot from the Pippi Longstocking films of the 1960's. The Terrarium feels out of place to me sitting tightly next to the club Debaser. Mårthen Gunnarsson, the park manager, said it has been run by the same man for ages and will continue to stay where it is until the day he dies. I have completed a full round of surveys and I head to the Rose fountain to wet my head.

At a slow pace, one can walk the circle around the park back here to the lawn on the north side in under 10 minutes. I did it countless times while handing out and collecting over 1,000 surveys over the course of 4 weeks. Such a diverse array of activities and dense and varied population is remarkable for such a small park. Pildammpark, by comparison, is 6-7 times the acreage and takes close to an hour to circumnavigate. It is possible to walk 15 minutes through the brambles of Pildammpark and not encounter a person. In Folkets Park, I am always aware that there is a community actively engaging with and performing for each other.

2.14 The End of the Day

Sunday night during the Utomshusbio (outdoor movie), daylight fades and the lawn starts clearing out. I have done my last surveys for the day and I finish up my research log notes for the day with a beer at the Moriskan's outside seating area. Visitors are covered up with warmer and more stylish clothing. One cannot see people across the grass anymore. Audial and olfactory senses take over more from the visual. People come out of the dark into the overhead lights and then disappear into shadows again. Conversations and laughing can be heard in the darkness approaching. There are no boom boxes or kids screaming or amusement park ride noises. The music is coming from the nightclubs and some conversations can be heard coming from the beer-gardens. The flickering light and murmurs from the outdoor movie drone on in the background. There are no smells of bbq-grills anymore. Family time is over. The DIY musicians and drum circles have stopped.

The grass is picked clean of bottles and cans throughout the day and dogs are not allowed during the summer so one can walk off of the lit pathways without fear of stepping on some unknown or unwelcomed objects in the dark. The activity is all on the north side near the clubs since the family section is closed. It feels a bit uncomfortable to walk passed the Moriskan towards the south side after reading about the various street crimes that occur here. Knowing that the vagrants and drug addicts would probably recognize me does not help. The atmosphere is calm but oddly it is not as eerie as it is during the daytime in the off-season.



(Nightfall: Human-Gallery closing. Photo: Malmö stad)

2.15 The End of the Summer

As autumn blows in and the Tivoli closes, the trees start becoming bare and the park feels vast and barren despite the people who do remain. There is more direct sunlight and less shade, but the days are noticeably shorter and colder. There are less people even at the peak hours. The Tivoli seems eerie. There is no music or sounds of children screaming and laughing. The smells of junk food are gone with the wind. It feels like a Stephen King horror movie set. The giant carnival elephant figures still stand alone; their clownish grins seem out of place. Some of the rides have been taken away completely and there are large empty patches of grass and gravel. The storage containers and piles of work materials and supplies covered in plastic Visqueen tarps are visible along the sides in the workers-only areas. Even when the Tivoli is gone, it still owns this space.

The Veteranbil (antique cars) children's ride has been shut down and its monorail track has become more visible through the bushes. The ticket box has been boarded-up. They look like abandoned or junked cars now. Dried leaves fill the seating compartment of the cars.

In the middle of the day now, the only sounds of children come from across the street at the elementary school. The high pitched laughing of children cannot be heard all over the park, though. Only during certain times (play period or recess, presumably) can their disembodied voices be heard echoing through the park like the ghosts of summers past.

There doesn't seem to be any truants hanging out in the park during the day. I remarked to one of the park workers that when I was a teenager, we always went to public parks when we cut-out of class. She smiled, nodded and said that they probably thought that someone they know would see them.

There is still a lack of sports being played even now that the grass is free and open. There is plenty of room for football or Frisbee without concern for other visitors, yet the grass seems to remain designated as a performance/hang-out space. A juggler, sometimes two, remains on the grass near the terrarium: even when a slight chilly rain starts to fall unwelcomed. The cold rain falling here on the Rose fountain is now an ironic irritant compared to the relief of the fountain's spray in the summer.

The Plaskdamm fountain has also been shut off and the pool is merely a series of shallow puddles filled with wet leaves: a giant bird-bath. A mother and father watch their kids splash in the post-season Plaskdamm: considerable sized manure-and-mud puddles near the Ark and Riding Club. Unlike the summer Plaskdamm, the parents do not join their kids in the

pool, but rather stand by taking photos and they will most likely not be carrying any of the muddy, manure soaked clothing into their homes.

In the playground, there is still much activity, although people are bundled up in warmer clothing. There is not much grilling, but people still occupy the tables and eat picnics or take-out food.

The night club, Debaser, has taken away the patio furniture and closed the beer-garden for the winter, but music still plays on their outdoor speakers very often. Cuba Café has also taken away their outdoor seating and is entirely closed for the season.

The wind blows more often and more noticeably and horse-chestnuts fall with a regular thud onto the roofs of the park house and other structures around the park. The dried chestnuts litter the grass and crunch underfoot.

The people who are merely passing through with groceries are more visible now without the throngs of visitors to hide them. The shopping bags of food give them away. People bicycle through the park now. Although there are signs posted asking people to kindly not bring dogs into the park during the summer it is completely acceptable now.

Raincoats and scarves replace bikinis and t-shirts. Musicians are rare now as well. Is it because it is harder to play in the cool weather or is it because there is no audience?

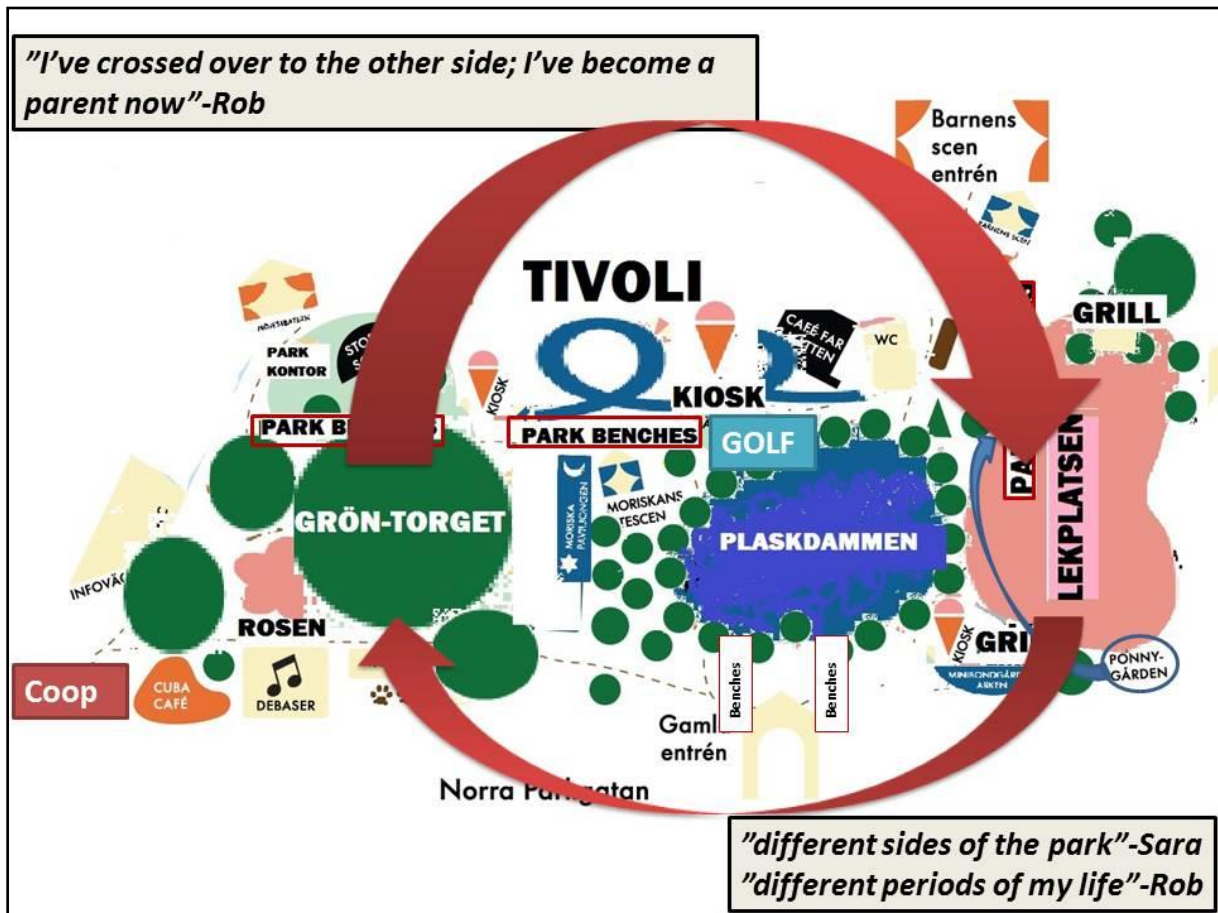
Soon the Plaskdamm will host an ice-skating rink. Small festivals are still arranged for the daytime during the winter and the clubs Moriskan and Debaser are open all year, but the community gallery and Gröntorget have moved elsewhere. They appear to be solar-powered in this way.

2.16 The Circle of Life

One of my focus group participants described the sections of the park as the different periods of his life. Now that he has a child of his own and he is a post-doctorate student in his mid-30's working in the knowledge economy of Malmö-Lund, he has "crossed-over to the other side" where he once played as a child himself. (Focus Group, 2012) The 'crossing-over' also reflects his attitude towards the park and its visitors as well. He is concerned with drunken kids cycling over his children on the side of the park where he once hung out and drank beer himself a few years ago. Yet, he still trusts his child's safety here in the park more

than the courtyard of his building. Place attachment puts its roots into the park in the form of memories and of future hopes.

Will he sit and watch his grandchildren on the rides here one day? Will his kids come here to play guitar on the weekends and work at Ideon Science Park during the week like him? Will he become a chess enthusiast and move to the older section of the park one day? Next season? The one after that? The one after that?



(Circle of Life of Folkets Park; map altered by me with enlarged icons to reflect park usage.)

8. Har du tillsammans med barn under sommaren 2012 besökt Folkets Park av någon av följande anledningar. (Du kan kryssa i flera rutor).

Föreställningar på Superdupersommar Barnloppis Inget av dem

& för lekplatsen! mycket mysigt att
se barnen ha kul med saker
man själv lekt med!

(“Very cozy/cute to see the kids have fun with things one played with them self!” Anonymous woman, mid-20’s with “2 bonus children”; Survey, 2012-08-16)

3. DIY Performances in Folkets Park

3.1 Social Capital

Social capital, in general terms: a community of people, investing their time and faith in their community, gives it credibility affirming its value and the value of neighbors by interacting with them. Wikipedia offers: *Although different social sciences emphasize different aspects of social capital, they tend to share the core idea "that social networks have value"*.

In its simplest form, creating this value of social capital through trust does not require grand rituals and performances. What it does require, however, can be pointed to by Akram M. Ijla in *Does Public Space Create Social Capital?* “The concept focuses attention on the positive consequences of sociability while putting a side its less attractive features.” (Beem, Christopher. *The Necessity of Politics: Reclaiming American Public Life*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), (Ijla, 2012, p.145)

This, of course, relies on the public actually putting aside its ‘less attractive features.’ In a reflexive loop, the level of deference and demeanor is both dependent upon and perpetuates an attractive level of social engagement by reaffirming participants’ level of commitment to the community. Our willingness to invest ourselves and our behavior in community is a show of good faith, a down-payment of social capital towards future returns of greater social capital. It seems intuitive enough: *the nicer we are, the nicer it is; the nicer it is, the better it is.*

Or, in the spirit of neotony, as the children’s song says, “the more we play together, the happier we’ll be.” So, how does Folkets Park play together? How do park activities express an investment into the community and a culture that can be analyzed? What is its value?

Following are some of the more colorful examples I observed to help illustrate and answer the first two questions and describe the human-gallery of DIY theatrical performances. The sensory cues of visuals, of sounds and of smells function as signals to others and help convey the implied levels of deference, demeanor and engagement with the community and claim space for the performers.



(Drum/Dance circle, North side of Folkets Park outside of Cuba Café. Photo: Ian Muller)

3.2 Drum/Dance Circle

A drum circle is an overt, imposing invitation. The loud tribal thumping noise carries far through the air, like a church bell, calling the faithful and the curious to join, to wade in carefully or to linger on the periphery and observe. It is not a solo recital but rather a communal activity which relies on, and so encourages, active participation from others. The tribal connotations are palpable. The vigorous disruption of the stable, calm, lazy atmosphere of a Sunday and the symbolic violence of the Afro-Brazilian capoeira dancers in the center of the circle declare the call to *communitas*. (Turner, 1969) They mimic a martial-arts contest of hand-to-hand combat with occasional kicks, leg sweeps and tumbling to the ground or somersaulting. Though not para-military in style, like a parade (Mitchell, 2006, p.395), the hand to hand combat, drumming and chanting brusquely claim and transform space: both the physical spot they are standing on and the surrounding lawn that is within ear-shot and sightline.

Among the play-performance activities in Folkets Park, which I observed, the drum circles had the widest level of accessibility for observers and visitors to participate. Although the troupe stands, 6-8 people, in a circle facing each other, there is ample room for anyone to move in rather close. The drummers rock back and forth and sway side to side with the rhythm while the dancers perform their acrobatic movements in the center forcing the circle to widen and break open at times engulfing on-lookers. They never form a rigid tight circle that

might signal “no interlopers.” This sort of activity seeks attention. It relies on it to serve any value as performance ritual.

They usually perform at the northernmost point of the lawn by the Cuba Café and the main entrance to the park. The chanting and drumming greet visitors coming into the park and announce the clear signal that they have left the structure of the mundane workaday city and entered the sacred ritual space of Folkets Park.

3.3 Guitarist/Singer

The sensory footprint or sphere created by an acoustic guitar is not as broad or bold as a drum circle and is therefore less invasive to the surrounding. But that does not mean that the sensorial gravity-well will always be categorically weaker. If we assume that a guitarist who plays in Folkets Park can practice at home in privacy, we can also assume that having an audience by coming to a busy public park is a factor in the decision to come here. In fact, Johan, a guitarist age 29, and his friend ‘Lockheed’ regularly come from across the city, and from Lund, to play at Folkets Park. They do not choose this playground for its proximity to their homes, as the Canadian study discussed. (Bennet et al., 2012) They make a deliberate choice to bring their sacred inside outside into this arena. (Mitchell, 2006, p.396)

“Sometimes, people sit near us and sing,” Johan told me.

The level of accessibility of participation and interaction for observers and visitors is more limited in the case of a guitarist and singer than a drum circle. The sounds of acoustic guitars, even if a person is singing along, do not carry as far through the air as a drum circle with several people chanting. Drum circles violently engage us and clearly and confidently announce their intention to invade or even take over our space. Acoustic guitars, on the other hand, tempt us softly into their space. The sounds of the strings, like physical touch, casually reach out and gently tap us on the shoulder or about our ears and ask permission to enter our space or tempt us to enter theirs. All the sounds from about the Rose Fountain compete for influence over our personal sphere of attention; the whooshing of water, the shrieks and laughs of children, a police-car’s siren, a boom-box, the murmurs of a conversations and the guitars, all jostle against each other and bump elbows for our attention. They rise and fall, ebb and flow gently against the shores of the island of our sensory sphere if we close our eyes.

Access to participate is limited by other factors as well. Clearly, all are welcome to observe and enjoy the folk-music as spectators, but to sing along requires knowledge of the song and its lyrics. There is a closer connection between the performer and spontaneous participants through a common cultural knowledge of the song being played, even if they have never met previously. In a drum circle, one only needs a sense of rhythm (and often not even that).

Also, approaching one or two guitarists who are sitting stationary requires a certain degree of personal confrontation with the performers. In a drum circle, one can move slowly, discreetly and anonymously into the fray. Depending on how and where the guitarists are sitting, conversely, it might feel disruptive or brusque to enter their space and begin singing along. There is a more even symmetry of deference and demeanor between participants. We are not forced to listen to them, and we are required to force ourselves upon them if we want to join as performers; more so than in the case of the drum circle.

Park visitors who come without an instrument and possibly no acuity for music have an opportunity to sing and perform impromptu: spontaneously. They may not have come with the intention of joining a folksong sing-along and they can stay for just one song which they like or one that they know the words to, or until they feel they are intruding. The liminal aspects may not seem as violent as the drumming and fight-dancing, but the random *unstructured* shifting of roles and activities typifies a mixed urban leisure space of this sort. Enter here and you may be transformed from an office-worker who is on a lunch break into a back-up singer in a folk music trio or a South American tribal member.

Temporary social groups like these in Folkets Park, though transient and “*however momentary, mute and distant they appear to be,*” (Goffman, 1964, p.135) enact this shared experience and the implied rules of a community. The micro-social of the performances are intertwined with the meso-social of the park and of the Möllevången neighborhood. All the actors, singers, drummers, and spectators are for a brief time engaged in a common ritual activity until they no longer care for the music, until the ritual serves no meaning to them or until something else calls them and they become passers-by or sunbathers or picnickers again and join another group.

Or, perhaps, they must return to work and the structure of the everyday outside the park. The hero’s journey complete, they have left home, entered the liminal danger of the

wild, conquered the dragon of inhibition and stifling routine drudgery, they have won the prize of acclaim as a folk-singer and they may return home to glory with the spoils of victory, a new story to tell and a new identity.

In lieu of any clear way to quantize or monetize this value, I suggested that we ask visitors how much they normally give to street buskers on the SROI surveys. Surprisingly, my focus group stumbled at the question and admitted that although they like street performances, they never really give money. Commercializing the experience would profane the value of the performance and threaten the ritual for all the actors. (Goffman, 1956, p.474 & p.494)



(A little summer's day music. Locals enhancing the value of the park. Photo: Ian Muller)

3.4 String Quartet

The accessibility for spontaneous participation is even less still, in the case of the string quartet which I observed in Folkets Park. They sat away from the more crowded noisy area of the lawn, but still only a couple of meters off of the Yellow Brick Road footpath. They do not have any real privacy. One can hear them from the pathway without intruding, but their body language also conveys a message limiting the invitation to join them. They sit in a tight circle facing each other with their backs facing outward.

The string quartet did not gather spectators, though. When I asked if there was some particular purpose for them to practice in the park (*did they not have a rehearsal space; wasn't it an effort to bring all their instruments to the park; did they come to play that specific*

day for a reason) they all agreed that it was just nice to be outdoors, that people could possibly enjoy their music and that they didn't mind having their space intruded upon by strangers. Although they were in a public setting, it was still a fairly closed group compared to the drum circle or the guitar duo. They stopped playing and started again abruptly, they chatted, snacked, laughed and got up to dance at random moments. They clearly came here to be with each other and not just to provide entertainment or add to the ambience of the park.

This is not camp-fire sing-a-long music and although they were happy to be observed and heard, the spot they picked and their body language does not appear to invite strangers to join in. It would seem inappropriate to sit down in their circle and begin clapping, humming or whistling along with their music; that would disrupt rather than add to the performance. It would not seem outrageous for a passer-by, who might happen to have a violin and knowledge of the piece of music they were performing, to sit down and attempt to play with them, but the visitor would still be a 'fifth-wheel.'

Rather, we are offered a back-stage glimpse into their rehearsal routine: their indoor sacred being brought into the outside. Unlike the guitarists and drummers, the quartet seems oblivious to, or at least uninterested in, the rest of the park activities at times. They have domesticated their small space on the grass and only unexpected or disruptive noises, sights or smells would seem to be able to penetrate their sphere.

Their music coyly tempts us from the corner. It is not a shy wallflower, but a confident garden of tones and timbres which does not feel the need to compete for our attention. Aided by the curious sight of four exotic instruments, the sounds are confident we will come closer to their space and watch from a near distance, at least, without having to elbow their way to us through the crowd of noises in order to tap us on the shoulder and enter our space. We have access to the music, but not an invitation to join in and play. Even quietly entering the circle of musicians and sitting down might scare off the music and bring the musicians, as people, back into our space instead. The symmetry of deference here puts the onus on us to approach them.

3.5 Jugglers

In the case of the jugglers, the sensory cues are all visual. Juggling is also a blatant act of performing as entertainment for others. By the level of mastery, I must conclude that these are not professional jugglers or that they at least had not perfected this area of their repertoire.

They did not appear self-conscious about it, though. At times, there was more than one juggler; at times, there was only one. Late into September, and during a light rain, he was one of the last diehard performers in the park vigilantly claiming the space as a stage for DIY theatrical performance.

In the cold and damp, there were hardly any of regular summers-day visitors and hardly any passers-by either. In the case of juggling, it is not an activity that one could comfortably practice in an average apartment. One must have high open space and no valuable fragile objects directly nearby. Still, one could imagine that there were more private places to practice. Coming to the park to rehearse alone still engages the community. He is visible from across the lawn and from the windows of the surrounding buildings.

The complete absorption of the body into the activity facilitates an almost meditative state of “flow.” Stuart Brown calls this an altered state imbued with magical qualities. (Brown, 2008) The juggler may leave our space, so to speak; though he is physically present, he may be oblivious to our presence. Much like the string quartet, when he is fully absorbed in playing, he is in his own space entirely and answering my questions would break the spell, require him to cease his activity and rejoin us here in the park.

Because of this, active participant in his performance on our part is limited. Without a matched level of skill on the part of a second performer, juggling is a solitary act that does not invite unrehearsed strangers to join in. Much like the string-quartet, we are invited to interact as spectators based only upon the fact that he is practicing in public, but we cannot participate as we might with the guitarist or drum-circle.

At the same time, it is one of the most visible performance markers of the space. He is mostly silent and he only passively intrudes into our space via unusual visual displays. It is the only sensation that breaks out of his tightly formed sensory-sphere, but on an open lawn where one can see just about all the activity from any place they stand, the vigorous movement of dancing and juggling quickly reaches out and catches the eye.

On a crowded summer day, movement through this area is slow and leisurely. Bursts of rapid movement come from small children who dart to and from the Rose splash fountain in the middle of the lawn at times, but the adults are strolling or standing and talking. Occasionally, a roller-coaster shoots upward over the top of the tree line past the edge of the lawn and careens downward again out of view. For the most part, though, visitors move

leisurely or sit on blankets. It is easy to spot an adult standing and moving as vigorously as the jugglers. Their batons twirl and sail up and down through the air or side-to-side and occasionally tumble to the ground with the juggler lunging after them for an attempted save and thusly breaking his personal space in the process. The flying batons are visible from as far away as the drum circle is audible, but we must look at him unlike the drum circle which claims space through sound even when we can't see them.

All the theatrical performances sanctify the entire lawn claiming the space by transforming it into a communal performance play-scape. They gain their power through the community's acceptance and deference towards the performer (Goffman, 1956, p.478) and create their value thusly.

As a function of play and community, Stuart Brown adds, "I think a state of play is very similar biologically to a state of sleep or dreams. It is something you get into, and when you get into it you've got a different level of consciousness and accessibility to imagination and to other ways of being and experiencing belonging or peacefulness or community. Ritual play, like music and dance, can evoke these experiences for individuals and communities. There seems to be a collective play urge that is a part of being human, that's deeply ingrained in us as a social and communal need." (Kadlec, 2009, p.10)

There is a qualitative difference between the DIY-performances of Folkets Park as a participatory act compared an organized event which attracts spectators from outside the community or a busker who performs for money on busy city street. The culture of the park is uniquely expressed this way.

3.6 The Tivoli (Amusement Park)

The parents or grandparents of children on the amusement park rides, such as the rollercoasters, are often very passive upon first observation. Just like at the Plaskdamm, it is the children who are entertaining the adults. Although the activity at the Tivoli costs money, it is not the children who pay to play; it is the parents who pay to watch them play. The young children are in motion, faster through space/time and more violently and dangerously than anyone else in the park. The older parents or grand-parents are often motionless. They sit, watch and document the event with cameras and attentive smiles and waves. They are maintaining the base-camp, the safe haven, by holding the bags of food and sweaters while

the children venture forth to liminal adventure. Younger parents will stand, often with infants in prams or strapped to their chests, close to or in between the rides. Their attention is often split between their children on the rides and the other parents with whom they chat.

The shrieks and laughs of the children compete with the hurdy-gurdy and the rattle and clatter of the machinery to reach out of their space and into ours, like the other described performances, but this is a private performance. Unlike playing an instrument, the level of access for visitors and observers here is very limited and very tricky. Without a personal rapport, it would seem inappropriate to smile and wave or take pictures of children on rides. One could imagine it would confuse the children and concern the adults.

Many of the benches are across the Yellow Brick Road from the rides and passers-by must put themselves physically between the parents and the children. As I handed surveys to the parents, grand-parents or guardians who sat on the benches near the amusement park, they would sometimes lean left or right to look past me as I blocked the view of their show. Their attention was focused on the children and I was intruding. Usually, they politely took the surveys and offered to fill them out later. They paid good money for the rollercoaster so that they could witness their children laughing, so that they could enjoy the moment, so that they could share that moment with their kids and document it with photographs for later enjoyment like a squirrel burying an acorn for the winter.

Entering the space between them is different than walking into a drum circle, for example. The amusement park takes up a fairly large amount of the park space and can be entered from many sides. The rides often take the children violently away from parents: high up in the air for all to see or abruptly around a bend and out of view to us and the parents themselves.

At both the Lekplats and the Plaskdamm I am acutely aware that I am being estimated: perhaps not intensely or with suspicion, but I am being noticed at least. In both the Lekplats and Plaskdamm, one must put themselves between parent and child physically just by walking through the space. Whereas walking through the middle of a string-quartet would be a blatant imposition, in the playground one has no choice but to enter the circle between the actors.

Here at the Tivoli, we are also forced to queue up directly in front or behind families to board the rides or to buy tickets. We must squeeze past the families in the more crowded spaces between the rides. But these are temporary intrusions and temporary social groups.

(Goffman, 1964, p.135) We may be *queue-standers* together, or even photographers, but the participatory theatrical aspects are primarily shared within the family for the purposes of their own entertainment in these instances. Unless we attempt to climb into a gondola with a stranger's kid, the intrusions are unremarkable.

On the subject of the amusement park and 'people-watching,' Sofia, age 23, said, "I like to see other people using the rides and having fun, even if I'm not." Rob, age 36, added that "unused rides are depressing." (Focus Group, 2012) Their first comments on the amusement park were not regarding cost, safety, cleanliness, noise or even worker's rights, although these concerns did arise later, but were rather focused on the level of community participation and performance.

3.7 Nighttime

Just as the play activities described so far are solar-powered, (they are contingent upon fair weather during the day-time), so too is the level of trust. At night, urbanity moves in along with the dark. It would be shocking and likely a cause for concern to see a young woman lying in a bikini with her eyes closed and a bag of personal items and valuables lying open beside her at night in any urban park.

Not only does the darkness prohibit, or at least discourage, many of the daytime play activities for practical reasons, there have also been muggings in the park, which will probably fail to surprise anyone. The liminal danger of the space at night becomes associated with the threat of actual physical harm rather than just ridicule or humiliation and activity moves into the electric light of the outdoor beer-gardens.

On a summer night, some of the day-visitors are still about, but they have changed their clothing and their activity. Disembodied conversations move through shadows. Playfulness is more centered on alcohol and club music. The entertainment is provided by professional bands and DJ's who entice us to dance. The activity that spills out into the lawn from the beer-garden also has different rules of privacy and access as well, but the park has become a completely urbanized space which shares the same rules as other nightclubs across the city.

The sounds, smells and sights function as indicators as to the implied level of admissible participation with each other and help create an atmosphere of a spontaneous DIY

festival at times in Folkets Park. All who come are participating and adding elements to the mixed use of the space. Theatrical performances as a form of play, which I have described, are one of the activities that helps create the identity of the space which is, in turn, an integral part of the local community. Some performances claim more space than others, but the playful repetition of all these rituals together helps the actors maintain ownership of the space.

Mitchell uses the example of the bearing of a statue of St. Paul, a sacred object, out of its safety into a public ceremony “*taking the inside outside, the outside is transformed from mundane everyday space into transcendent ritual space.*” (Mitchell, 2006, p.396) Taking a role-play alter-persona out into the public transforms the mundane everyday space while it simultaneously and reflexively sanctifies our myth, our inner-story, exposing it to liminal danger and granting it ritual deference. By ‘taking their inside outside’ theatrical performers take a risk of rejection or humiliation (Turner, 1969, p.103) which creates trust and therefore community cohesion.

3.8 Risk, Trust & Social Capital

“Play is the icon of trust,” claims Stuart Brown, Founder of the National Institute for Play. So, what is the value of trust, then?

“Trust is the core process that evokes and allows enough safety for play to take place, and play in turn allows us to experience the benefits of trust, such as cooperation and fairness and optimism.” (Kadlec, 2009, p.8)

Quoting Erving Goffman, in *Social Interactions in Urban Parks: Stimulating Social Cohesion?*

“Respectful interactions enable citizens to have rewarding social interactions and to develop social networks that are sustained by trust. These in turn support a wider social sphere that is characterized by peaceful coexistence, prosperity and inclusion (Goffman, 1971)”. (Peters et al, 2010)

If we unpack the term Social Capital further; from the *Oxford English Dictionary*:

Capital - “Real or financial assets possessing a monetary value; the stock with which a company, corporation, or individual enters into business; the total sum of shareholders’

contributions in a joint-stock company; accumulated wealth or goods, esp. as used in further production.” “Any source of profit, advantage, power, etc.; a store of some positive or advantageous quality.”

Capital is transferrable and exchangeable. It has power and value that changes with fluxuating exchange rates; so too has social capital along with fluxuating cultural paradigms and values. What remains constant is the currency of trust and how communities ‘mint the coin’ of this currency: deference, demeanor and engagement. A comparative ideological review of the history of municipal investment in public urban play-scapes will help account for the fluxuating value.

4. Urban Policies: Play and Social Capital from Olmsted to Innovation

From a memo by Sverker Haraldsson (2013), who commissioned the Social Return on Investment study in Folkets Park, it is stated that Malmö stad Gatukontoret's *verksamhetsområde*, (their mission purpose), is "Ett Malmö där man hellre är ute än inne." "Utveckla & vårda parker. – Bidrar till en mera attraktiv och inbjudande stad." (p.5) Their mandate is '*developing and fostering a more attractive and inviting city where people would rather be outside than in.*'

The SROI study is an example of a municipal governing authority's contemporary view of social capital and their obligation towards the public. This seemingly idealistic attempt at co-creation of urban space and usage has evolved over the history of urban parks. The role of these urban public spaces has undergone different ideologies over the last century and a half and it is a story of reinvention and redefinition based on the perceived purpose of parks, municipal governments and their view of public needs.

4.1 Victorian Era

In pre-industrial western countries, before urban leisure spaces as we know them today, play was more integrated into communities. In lieu of designated recreation areas, civic town squares and streets were used as multi-generational mixed-use play-scapes. (Brown, S., 2008) With the rise of modern industrialized cities in Europe and the U.S., according to Karl Spracklen in *Constructing Leisure*, "...gin became associated with poor leisure choices: drunken idleness, cockfighting and bear-baiting, casual sex, gambling, fighting and petty crime." (2011, p.144)

As a reaction to this, in Victorian fashion, leisure-time play and sports became linked to health and morality. Organized team sports and structured recreation came out of this era. This was also the era of Folk-culture revival movements with renewed interest in traditional cultural folk-dance and music as a leisure time activity. "These rituals were part of our leisure lives, fixed events in the year, where our full participation was essential if the rituals were to succeed." (Spracklen, 2011, p.155) In a time before electronic recording media and ubiquitous and instantaneous access to ready-made entertainment, folk-dance and folk-music occupied a different place in public culture than it does today. As form of participatory leisure time activity, however, they still share the elements of ritual and *communitas* from their beginning, through the Victorian revival to Folkets Park today.

4.2 Olmstedianism: Museumification

The Victorian sensibilities of morality and health also prompted the urban park movement, but the chaotic and festive theatrical performances, like those of today's Folkets Park, were quite different. Unstructured creative play of the type which I observed in Folkets Park, including folk music and dancing, was originally discouraged in the early sculpted, pastoral gentile Victorian parks and was even specifically and prescriptively outlawed in Central Park, New York City: a classic example. When it was built in the mid-19th century, the architect/planner, Frederick Law Olmsted envisioned the working and immigrant classes of New York being socialized and civilized by the upper-class. From *Nature in the City: Urban Environmental History and Central Park*:

“To ensure that everyone behaved like a proper Victorian nature tourist, he [Olmsted] posted rules (no commercial vehicles, no walking or grazing animals on the grass, no fishing or swimming in the park lake, no picking flowers, no sports, and no music on the Christian Sabbath), which he enforced with a park police force.” (Fisher, 2011, p.29)

Olmsted's prescriptive rules of conduct in Central Park served to reinforce ownership of the park by the upper-classes. These strict *look, but do not touch* rules prevented visitors from engaging in most of the activities we associate with urban parks today. Paul Gobster (2007) used the term “*Museumification*”; evoking images of glassed in displays which separates visitors from the integral sensory involvement required of material beings to enact culture. (Law, 1994)

Folkets Park, Malmö, on the other hand, was donated and designated ‘The *People's* Park’ by the industrialist Frans Suell who shaped much of Malmö. Though the rules were not Olmstedian in nature, Folkets Park, according to the Malmö stads kultur arkiv, was only opened on weekends in 1891. It featured restaurants, dancing, theatre and circus acts, structured events, but there was no playground and leisure time for the workers of Malmö had a different meaning than it does today as well.

The park and the local neighborhood of worker's housing underwent 30 years of demonstrations and labor strikes culminating in bloody riots involving thousands of people by the late 1920's. The elements of *communitas* back then were embedded in the park through riots and civil unrest: the ‘dancing in the streets’ of Folkets Park and Möllevången of the day.

Folkets Park was a daily gathering point for striking workers who came from throughout Malmö. Twenty-four hour police patrols around the park still failed to prevent the nightly vandalizing of the A.W. Nilsson factory across the street from the main entrance. (Nyzell, 2009)



(The A.W. Nilsson factory 'Alhambra-esque' image: Looming over and laying into Folkets Park.)

4.3 Neo-Olmstedianism: Progressives, Modernism & Mallification

During the prosperous era between the two world wars, and in the wake of three decades of turbulent class struggle, a changing view of the needs of the public started to change urban spaces. The amusement park and playground were added to Folkets Park.

Although the rise of modernist progressivism began to consider the actual needs and preferences of the public, there was still fairly limited feedback and, in modernist fashion, measureable value is starting to be considered. In *'Striden ägde rum i malmö': Möllevångskravallerna 1926: En studie av politiskt våld i mellankrigstidens Sverige*, Stefan Nyzell, (2009) also criticizes the idealized 'Swedish Model' of compromise and civil co-creation as a revisionist history.

The New Deal progressive programs of the U.S. in the 1930's, like in Sweden, aimed not only to "revitalize democracy by building community institutions such as recreation centers and playgrounds," but they also held an emerging *neo-Olmstedian* belief that "public

facilities for organized play helped introduce Americans to a new ethic of consumption by encouraging the pursuit of pleasure beyond the confines of the industrial workplace.”

(Rosenzweig & Blackmar, 1992, p.459)

So, although not as strict, elitist and ‘Museumified’ as Olmsted’s vision, the modernist *neo-Olmstedian* view of designated ‘play-scapes’ and the role of urban planning still served as a function of socializing, but with an eye towards consumerizing the public rather than strictly for the purposes of community building or for the purposes of play for its own sake.

In *The Return of Aesthetics to City Planning*, M. Christine Boyer writes, “Consumption is the economic role of many of our center cities today, consequently they are becoming places of entertainment, of pure play.” Pure play, yes, but she adds, “... food shops, boutiques, entertainment zones, and television and information nodes are commanding more and more territory and displacing many of the city’s former residents, functions, and services.” (Boyer, 1988, p.50)

If public spaces are important for revitalizing democracy, as per neo-Olmstedians, then there is a contradiction here. One cannot simply preach from a soap-box, juggle or start a drum-circle in a shopping-mall, for example, without contravening their prescriptive rules and risking physical ejection. There is a clear *real-ownership* of the space. One must be consumer first and foremost to be accepted in a shopping-mall. The degree to which youth are allowed to loiter in malls, unlike adult indigents, is dependent upon a neo-Olmstedian view that they are still in need of socialization via consumerization.

So, whereas Olmsted did not take into account the cost of a trolley ride out of New York’s inner-city, (where there was no space to embed a park like Folkets Park is in Møllevången), or the cultural preferences of the working and immigrant classes, neo-Olmstedianism also fails to address social capital equitably and pluralistically.

4.5 Post-Olmstedianism: Co-creation and Social Capital

Today, in the wake of the rational modernism and progressive reforms of the past century, the value of the social has become not merely an end in itself, but something to be quantified, monetized and invested in, like real capital, in an attempt to reap dividends. There is a deliberate attempt to foster social capital via public spaces and a fiscal need to monitor actual capital investment in the process by including the public in development and planning: to literally monitor the *Social Return on Investment*.

Studies regarding park development and urban planning are conducted now including public feedback. In, *Managing Urban Parks for a Racially and Ethnically Diverse Clientele*, it is proposed that,

”More research in this area is needed, and qualitative, ethnographic methods may be the logical way to explore in depth the meaning and values that leisure experiences have for different cultural groups.” (Gobster, 2002, p.157)

Also, from *Urban Forestry & Urban Greening*,

“Local needs and preferences might be important factors to consider in playground planning and management. These cannot be determined by quantitative methods alone, but require a qualitative approach or user participation.” (Jansson & Persson, 2010, p.40)

The SROI study, of which I was a part, is an indicator of the local municipality’s current effort to address this need for more research and public feedback in order to reinvent public space with one eye on enhancing the ‘social value’ and one eye on the dividends that might be gained by investing real-capital towards social-capital. Value, then, becomes a measure of *utility* and of satisfying as much of the public for as little money as possible.

4.5 Cities for People: Critique of Co-creation

Regarding the influence of the various stakeholders and Malmö’s investment, Tove Dannestam in *Stadspolitik i Malmö: Politikens Meningsskapande och Materialitet* (2009) writes,

“politics is about setting priorities and the future prosperity of cities is often framed in terms of entrepreneurial visions. Buzz words and phrases such as ‘*strengthening the brand of the city*’ and ‘*enhancing its competitiveness*’, in order to be an ‘*attractive city*’, are frequently translated into policies by Swedish local governments.” (p.288)

These italicized phrases, along with ‘*innovative*’ and ‘*creative*’ begin popping out of the current discussions of urban-space and policy-making everywhere.

In agreement with Nyzell’s critical view of the cooperative Swedish model, the rather utopian view of co-creating social capital today is also harshly contradicted in *Cities for People*:

“‘social capital’, is also being used ideologically by state institutions, which have co-opted it into a basis for legitimating existing, only weakly participatory forms of urban governance, or for exaggerating the systemic implications of newly introduced forms of citizen participation in municipal affairs (see also Mayer, 2003). Lefebvre (2009 [1966])” (Brenner et al., 2012, p.180)

As Malmö added the amusement park and playground to Folkets Park after the riots of the early 20th century, so too in a discussion of the Harlem riots of the 1930’s in New York, the president of the board of aldermen pointed to the lack of recreational facilities in the predominantly lower-class black area on the north of Central Park. Indeed, of the 255 playgrounds that were built in New York in the 1930’s, only one was built in Harlem. (Rosenzweig & Blackmar, 1992, p.461) The progressivism in urban planning of the day could be interpreted as a reaction to civil unrest and class/race-struggle rather than idealistic co-creation.

As it relates to co-creation of urban parks, Brenner implies that the modernist neo-Olmstedian ideologies are still dominant (that we’ve never been post-Olmstedian). Urban commons may still provide leisure spaces for relief from the workday, but they also function to socialize and consumerize the public. The article goes on to form a critical discussion of the roll of municipal co-creation for the causes of capitalism. “Capitalist cities are not only arenas in which commodification occurs,” according to Brenner (2012), they are “sculpted and continually reorganized in order to enhance the profit-making capacities of capital.” (p.178)

Nyzell and Dannestam both seem to cynically agree with the contention of Brenner (et al) that true democratic control of urban spaces by citizens does not exist but rather, “public investment in urban infrastructure is needed to keep businesses ‘competitive’” for capitalist interests only.” (Brenner et al., 2012, p.182) So, the social return on investment is ultimately aimed at a real capital return on investment.

“Further, several of the entrepreneurial projects have been institutionalized through a technology based on an interplay between formal and informal processes of decision-making and implementation. This technology was necessary in order to generate a power to act, but also to create political legitimacy.” (Dannestam, 2009, p.286)

In the new post-Olmstedian model, decisions on the reinvention of space, investment of social and real capital and discussions of value for individual visitors and for the larger community are categorically politicized and commoditized. Even Stuart Brown, regarding the

benefits of play, notes that play helps in grooming people for the ‘all-important knowledge economy’ citing companies who ranked the hireability of engineers based on the amount of play they engaged in with their hands. (Kadlec, 2009, p.9)

Play and play-scapes have attained a beneficial utilitarian value: results-driven and functional. Rather than being integrated for its own sake into pre-Victorian lives and streets, or confined solely to designated spaces for the purposes of health and community, the playground is now reintegrating work-spaces and vice versa.

It is the context in which I helped conduct the SROI study for the city of Malmö. The knowledge/innovation economy, the municipality and the public are the structures that border urban parks and urban commons as the stakeholders that contend for real and symbolic ownership of the space. What is the future of an urban space like Folkets Park, and its culture, standing in the canyon of government, business and residential housing? How does this affect community participation, symbolic-ownership and play for its own sake?

For policy-makers, value will clearly change along with their changing ideologies towards the public and economic concerns. What are the applicable concepts of leisure time play and social capital’s value in regards to DIY culture in Folkets Park and the post-Olmstedian co-creation of the knowledge economy? Conveniently, creative play-scapes, in this context, also have a *utilitarian* value.

5. Discussion: Stakeholders, Ownership & Place-Attachment

5.1 Play and the Innovation Economy in Malmö

Malmö city and Region Skåne, the province where Malmö is located, are investing heavily in the knowledge economy of innovation and monitoring their investment through the SROI study which I helped conduct. At the same time, innovation-industry giants like Google are also turning the workplace into playgrounds. Tove Dannestam (2009) writes,

“This discourse is getting discursive support from meta-discourses on the ‘knowledge-based economy’ and the ‘knowledge-region’. Materially, it is selected through actors within city government initiating an extensive visionary program, with the purpose of mapping the city’s future. At the same time, city leaders rejected strategies aimed at locating new (traditional) industries in the city and started a process of informal lobbying for the establishment of a college (University) in Malmö.” (p.284)

Indeed, Malmö, Lund and Region Skåne, showcase their investing in innovation and the knowledge economy on their own website, *Skane.se*: “Region Skåne has taken an active role in developing procurement as a tool for promoting innovation.” (Näringsliv Skåne, 2013)

Championing this trend in, *11 Rules for Creating Value in the Social Era*, from the Harvard Business Review, Nilofer Merchant advocates for propagating capital and municipal co-creative partnerships with an eye on the innovation and knowledge economy by “soliciting community investment in an idea so that it can take hold and grow.” (Merchant, 2012)

Examples of the resulting cross-over of leisure, work and creative-play in this co-creation of new types of urban space are abundant. In a recent lecture published by TEDTalks on April 29, 2013 titled “*Got a meeting? Take a Walk*”, and in Wired Magazine, *Kill Your Meeting Room - The Future’s in Walking and Talking*, (2013), Nilofer Merchant suggests conducting smaller business meetings outdoors; while walking your dog, for example.

My client, Sverker Haraldsson of Malmöstad, also talked of the concept of having meetings in an outdoor park setting as an alternative to the normal office conference room: to literally have a conference table and meetings in a public park setting.

In 2014 the city of Malmö and Lund will host an *Innovation Carnival*, as reported by Sydsvenskan on March 4th, 2013. “Den stora innovationskarnevalen som ska hållas i Malmö och Lund nästa år väntas kosta över 10 miljoner kronor – bara för Lunds del.” (Ziegerer, 2013)

The word ‘*Carnival*’ replacing the genteel sounding ‘*Fair*’ or the stodgy ‘*Convention*’ brings an added feel of neotonous play and theatrical festivity.

Continuing in the neotonous spirit of co-creating urban-commons, *Connectors in Malmö*, an NGO based in Malmö, arranged a ‘24 hour Sleep-Over Camp’ May 18-19, 2013, to put stakeholders in bed together (so to speak). The text from their web-brochure reads like an ad for a summer-camp retreat littered with playful references:

“Throughout the 24 Hours, there will be a series of short seminars, inspirational talks, unplugged concerts, cooking sessions, open bars, ping-pong-playing, vinyl-spinning, creative sessions and more.

About us: We run a series of different programmes to encourage citizens to engage both within the local community and further on within the EU.

Connectors Salon promotes the spirit of social entrepreneurship, it also acts as the creative workspace for Connectors Malmö” (connectorsmalmo.com)

Creative play has become more than a simple “pursuit of pleasure beyond the confines of the industrial workplace” (Rosenzweig & Blackmar, 1992, p.459), or a social activity that fosters community and social capital. As well as becoming an investable value by virtue of the social capital it creates, play has also recursively entered the workplace itself and gained the attention of the innovation-based industries which municipal policy-makers are courting. Just as creating a better, more attractive, public space increases a *Social Return on Investment*, creating a more playful creative and attractive workplace will financially increase *capital return on investment*.

Manfred F. R. Kets de Vries, in *Get Back to the Sandbox: Teaching CEO’s how to Play*, (2012) prescribes play for employee morale and productivity. A publication titled “2013 Carpe Diem: Play” by a media industry archive called Corbis, also suggests that companies consider models like that of Google and LEGO who use “games, bright colors, indoor gardens and even giant adult-sized play equipment in an effort to... get creative juices flowing...boost morale, combat absenteeism, encourage increased interaction and communication among employees” (Corbis, p.2)

But is it play? Stuart Brown (2008) says, “if it feels purpose driven, then it is not play.” As play moves into the workplace, what sorts of spaces are being created there? Play in this setting is void of the ritualistic elements one finds in a public urban leisure space and there is

an indisputable *real-ownership* of an office-space despite any attachments paid employees may have. Can a drum circle spontaneously form in the lobby of an office? If all actors in a ritual, including the space itself, dictate the rules and symmetry of deference and demeanor, as per Erving Goffman (1956), and each actor has the potential to profane the sacred aspects of a ritual as per Jon P. Mitchell (2006), then the qualitative differences are clear. Communal performance rituals can never truly transform or fully claim *symbolic-ownership* of an office work space.

5.2 Symbolic Ownership and Place Attachment

For the public, value will change with their sense of place-attachment and symbolic ownership. Organized events which are orchestrated by municipalities, for example, may serve a purpose as entertainment for some that is opposite for others. Bringing in larger crowds changes the meaning and the shape of the park, but it does not necessarily foster social cohesion or trust in the same way that participatory creative play does.

For example, all the focus group participants agreed that any form of advertising or commercial interests should be kept out of Folkets Park. They mentioned that they wished their home town Folkets Park was like Malmö's when they were teenagers, where one could hang-out without having to spend money like in a shopping mall. Yet they still favored the nightclubs in Folkets Park which they frequented, the kebab-stands and the Tivoli, all commercial interests within the park, as well as expressed a desire for a good café to open in the park. (Focus Group, 2012) It seems that it is not the commercialization of the space *per se* that is objectionable, but rather the loss of symbolic-ownership that is inherent in malls vs. parks.

Similarly, during the transformation of Bryant Park in New York from the brink of disuse in the 1970's to an upscale urban green space of today, the rationale of *inclusion* rather than *exclusion* was employed as a remedy for the extreme crime rate and drug use of the time. Rather than ejecting all undesirables by force, which was tried at first, the idea to attract *desirables* and gentrify the park instead was employed. Though not as overtly and prescriptively employed as Olmsted's rules in Central Park a century before, this neo-Olmstedian campaign in Bryant Park mimicked Olmsted's elitist attempt to socialize the public. Eventually, however, early advocates became critical when the park began to host expensive private events such as the Fashion Week festivals. (Madden, 2010) Real and

symbolic ownership defer to business interests and the value of the park as a source of social cohesion collapses: the currency is destabilized.

Along with the criticism of viewing citizen as consumer, the very concept of ‘desirables’ and ‘undesirables’ in a municipal public-access space like Bryant Park also started to draw dissatisfaction. In apparent agreement, Sofia, a 23 year old resident of Folkets Park’s local neighborhood, volunteered that it was better to have the drunks of Malmö hanging around Folkets Park where, as she said, “*they can be watched.*” (Focus Group, 2012) Interestingly, her view of the culture of her all-inclusive pluralistic Möllevången community meant *taking in* Malmö’s ‘undesirables’ not for the sake of socializing them, but rather to simply assume the burden of monitoring them off of the greater Malmö community and thus de-gentrifying her own neighborhood in the process. If indigents are forcibly ejected from the park, there is no way to predict or control where they will move to in Malmö and which space they will claim.

Rob, a 36 year old resident of the neighborhood, also claimed “*Poshness would bother me*” admitting that he feared he himself was gentrifying the Möllevången neighborhood after buying an apartment there. (Focus Group, 2012) In a truly progressive way, social capital, in their view, is meant to be shared rather than simply used to increase property values.

7. Om Folkets Park inte funnits – vilken park eller plats skulle du gått till?

Pildammsparken Slottsparken Kungsparken Rörslöparken Ribban
 Västra Hamnen Annan plats/park: *Engeströmsparken* Låtit bli

P.S. Vi flyttar om inte Folkets Park finns. DS.

8. Har du under sommaren 2012 besökt Folkets Park av någon av följande anledningar. (Du kan kryssa i flera rutor).

EM i Parken Utomhusbio För att delta i ett kultur- eller föreningsarrangemang utomhus vid/på Stora Scenen Inget av dem

(Strong place-attachment. Survey response: “P.S. We’d move if Folkets Park wasn’t here.” Where to?)

5.3 Plurality and Gentrification

With regards to plurality and co-creation, symbolic-ownership by a local neighborhood, taken to its extreme, can also overtly serve to gentrify, thus creating less pluralistic social capital as value in favor of raising real property-value in complete opposition to the culture of the Folkets Park/Möllevången community. In an extreme example of this in the U.S., some municipalities have begun to build strategically placed *pocket-parks*, often too

small for actual use as a playground, to exploit laws regarding the proximity of housing for sex-offenders to playgrounds. (Lovett, 2013)

The boundaries of these unused parks also expand to encompass the entire neighborhood, but in a quite different way than Folkets Park does in its neighborhood. The transformative power of these parks comes not from a community that plays and trusts together; they are void of ritual. Nor do they assume the burden of monitoring undesirables rather than forcing them into other neighborhoods. Instead, the transformation of space comes through prescriptive municipal laws meant to defend the park space from deviants and undesirables. These laws are deferred to by a community that does not trust or accept this type of risk regardless of the playground's potential usage or value. Relying on wider implied social rules in addition to strict prescribed rules, risk is completely mitigated or deferred to government agencies and trust is suddenly a tenuous commodity.

The community's perceived social capital and property values were threatened and an outpost of civil authority was built with municipal funds. Although these policies are influenced purely in response to public feedback, there is a lack of progressive pluralism. The actual space of these urban commons then goes unclaimed and unused by the public: museumified but without spectators.

5.4 Organized Events, DIY Performance and Place Attachment

Ownership of the space and social capital are reinforced by the investment and reinvestment of a community into itself through performance and the resulting trust it fosters. It is a tenuous symbolic ownership based on place attachment which can be lost and regained by usage. (Francis, M., 1989) Folkets Park must be reclaimed by the drum-circles and string-quartets after an organized event which attracts crowds to the park, like the Allsång I observed, and displaces the locals' activities. Otherwise, the symbolic-ownership by the neighborhood is lost over time.

Paralleling the backlash against organized events in Bryant Park, are recent observations in *Social interactions in urban parks: Stimulating social cohesion?*:

“However, people who live nearby and use the park frequently feel more connected to the park, in the sense that they express their wishes and complaints to local governmental organizations. An example related to this is the fact that they complain

about the pop concerts that are held there, because during these concerts the grass becomes ruined and they cannot access parts of the park. They perceive Goffert Park [Netherlands] as a public space, and feel that limitations in access do not foster its public character. For people who visit this park less often and who do not live nearby, this attachment is not evident.” (Peters et al., 2010, p.98)

Though staged events are enjoyed by a wider public, there were diverging reactions among regulars who felt a sense of symbolic ownership. This was also evident in my focus group. “The city [Emmaboda] tried to put on events, but they failed” (Sofia, Focus Group, 2012) “Yeah, our Folkets Park events didn’t succeed; no one talked about Folkets Park.” (Sara, Focus Group, 2012)

The Folkets Parks in these towns were not embedded into an inner-city neighborhood like it is in Malmö. In these cases, Sara and Sofia also seemed to perceive the organized events as neither relevant nor interesting precisely because they were not spontaneous festivals of local people, ‘*creative people like us,*’ performing freely. The place attachment was therefore weak and symbolic ownership was not supported by repeated ritual local usage.

5.5 Paid Performers: Profaning the Sacred

Further to this, the context of a performance is also integral to its meaning. Spontaneous, DIY theatrical activity on the main street in town, in a museum, in a mall or in an office space could label the performer as a busker, a professional musician or performance artist, or perhaps even a deviant or lunatic. Conversely, a professional performer in Folkets Park who walked off-stage about the lawn performing during the daytime, would upset the symmetry of deference and demeanor and possibly profane the sanctity and the authenticity of the rituals and the space. Regarding “playful profanation,” as Erving Goffman discusses in *Deference and Demeanor* (1956, p.494), the teasing or testing of ritual limits, as street mimes do to spectators: what happens after the paid performance suddenly steps out of character? What does this do to the space? Who profanes who at this point? How do we defer to each other when the pretenses of the ritual were not genuine?

A paid performer cannot be relied upon to be an actual member of the local community and the reflexive transformation of the actors and space is broken. Furthermore, commoditization is not only a profanation of the ritual, but it also has a homogenizing effect, like Disneyland: safe, all uncertainty has been removed, no liminal danger, no *communitas*.

We cannot reliably assume that that the juggler is a member of the local community and we must also conclude that, if he is paid to be here, we can see him perform anywhere. The park loses its *here-ness*.

Paid performances involve the municipality in co-creating the cultural activities of the space to a greater extent. Will this inhibit or discourage spontaneous performances by the regular visitors? When a local juggler or guitarist competes for the sensory landscape with the park authority, we have seen who wins control and ownership of the space. Naturally, the pluralistic use of the space means sharing it with other people even if they do not live nearby. If the atmosphere is not conducive to certain activities, the actors will have to move elsewhere. Just as playing sports in Folkets Park is not enjoyable for either the participants or non-participants and does not take place even when the lawn is empty, so too theatrical-performance as a form of play might dwindle or be forced to find a new home in Malmö to claim space.

If the space is continually owned by spectator events and corporate ‘Carnivals,’ then playing music and dancing, though not *prescriptively* prohibited like Victorian Olmstedianism, will become at least *implicitly* discouraged in Folkets Park. Performances will become purely spectator events: non-participatory and unspontaneous. Thus play would be stripped of its ritual meaning in the park, as it is does in the workplace, and lose its function as a vector of *communitas* and social cohesion.

How this changes the value of the park remains to be calculated depending on the criteria and algorithm of the accountant.

Based on my research, I have included in Appendix A, a list of applicable suggestions for Folkets Park which might further enhance the observed culture and foster greater social capital and community within the neighborhood.

6. Conclusion

Regarding policy-makers and urban planning, in *Future Directions for Research and Design*, Mark Francis (1989) states that,

“The effect of control on public environments raises several issues in need of further empirical study and design exploration. One example of research needed is the study of the role of control in design, management and use of different public-space types.”

“How does the management of urban streets affect residents’ perceived or actual control of streets?” (P.168)

I hope I have begun to address this question by defining one value gained by a community interacting through participatory creative-play such, as the DIY theatrical performances I have described in Folkets Park. This is not to say that other activities and events have no value to a community, but they are qualitatively different. Role-play, such as theatrics, offers the opportunity for participants to break rules and roles in a safe environment. (Goffman, 1956, p.489) It gives community members the opportunity to physically engage with, and thus publicly affirm their association with, their community. The sensory cues and the spectacle of bringing one’s inside outside and create trust within a festive and inviting atmosphere.

Also, according to Jon P. Mitchell, the transformation of space by these performance rituals “endures beyond the performance itself.” (2006, p.394) However, performance rituals must be repeated or the space will be co-opted again and symbolic-ownership or control will be lost. The example he uses, military and paramilitary parades, are a way to claim space with the symbolic violence of *martial*-control. But, the physical routes of the parades in his example are subsequently marked with ‘triumphal’ arches: *permanent* physical reminders of the conquest of space. (Mitchell, 2006, p.396) The smell of a Christmas tree fades; political-rally posters get torn down; debris gets swept up after a street carnival: without these markers, space will be co-opted again.

The enjoyment and stress relief of play serve as their own rewards. Thus, these rituals are repeated more often thereby giving the whole community ongoing ownership of the space, greater place-attachment, more trust and social capital. The loop between trust and social capital becomes self-perpetuating and *value* then becomes a question only of which stakeholder is controlling its definition and the standard by which they are measuring it.

The history of urban planning and policy-making reveals ever-changing attitudes toward the public. As the production of urban spaces responds to the influences of economic and public needs, the struggle for control of the meaning of urban commons balances between these changing ideologies, changing economies and the public. The sharing of public space creates an inherent tension for real and symbolic ownership and place-attachment. Pluralistic co-creation and striving for a high Social Return on Investment value categorically entails drawing as many people as possible for as little money as possible. What does this mean for the micro-social?

The focus group felt that it was hard to tell *who was who* at other parks. “The park and Möllan depend upon each other,” claimed Sophia. “Today, people talk about mötesplats; trying to plan for those natural feeling places in the city. But it’s hard because it costs a lot and you have to spend money to go there.” Sara offered, “if you built a new one [Folkets Park] it wouldn’t have the history.”

Their association with the park is centered on communal interaction with her neighborhood and its history of ‘*creative people like us*.’ Going elsewhere for recreation would be dependent upon a specific plan of activity like jogging, for example. “If I want to go for a run, I go to Pildammspark; if I want to relax, I go to Folkets Park.” Similarly, Kasia felt, “you don’t have to plan too much, you can just go here.” (Focus Group, 2012)

There is an implication that if those other parks’ cultures invaded Folkets Park, the same problem would then apply here and no one would be able to tell *who is who*. Folkets Park would lose its ‘*natural feeling*’, its simultaneous spontaneity and sense of familiarity come from the *communitas* of ritual and performance.

As we have seen, small groups enacting rituals of DIY theatrical performance rely on sensorial markers and cues to invite participants and to claim space in the sensorial landscape of the park. These sensorial elements cannot compete with public address systems and invading throngs of outsiders co-opting the lawn. It is in this way that the rituals create community and place attachment and create an atmosphere or *here-ness*.

What is the future of an urban park, like Folkets Park, with its culture of DIY theatrical performance in the canyon of municipal offices, public housing and capital? Speaking hyperbolically, could the park become a *museumified Olmstedian* urban space of spectators who look but don’t touch, or a *mallified neo-Olmstedian* space where value is determined by municipal partnership with economic interests and the public lose real and symbolic

ownership, or a *co-created post-Olmstedian* space where the relativism of public opinion can drastically change the pluralistic and cooperative culture of public commons? These ideologies and influences are not static and because value is relative to the users and stakeholders, it changes over time.

I interviewed a retired couple in their 70's who live by Hyllie, an outer neighborhood of Malmö. (Survey notes, 2012-08-03) They seldom come into Malmö center anymore, but they came that day for the organized Allsång sing-along event. They came early to get good seats close to the professional performers on stage and to become part of the participatory show, but they sat facing the empty stage while they waited with their backs towards the local playful performances in the park behind them. In addition to commenting on the poor condition of the grass at Folkets Park, the couple claimed that "Scenen ser väldigt tråkigt ut." "Malmö bör göra lite mera."

"Det var bättre förr."

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8. Footnotes

¹ Carrying out an SROI analysis involves six stages:

1 Establishing scope and identifying key stakeholders.

It is important to have clear boundaries about what your SROI analysis will cover, who will be involved in the process and how.

2 Mapping outcomes.

Through engaging with your stakeholders you will develop an impact map, or theory of change, which shows the relationship between inputs, outputs and outcomes.

3 Evidencing outcomes and giving them a value.

This stage involves finding data to show whether outcomes have happened and then valuing them.

4 Establishing impact.

Having collected evidence on outcomes and monetised them, those aspects of change that would have happened anyway or are a result of other factors are eliminated from consideration.

5 Calculating the SROI.

This stage involves adding up all the benefits, subtracting any negatives and comparing the result to the investment. This is also where the sensitivity of the results can be tested.

6 Reporting, using and embedding.

Easily forgotten, this vital last step involves sharing findings with stakeholders and responding to them, embedding good outcomes processes and verification of the report.” (The SROI Network, p.9)

²The National Institute for Play describes seven play types [*keywords highlighted by me*]:

1. Attunement, which establishes a **connection**, such as between newborn and mother.
2. Body, in which an infant explores the ways in which his or her **body works and interacts** with the world, such as making funny sounds or discovering what happens in a fall.
3. **Object**, such as playing with toys, banging pots and pans, handling physical things in ways that use curiosity.
4. **Social**, play which involves others in activities such as tumbling, making faces, and building connections with another child or group of children.

5. **Imaginative** (also called "**pretend**" or "fantasy"), in which a child invents **scenarios** from his or her imagination and **acts** within them as a form of play, such as princess or pirate play.
6. Narrative (or **storytelling**), the play of learning and language that develops intellect, such as a parent reading aloud to a child, or a child retelling the story in his or her own words.
7. **Transformative** (or **integrative**), by which one plays with imagination to **transcend** what is known in the current state, to create a higher state. For example, a person might **experiment** to find a new way to use a musical instrument, thereby taking that form of music to a higher plane; or, as Einstein was known to do, a person might wonder about things which are not yet known and play with unproven ideas as a bridge to the discovery of **new knowledge**.

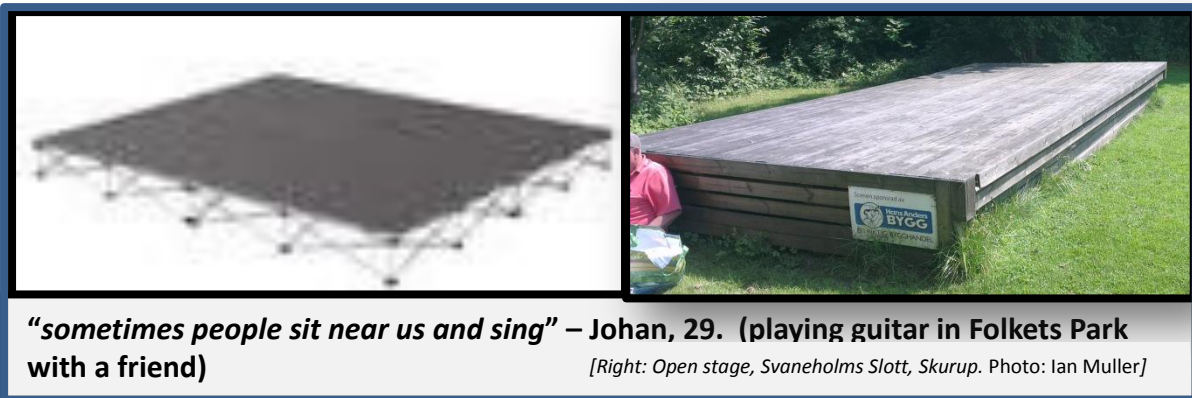
(http://www.nifplay.org/science_intro.html)

Appendix A: Applied Suggestions

To be *applicable*, cultural analysis must also be practical or at least practicable. Based on the surveys and the analysis of my own field research, I have appended a few simple suggestions to enhance the atmosphere of DIY performance as creative play, symbolic ownership and place attachment for the community.

1. Small stages for open public access.

Set a few small stages, the size of drum-risers (3-4 square meters; less than 50cm high, no roof or electricity) in key areas for public access. Even if they are not being used all the time, they are physical reminders, spatial markers of symbolic-ownership, and an invitation for park visitors to entertain each other. If the park is a ‘human gallery’, having open stages rather than hiring professionals exclusively will encourage visitors to bring their sacred inside outside and tempt them to perform for each other. Of the surveys I collected (2012), 70% of respondents frequented the club Debaser and 64% frequented the Cuba Café. The ‘value’ of the park in these cases is clear to these clubs that operate on its grounds and they might be persuaded to donate materials which they already have.



2. 'C'-shaped Park Benches

Standard straight benches which can be found in every park are good for spectating or for two people to sit and talk, but for more than two people it is almost impossible for them to see each other and converse naturally as a group. In certain spots near the lawn, the benches from the summer stage get dragged around routinely and the park workers have to put them back in place the next morning. In the playground, particularly, 'C' shaped benches could help parents network with each other and facilitate conversations between larger groups of people.



Although privacy is often welcome, people also like to sit in groups and pull picnic tables and benches together.



C-shaped bench-group near Västrahamn, Malmö

3. Real Knowledge: Combine the animal attractions with a community garden

The Terrarium could be moved to the south end of the park in the large unused space between the horse riding club and the Ark petting zoo. With the addition of a community garden, the support of local schools, especially the one just across the street, can be enlisted to use it as an educational feature. Community gardens create strong symbolic ownership and place attachment.

4. Real Co-creation and Symbolic Ownership

Help form a permanent *Friends of Folkets Park* community group rather than quick ‘speed-date’ style brain-storming sessions or weekend sleep-over camps with the public. Volunteered man-hours can be calculated as monetary ‘value’ with regards to SROI. The question “How much is the park worth to you?” becomes tangible to the public and gives a context for survey respondents rather than hypothetical amounts of SEK. The neighborhood retains strong symbolic ownership of the park and place-attachment. (Francis, M., 1989, p.167)

Encourage all employees of the park, including vendors and amusement-park workers, to become familiar with each other. They are as much a part of the park community as the people who live nearby. In *Urban Forestry & Urban Greening*, regarding playground planning and management, it was noted that, when it came to public preferences, “The park workers were able to estimate use quite accurately according to results from interviews, questionnaires and observations.” (Jansson & Persson, 2010, p. 37)

5. Outdoor Business Meetings

Folkets Park can become rather crowded and raucous at times. A conference table of men in suits in the middle of the park might be comical to see, but it might be too disruptive an atmosphere for business meetings. As per Sverker Haraldsson and Nilofer Merchant’s idea for outdoor meetings, Kungsparken/Slottspark might be better suited for a trial-run of this idea by virtue of its location. The conjoined parks are more central to Malmö’s downtown offices and the main city library has free wi-fi. There are long trails that include pockets of quiet areas. Set medium-sized standing-height tables along the trails where walking-meetings can stop and rest, take notes, open electronic devices, put down their coffee etc. It will save companies the cost of building indoor playgrounds like Google and Lego, it will foster engagement with the community and the health benefits might incur interest and support from health and insurance departments.