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Suburbs & Interstices

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EDITORIAL

The suburb is usually theorised from the perspective of urban centre/periphery relationships. What happens if we observe it from the perspective of the urban interstice, or in-between space?

This is the type of exercise attempted by the contributors to this issue. Traditionally, in urban planning the suburb has been conceived of as something that is hierarchically subordinated to the city (a kind of contentious space between the city and the countryside). From this perspective, a basic distinction between centrality and peripherality seems to inform the very notion of suburb. On the contrary, the notion of “interstice” suspends such a distinction as well as the hierarchy that is attached to it, and creates a space for the emergence of possible alternative hierarchies. The interstice invites us to push our gaze “in the middle of things”. By doing so, such dislocation inherently spurs a wider interrogation about what generates the value that can be attached to a certain place.

Once we put in parenthesis the peripheral location of suburbs, new territorial dimensions begin to become visible. This issue collects texts that explore suburbs and suburban life (suburbanism) from the perspective of spatial and social interstices. Indeed, suburbs seem to be a rich and fertile field for investigations into different kinds of interstitial production. We are interested in exploring the social life of such suburban interstices, as well as understanding how interstices are always related to different territorial and social “investments” in terms of not only economy, but also affects and shared meaning.

Modernistic suburbs are usually characterised by vague or loose spaces where association patterns remain under-determined. An unclear sense of belonging is often attributed to (or charged against) suburbs and in-between spaces, including for instance pathways,

semi-desert greenery, etc. The blank territories that are seen on the urban fringe might at first sight appear as underinvested of meaning (e.g., “dormitory ghost towns”), but are actually often full of hidden practices. The point is that, to spot these practices, we might just need to attend various populations (children, youngsters, elderly people, etc.) that are not foremostly in the planner’s mind or under the researcher’s eye.

At another level of scale, suburbs are often contradistinguished by clear and constantly reconfirmed borders between the suburb itself and its surroundings. It is almost a stereotype that you reach the suburb by car, or in any case that the suburb is severed from the city by dead or ghostly in-between spaces, such as decayed brownfields, terrain vagues, large mobility infrastructures, etc.

The borders of suburbs are as much external as they are internal, given that, within the suburb itself, different areas are juxtaposed to each other, distinguished, and marked out. In this sense, we find an overinvestment of meaning into borders. As a whole, suburbs have thus been seen as venues of contradictory investments of meaning, associated with city commuters as well as village life, rural recreation as well as urban services.

We open this issue with an essay by Cristian Silva that provides a useful literature review and discussion of existing approaches to the study of urban sprawl. Silva argues in favour of the analytical notion of interstice over other spatial metaphors. His exploration of the suburban geographies of Santiago de Chile favours an interstitial approach to understand the unbuilt areas that surround the city which the author suggests are rich in invisible on-going processes of spatial production.

In the following contribution, Alan Walks proposes to uncouple the notion of “suburbanism” from the actual physical suburbs. He contends

that any given local place is crossed by a tension between urbanism and suburbanism. For Walks, suburbs are not condemned to being just suburban; instead, they can be appreciated as a “field of possibilities” that remains open-ended and undetermined. The reason is that suburban areas produce physical interstices that are invisible and can hardly be as controlled, policed and surveilled as urban centres. “It is in the peripheries — Walks concludes — that political and social mobilizations are, and will be, most contested, and where they will have the most importance for the kinds of political ruptures that will only become visible when, later on, they have evolved to the point of seeking to control the centre.”

The essay by Fredrik Torisson is more philosophical in approach. The author provides a historical reconstruction of the case of the Hyllie suburban development in the periphery of Malmö, Sweden. His elaboration on the “spectrality” of the suburb connects urban studies to Derrida and utopian literature, with the aim of apprehending the “lingering influence of futures that never came to materialise” upon suburban reality. Were such hi-tech dreams not implemented for technical difficulties, or were they purposefully designed to never actually materialise? This is the driving question. Working on this point, Torisson attributes to the never-realised megaprojects for Hyllie a kind of “virtual agency” that persists even through absence.

Not quite far away, in the periphery of the neighbouring city of Lund, a different suburban situation is at stake. As reported by Sandra Kopljär, in the outskirts of Lund, the investment in hi-tech infrastructures — namely, two EU-sponsored large scale research facilities known as ESS (European Spallation Source) and a planned extensive development of the city — is about to reconfigure centre-periphery relations. What really matters in this case is scale, insofar as the new spallation research labs appear to

exist at a different scale from the rest of the city. The clash, Sandra highlights, is one where “a central and abstract situation (scientific research)” is being rooted in a “peripheral location (the suburb), usually associated with blandness and sleepiness”.

The next essay by Alvis Torresin leads us for a stroll in the Arcella neighbourhood in Padua, Italy, through its geography and history. This inner suburb, variously described as a dormitory and student zone, or a middle class enclave challenged by unruly immigration, is vividly (as well as lovingly) depicted by Torresin as a place where all the major challenges of the future city are being tested.

The conclusive essay, co-signed by the two issue editors, focuses on the process of urban fragmentation that is currently affecting many suburban expansions. Drawing from the case of Norra Fälåden, Lund, we suggest that even though a simple relation between the home and the neighbourhood can no longer be taken for granted, the interstitial spaces of the neighbourhood remain important to home-making practices. As neighbourhood life is divided into subareas and sub-fields of interest, questions about public space infrastructure and public space dependency come to the fore as two increasingly important and critical issues for future planning.

Taken together, the texts of this issue bring up a series of new perspective on the suburb, and more importantly, they highlight the suburb as an interstice, i.e. a place of unsettledness and a place where new beginnings and trends of the urban landscape are born. The suburb can no longer be seen as a dormant place at the margin of the town. Rather, it is a place of transformation in the middle of things, a place where to find and identify the future problems of urban life and planning.

MK & AMB



The Interstitial Spaces of Urban Sprawl

Understanding the Components of the Unbuilt Suburban Geography of Santiago de Chile

Cristian Silva

Debates on urban sprawl remain strongly focused on the built-up space as main object of study. Nevertheless, undeveloped lands and open tracts are relevant for understanding land fragmentation, suburbanisation and transformation of fringe/belt areas of city-regions (Galster et al. 2001; Northam, 1971). They describe a large geography of interstices that have not been acknowledged in the planning literature. Planning policies regard them as just gaps in the urban fabric – somehow negative or inert – or as abandoned spaces that should eventually be urbanised. In this paper, I introduce a framework for understanding urban sprawl from its non-urban elements – the interstices – starting from a critical revision of current approaches used to describe these spaces in cities. I discuss interstices and their implications based on the case of Santiago de Chile. It reinforces the idea that urban sprawl is equally composed of built-up areas and interstices that play an active role in transformation of city-regions.

Critical antecedents to define Interstitiality

There is a varied range of terms for understanding undeveloped areas of cities. However, they do not provide a unified framework for the varied spectrum that compose the unbuilt suburban geography, although contribute in defining suburban interstitiality. Sieverts (2003), for instance, proposed the idea of ‘in-between’ city (*Zwischenstadt*) to describe the territory between the consolidated city and the open countryside. His focus is on the whole scope in which extended suburbanisation is deployed. Another approach is the ‘undeveloped space’. Although highly debatable, ‘undeveloped’ or ‘undevelopable space’ describes physical constraints that impede urbanisation, affecting the degree of sprawl (Theobald, 2001; Wolman et al., 2005). Some farmlands, hills and some industrial plots fit into these categories. The term ‘vacant lands’ arises in the early 1970s to describe outcomes of industrial obsolescence, often reclaimed for regeneration or infilling policies (Ige and Atanda, 2013; Foo et al., 2013; Northam, 1971). It often illustrates a contrast between productive pasts and current decay and thus, their condition as ‘brownfields’ or simply abandoned industrial facilities (Pagano and Bowman, 2000). ‘Open spaces’ are also discussed as gaps in the urban fabric but with a positive connotation in terms of their social, environmental and economic benefits. Environmentally speaking, they help in reducing impacts of natural disasters (Barkasi, et al., 2012), emerge as reservoir for future developments (Graham, 2000) or provide specific ‘features’ to places (Kurz and Baudains, 2010).

The notion of ‘wildscapes’ has also appeared to describe undeveloped areas that support some expressions of wildlife – flora and fauna – including built-up spaces such as abandoned buildings, ruins or unattended facilities. It illustrates any space where city’s forces of control have not been placed, where spontaneous activities and uses not determined by formal plans can flourish (Jorgensen and Keenan, 2012). Similarly, ‘wastelands’ are abandoned, marginalised and forgotten

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spaces characterised by exuberant flora and fauna with aesthetics and ecological benefits. Alluding to them, Gandy (2013) developed the term 'marginalia' to describe wastelands in cities like London, Berlin and Montreal that offer strong sensorial stimulation based on their aesthetics, spatial flexibility, spontaneity and some hints of history. Reinforcing the environmental perspective, 'non-urbanised-areas' (NUAS) emerges to describe undeveloped lands characterised by ecological attributes and nature. It highlights ecological contents — including agricultural functions and any kind of green infrastructure — recognised by biochemical and socioeconomic properties that support narratives

of sustainable development and ecological modernization (La Greca *et al.*, 2011). NUAS are gears of ecosystem services, preserved at different levels (Saunders, 2011).

Similarly, the 'drosscape' coined by Berger (2006) refers to wasted

landscapes within urbanised areas defined by heavy infrastructure or as by-products of uncontrolled urban sprawl. These infrastructural spaces are leftovers of economic declines and remain outside regulations and institutional norms. They interrupt the continuity of the urban fabric and their reversion depends on different political and economic constraints (Silva, 2017). The 'interfragmentary space' coined by Vidal (1999; 2000) refers to any undeveloped space within the city. It derives from Vidal's definition of cities as composed by 'fragments' that suppose the presence of 'interfragmentary spaces' as a logical outcome (Vidal, 2002). Similarly, De Solá-Morales (2002) used 'terrain vague' to describe spaces that are 'vague' in the sense of empty, abandoned or without activities or functions. They appear as a 'form of absence', i.e. without fixed limits or future destinations irrespective of previous occupation.

Defining The Interstitial Space Of Urban Sprawl

Although the aforementioned approaches describe undeveloped, less-developed, empty, marginalised or inert urban spaces, they appear to be specific, partial or simply do not provide a framework for the whole spectrum of undeveloped lands that are part of the sprawling urban geography. In this sense, the term 'interstitial space' emerges as more, generic, transversal, conceptually flexible as it is widely used in different fields of academic inquiry such as biology, physics, arts, sociology, religion and information sciences *inter alia*. Etymologically, there is a consensus that 'interstitial' refers to a space, a physical entity or an interval of time between two or more elements or events. It is intrinsically an 'in-between' condition and thus, supposes an inevitable presence of surroundings — or at least boundaries — that confine its unitary nature.

In planning, it is accidentally invoked to describe by-products of urban sprawl and opportunities for further urbanisation. Mohammadi *et al.* (2012: 87), for instance, assert that: 'Sprawl leaves behind numerous interstices that may be used for other functions such as agricultural land or for infilling policies. . .'. Gallent and Shaw (2007) explain how rural-urban fringes attracts the attention of policy makers and open opportunities to manage inherent complexities of urban 'interstitial landscapes'. What is clear is that the 'interstitial space' emerges as an element of the suburban expansion with potential to become something else. From an urban design perspective, Sousa Matos (2009) understands that 'interstitial spaces' should be reclaimed for new developments, functions and activities and thus, integrated to the urban fabric.

At smaller scale, the term has been used to describe different sorts of forgotten, derelict, informal or marginalised spaces that serve as scenarios for social reactions. From an architectonic point of view, for instance, Vidal (2002) uses the term to describe spaces delimited by buildings, walls and others

The 'interstitial space' emerges as an element of the suburban expansion with potential to become something else

where alternative architectonic functions can be placed. Similarly, Steele and Keys (2015) identify these spaces as scenarios for alternative everyday housing practices. For them, the 'interstitial space' is uninhabitable, undefined, uncertain but also flexible to host spontaneous activities. At an urban scale, Gandy (2011) uses the concept 'interstitial place' to describe unregulated spaces characterised by the presence of nature. These places have valuable information about local trees, grass, stones, meadows, and others transferable among citizens. The 'interstices' can establish a network of unregulated spaces where both ecological and socio-cultural diversity flourish. In particular, Jorgensen and Tylecote (2007) coined the term 'interstitial wilderness' to reinforce contributions to multiple human ecologies.

From a sociological viewpoint, Brighenti (2013) highlights the social relevance of interstices that host alternative reactions against institutional establishments or societal anomalies. The author remarks that 'interstices' are gaps within consolidated institutional frameworks and spaces where excluded individuals can be hosted. It is also understood as a disorganised environment that does not belong to official private/public realm – cracks in the structure of social organisation. Similarly, Dovey (2012) describes the 'spatial interstice' as scenarios for informal practices supported by informal morphologies that affect the image of the formal urban space. Shaw and Hudson (2009) refer to 'interstitial spaces' for artistic expressions that are also reacting against formal controls. They highlight the creative ways in which 'interstitial spaces' are occupied and how they challenge the idea of 'place-making' and social order (Shaw and Hudson, 2009). Tonnelat (2008) defines 'urban interstices' as 'zones of transition' where immigrants learn about local culture and adaptation to the mainstream society before moving to permanent residences: this takes place in various residual spaces between industrial facilities, roads, canals and poor tenements occupied by workers. Aside from understanding interstitial spaces as sorts of derelict or inert lands, they are intrinsically relevant as they indeed determine the 'sprawl index' (Galster *et al.* 2001), contribute to a series of still unexplored ecosystem services (Sandström, 2002; La Greca *et al.*, 2011), and affect the suburban performance in both positive and negative ways (Meyer-Cech and Seher, 2013; Thomas and Littlewood 2010).

Understandings Santiago's Suburban Interstices

Santiago de Chile shares common patterns of urban sprawl with most Latin American cities (Inostroza *et al.*, 2013; Ducci and Gonzalez, 2006). It is characterised by a relatively homogenous residential landscape, but diversified by a range of interstitial spaces that includes agricultural lands, industrial, infrastructural, brownfields, landfills, public spaces, natural restrictions, military facilities, speculation lands and conurbation zones, that depict a varied, [complex and multifaceted suburban context](#). Many of them were originally outer areas but increasingly embraced by the urban expansion, now well located nearby transport infrastructure, energy supply, services and consumption power. Some interstitial spaces still keep original functions although not fully efficient or under pressure for land-use changes. Because of their multiple origins, functions, spatial, social and environmental characteristics, [the interstitial spaces of Santiago's sprawl](#) are perceived and understood in multiple ways:

Wasted and 'out of the market' lands. For policy makers and from an economic perspective, Santiago's interstices are areas 'out of the market'. Their condition as empty, derelict, inert is associated with lack of financial tools to integrate them to the urban fabric. Politicians and central authorities tend to see them as 'wasted lands' that cannot support further developments (Rodríguez and Winchester, 2001). Developers also identify as 'interstices' those areas currently densified and integrated to the urban fabric (good land-capacity or proximity to high-quality transport infrastructure) but not yet properly (re-)densified.

Interstices as 'borderlands'. Santiago's interstitial spaces are also perceived as disruptions of the urban fabric, specifically as internal borders between urbanised areas. Practitioners and policy-makers

signalise them as 'urban moles', 'barriers' or simply 'borders' that make the city less efficient and more segregated. They are exemplified by empty lands, heavy infrastructures (such as motorways or buffers of security), or industrial facilities disintegrated from surroundings. They also refer to closed spaces – such as military facilities or rural lands with restricted access – recognised as depressed, with clear signs of decay and in tense coexistences with surroundings.

Reservoirs and opportunities. To local planners, developers and scholars, suburban interstices appear as opportunities to host services and improve urban standards. They could change trends defined by housing needs and concentration of poverty, diversifying socially homogeneous environments. They are conceived as reservoirs of space for provision of workplaces and services.

Uncertainty and contradiction. Although not without potentials, suburban interstices located within low-income surroundings are perceived as spaces of uncertainty and contradiction, as they are stagnated due to the lack of public investment or consumption power to attract new population and services. They remain undeveloped, informally occupied, unconsolidated, marginalised or simply ignored. Aside from their potential as informal venues, neighbours describe them as *potreros* [paddock]. In Chile, this is a pejorative term for areas without value.

Pollution and social insecurity. Residents also link the interstices with insecurity and environmental degradation. Noise, dust, heavy traffic, darkness, broken and dirty streets, lack of fences and security, and long periods of inactivity are typical. Wild animals and plagues such as rats, wild dogs and carrion birds also populate these areas. The stench of dead animals, stagnant waters and rotten materials define an overall landscape of marginality and insecurity. Lack of electricity, for instance, contributes to crime during the nighttime, and transforms these spaces into informal shelters for drug traffic and prostitution.

Healthy spaces. Yet, to many scholars and consultants, suburban interstices are 'healthy spaces' since they potentially act as green infrastructures. In this vein, agricultural interstices play a key role in reinforcing local economies. These are particularly located in the southern metropolitan area, recognised as the most fertile (ODEPA, 2012; SINIA, 2012), such as La Platina (Ministry of Agriculture), Campus Antumapu (Universidad de Chile), Tocornal and Concha y Toro vineyard, and the 'Huertos Obreros y Familiares' [Workers and Familial Orchards], all recognised as 'foodscapes' by NGOs, FAO and social organisations. They are clear expressions of 'urban agriculture' and cultural heritage related to historical practices in social housing (Catalán, Fernandez and Olea, 2013; Roubelat and Armijo, 2012).

Spaces of isolation. Policy makers mostly regards suburban interstices of Santiago as places isolated from the city. They are privileged areas connected to services and transport, but also calm atmospheres for stress relief, social encounters, and contact with nature. However, isolation does not impede them from offering amenities for sporting practices, children's playgrounds and alternative leisure: for instance, La Platina site is described by residents as a piece of countryside that allows the experience of 'rurality' within the city.

Conclusions

Interstitial spaces offer an alternative view of urban sprawl from its unbuilt geography, and highlight the interdisciplinary nature of suburbanisation beyond the 'urban'. However, the understanding on suburban interstitiality is varied and supported by diverse dimensions such as the political, functional, spatial, social, economic and the environmental. Interstitial spaces are multifaceted elements that disclose different definitions based on contextual, economic, cultural and technical understandings.

Urban sprawl is composed by active elements – both built-up areas and interstitial spaces – that trace a suburban territory in its own right. Alternative approaches in planning are called forth in order to provide a wider comprehension of the contemporary dimensions of urban sprawl.

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Suburbs and Suburbanisms Socio-Spatial Technologies and Radically-Open Fields of Possibilities

Alan Walks

There is still far to go in understanding the political implications of the suburbs — and suburbanisms — as socio-political interstices within a rapidly urbanizing planet. This article seeks to further this objective by putting into conversation the approaches of two key thinkers and applying them to a conceptual analyses of differential (sub)urbanity: Michel Foucault and Henri Lefebvre. Doing so leads to some productive tensions and insights. While suburbanisms are necessarily part-and-parcel of the urban, indeed, formed through the implosion-explosion of the urban in the context of the incline toward planetary urbanization, there is value in conceptualizing various urbanisms and suburbanisms in terms of socio-spatial technologies of citizenship for producing certain kinds of obedient and responsible citizen-subjects. With multiple forms and combinations of suburbanism, this means multiple kinds of citizen-subjectivities and dispositions, including *inter alia* those which internalize neoliberal market values, those that internalize inclusionary and diverse domesticities or monofunctionalities, but also those that internalize exclusionary discourses and practices. The inherent geographies of centres and peripheries have importance for the kinds of power that might be effective in influencing citizen-subjectivities and the abilities of states and other actors to police or otherwise provide surveillance in such spaces. In turn, the kinds of socio-political movements that arise in each place are subject to different logics of social control, surveillance and ultimately mobilization. The overlap between the discursive logics embedded within suburbanisms as socio-spatial technologies and the logics of social control derived from centrality and peripherality leads to a virtually infinite set of socio-spatial-political combinations, rendering the 'suburbs' as rich with radically-open fields of political possibilities, but also dangers.

Suburbs and Suburbanisms

Before delving into the analysis, it is important to first define the key concepts. Definitions matter, perhaps even more-so when considering concepts like 'the suburbs', as what constitutes the object of inquiry for one study might be completely different in another. In my own work, and in the work of many involved in the international multi-year global suburbanisms research project (Keil 2013 and others), the preference is to identify different kinds of suburbanisms that then perform certain kinds of work or fulfil certain functions, rather than reify a concept like 'the suburbs'. The idea of what constitutes 'the suburbs' in any given metropolitan region is always socially constructed and continuously evolving (indeed both figuratively and literally, always *under* construction), on behalf of various local agents (residents, politicians, various newsmedia, developers, etc). Thus, the suburbs of one city may hold a completely different meaning and identity for local residents than in others, and what constitutes the borders of such suburbs likewise may be defined and understood very differently, often also in state of flux. For the purposes of this paper, I will refer to 'the suburbs' as an as-yet undefined and

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unidentified place which exists by virtue of its conceptual distinction from its similarly amorphous and always-under-construction other, the 'city'. By virtue of 'the city' being, in Lefebvrian terms, the *centre*, 'the suburbs' are foremost conceptually defined here as the *periphery*, in both a physical and social/political sense. But what they are peripheral to, and how that peripherality takes shape, is an empirical question in each given place.

In contrast, I define a set of dimensions that define the conceptual boundaries of different kinds of suburbanisms that perform certain functions with metropolitan space. Drawing on Henri Lefebvre's dialectical method of implosion-explosion, I conceptually extrapolate the implications of Lefebvre's definition of the urban as 'centrality' into a series of six dimensions (Walks 2013). In each case, these dimensions inherently include urbanism and suburbanism in dialectical tension. That is, suburbanism is understood as an inherent component of the broader force of the urban; inextricable yet conceptually discrete, it is the ever-present anti-thesis to the urban that always exists in productive tension with it, never alone and never escapable. Unlike the 'rural', which is defined as outside the experience of the urban (thus, when the urban colonizes the rural, it no longer remains rural), suburbanisms are created via the inherent internal tendencies within the urban experience, always a part of the urban, Lefebvre's heterotopies to the urban's isotopies (Lefebvre, 2003, orig. 1970, 128). Hence each dimension constitutes a continuum of 'urbanism-suburbanism'. Always undergoing processes of construction, I consider such dimensions in terms of flows – that is, each form of urbanism-suburbanism flows at various speeds and in varying levels through different places, and it is partially through such flows that the functions and identities of such places shift over time (Walks 2013).

Lefebvre's first order thesis of the urban is that of centrality, and from this a first-order dimension of centrality-peripherality emerges. This dimension, and each other dimension, has both social and physical elements: centrality represents both agglomeration (of things, people, jobs, opportunities, functions, etc) and social power (the social ability to control, influence, define, exclude, educate, etc). Thus, the two first-order dimensions of urbanism-suburbanism I label in terms of 'centrality-agglomeration' and 'centrality-power', with the resulting ideal-type suburbanisms within this dimension reflecting dispersion, subordination, marginalization, dependency, etc (Walks 2013). The rupture of centrality-peripherality produces, in turn, a second-order dimension defined in terms of difference. This, again, has both physical and social elements, producing two new dimensions which I label 'difference-juxtaposition' (the placing and juxtaposing of very different things together in the same space producing connectivity and complexity, versus an ideal-type suburbanism of simplicity, separation, fragmentation, compartmentalization) and 'difference-social diversity' (contrasting the encounter, plurality, and social connectivity of urbanism with a conceptual suburbanism of segregation, avoidance, division and isolation). Finally, extrapolating further Lefebvre's dialectical method produces a third-order set of dimensions based on functionality. I label these in terms of a physical 'functionality-mobility' (an urbanism defined in terms of choice, multi-functionality, interdependence, and fluidity, against an ideal-type suburbanism of autonomy, singularity, and dependence) and 'functionality-domesticity' (which reflects a social functionalism contrasting an urbanism of publicism, exteriority, and politics against an ideal-type suburbanism of interiority, privatism, and domesticity) (see Walks 2013, for more explanation).

It is important to point out that such dimensions, and indeed each of the concepts labelled here as forms of suburbanism, exist conceptually outside places known as 'suburbs'. That is, any given place, even one locally constructed as a suburb, could be found anywhere on the continua of each of these dimensions, and indeed, might functionally exhibit more traits here associated with an ideal-type urbanism than suburbanism. Or, a given place might reveal features that suggest stronger tendencies toward suburbanism on one dimension, but stronger tendencies to urbanism on another. Each of these six dimensions is independent of the others, leading to an infinity of possible combinations of

urbanism-suburbanism for any given place. Furthermore, with the evolution that every place experiences, and with each dimension flowing continuously through places in differing levels and speeds, every place is always experiencing shifting forms, levels, and combinations of these six dimensions of urbanism-suburbanism.

Suburbanisms as Socio-Spatial Technologies

For Foucault (1977, 1979, 1991) social technologies are those that manage behaviour and steer (problematize) bio-political questions in ways that circumscribe or expose the possibilities for

action. They produce certain kinds of subjectivities that facilitate (or resist) acceptance and internalization of dominant expectations for the proper conduct of individuals and understandings of citizenship. Foucault's concept of disciplinary power,

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in which power is simultaneously performed by both those subjecting and subjected to authority, is at the centre of the Panopticon effect in which individuals supposing they are under surveillance will self-monitor their conduct and self-develop their identities and in so doing reproduce the obedience to established norms necessary for their behaviour to be managed (Heyes, 2011). According to Dean (1999, 18) "we govern others and ourselves according to what we take to be true about who we are, what aspects of our existence should be worked upon, how, with what means and to what ends" (cited in Leibetseder 2011, 16). Under a governmentality perspective, social technologies involve "new techniques to make society governable, new mode[s] of thought, support system[s] for ordered method[s] of government, self-conduct" (Leibetseder 2011, 18).

While Foucault focussed on specific institutions like the prison, the factory, the hospital, the military, the school, and the kinds of disciplinary power that infuse them, Deleuze (1995) has argued for a shift from these more enclosed institutional forms to the emergence of more general "control societies" in which individuals throughout everyday life and work must be constantly improving themselves, and furthermore, must want to improve themselves – must internalize the act of improvement and responsibility as part of their own identity and conformity with social expectations. Of course, what counts as 'improvement' or 'responsibility' is necessarily socially and collectively defined and monitored in relation to the social and physical environments within which individuals find themselves. While certain social technologies (such as bureaucratic decision-making, risk calculation techniques, educational assessment practices, work scheduling systems, etc) involve internalization of codes and standards that cross various boundaries, many others – including the institutions studied by Foucault – might better be labelled socio-spatial technologies. Their essential boundedness and abilities (even mandates) to define space are key attributes of their power to influence individual behaviours and impart social norms. Thus, while it is more common for social technologies to be understood in terms of programs, policies, and partnerships (for instance, Dahlstedt, 2008, discusses how processes for mobilizing citizen initiatives, public-private-third sector partnerships in urban development, and parental involvement in primary schooling, have been marshalled in the service of activating responsible citizens within multi-ethnic suburbs in Sweden), we might also extend the concept to the different kinds of spaces within which responsible citizen subjects are raised, live and work.

The various forms of suburbanism identified above and derived from Lefebvre's work, I posit, can be characterized as socio-spatial technologies of citizenship. Again, such suburbanisms are not places, but instead ideal-type concepts or forces that flow in and through various spaces, and in doing so,

promote, circumscribe, and steer certain kinds of behaviours of those individuals, families, firms and organizations utilizing or identifying with these various spaces. These in turn produces a series of dispositions that reflect, adhere to, and reinforce the social environment within which an individual is located, a set of dispositions Bourdieu (1977) calls “habitus.” This furthermore relates to the kinds of behaviours, bodies, practices and forms of consciousness that are necessarily excluded, demoted or discouraged by certain suburbanisms. The oft-stated phrase “out of sight out of mind”, when applied to the presence of poor or racialized bodies, gets at the effects of segregation begat by exclusionary (low diversity, segregated) suburbanisms. Iris Marion Young (1999) noted how spatial segregation of the poor makes privilege blind to the wealthy “in a double way”: not only does it displace the poor from the spaces of the privileged, making them invisible, but in so doing makes privilege seem “normal”, circumscribing the kinds of political and social action that might be considered when addressing evident inequalities (whether labour legislation, tax policy, job training, etc). Furthermore, it creates the conditions for respective cultural practices between the excluded and privileged populations to diverge, leading to working-class cultures and behaviours that deviate from dominant norms, which only reinforces the justifications for their exclusions on behalf of the privileged. The long-standing divergence between working class cultures and those of more ‘posh’ social groups in the United Kingdom is a case in point (Cannadine 1998). White privilege is buttressed in the same way by racial segregation and exclusion in the United States (US), producing what Wacquant (2008) calls ‘advanced marginality’ among the African-American population. That exclusionary suburbanisms might act as socio-spatial mechanisms (technologies of citizenship) driving social distinctions and their resulting politics is well demonstrated by scholars in the US (eg Massey and Denton 1993; Henderson 2006, in addition to Wacquant 2008, etc).

Similarly, functional suburbanisms defined in terms of singularity and autonomy with respect to mobility might be seen as socio-spatial technologies for circumscribing norms related not only to personal mobility but to larger political orientations toward infrastructure development. A case in point involves the many politicians elected in highly automobile-dependent municipalities in North America based on promises to “stop the war on the car”, including in my home city of Toronto (Walks 2015; see also De Place 2011; Paterson 2007). While Foucault cites the development of schooling practices and the shifting objectives of medicine as promoting model individuals and proper sexual practices in his *History of Sexuality* (1979), he might also have identified the emergence of the ‘family-friendly’ dormitory suburbanisms defined in terms of concentrated domestic functions during the inter-war years and particularly in the early post-war period, as socio-spatial technologies that normalize certain approaches to sexuality. Of course, the degree to which communities concentrate particular kinds of groups and reinforced certain patterns of spatial segregation differs across cities, nations and eras of development.

To be sure, there are not only exclusionary suburbanisms and suburbs. By virtue of the range of possible combinations on the various axes of urbanism-suburbanism, there are also diverse suburbs, multi-functional suburbs, creative suburbs, and inclusive suburbs, each aiding in the fashioning of particular kinds of citizen subjectivities. Furthermore, the kinds of suburbanisms expressed in any given place can and do change. As socio-spatial technologies inhabit places for only limited amounts of time, there is the possibility of competing forms of suburbanism creating new ruptures and hybrid subjectivities, and with them revolutionary potentials.

Suburbs as Radically-Open Fields of Possibilities

Back in 1970, Lefebvre (2003) argued that the world was becoming almost completely urbanized, by which he meant that urban logics and processes were becoming ubiquitous, and furthermore, that urbanization was replacing industrialization as the main driver of capital accumulation. This is the

basis for Brenner and Schmid's (2011) declaration of a *planetary urbanization*. However, and despite difficulties in measuring and bounding the urban, with over half of the global urban population now living in what Keil (1994) calls 'global sprawl', a more fitting moniker would be *planetary suburbanization* (McGee 2013). Such a 'suburban revolution' (Keil 2013) entails much more than a change in label, as it represents the extension and multiplication of many new hybrid suburbanisms into various corners of the globe.

While Deleuze (1995) may argue for the emergence of generalized control societies, it should be noted that as ideal types, the spaces of the centre and periphery represent differential possibilities for the establishment of social control. This differential control is fundamentally related to the arrangement of space. The urban, represented in its ideal type by the centre of cities, is a place of agglomeration (of jobs, power, competing interests), encounter (between strangers, social groups, etc), juxtaposition (of uses, functions), and of a very visible publicity and politics. One goes there to see what others are up to at the centre of power. This is the reason why interpretations of Lefebvre's call for a *Right to the City* (1996, orig. 1968) typically relate this to a right to housing and working at (or near) the centre, and why many scholars (including Lefebvre) promote mobilizations, protests and occupations of the centre. This is to say, the centre is a place of radical encounter, and its range of possibilities for political rupture as a result set the stage for the potential it holds as a target or prize. However, it can be placed under surveillance fairly easily due to the limited amount of space found in the centre. Yet *because* of agglomeration, diversity, multi-functionality and juxtaposition, it is impossible to predict the range of political possibilities that might result from such encounters, and in turn, to impose consistent social forms of control. Control must either be exercised through a low-level disciplinary power during 'regular times' – each individual modifying their behaviour in the expectation of surveillance – and via the ever-present threat (by the state) of direct physical control (via policing and military occupation, forcefully activated only during 'exceptional times').

The peripheries are a very different story. Because various suburbanisms conceptually involve singularities, fragmentations, segregations, and monofunctionalities, they are more likely to act as socio-spatial technologies with *specific* effects in producing particular citizen subjectivities. However, not only are the peripheries often spatially un-boundable (they are huge, and it is unclear in most cases where they begin and end), but their spatial extension and multiplication means there are far too many marginal and largely invisible spaces – the physical interstices – to be physically controllable. In the peripheries of my own urban region (Toronto), there are numerous ravines, gullies, forests, lakes, cliff faces, bridges, highway under-passes and extensive farming areas, all together much too large to be effectively policed or subject to surveillance by the state if they were to be used as spaces of resistance and insurrection.

In the peripheries, obedience is fashioned through the invisible accretion of disciplinary power – adherence to social norms, driving regulations, market rules, and the like. However, unlike the centres, which are public and visible, much of what occurs in the peripheries remains interior, domestic and invisible (and because of this, and because of their tendencies toward monofunctionalities and singularities, are also often considered uninteresting and dismissed by those with social power). In these marginal and largely-forgotten spaces, constantly flowing with hybridized suburbanisms, people who otherwise are subject to constant pressures are mostly left alone and beyond the gaze of the state (and the gaze of private capital for that matter). It is here that the centre's diverse spaces of encounter meets its dialectical creative anti-thesis. As Shields (1991) notes, the social and cultural peripheries (margins) are where much "low-brow" social and political innovation takes place, where the "dominant, authorized cultures" are ritually inverted, thus opening space for the evolution of alternate dispositions (even habitus). The multitude of marginal largely-forgotten peripheral spaces contains the potential for a multitude of political movements which, because of their removal

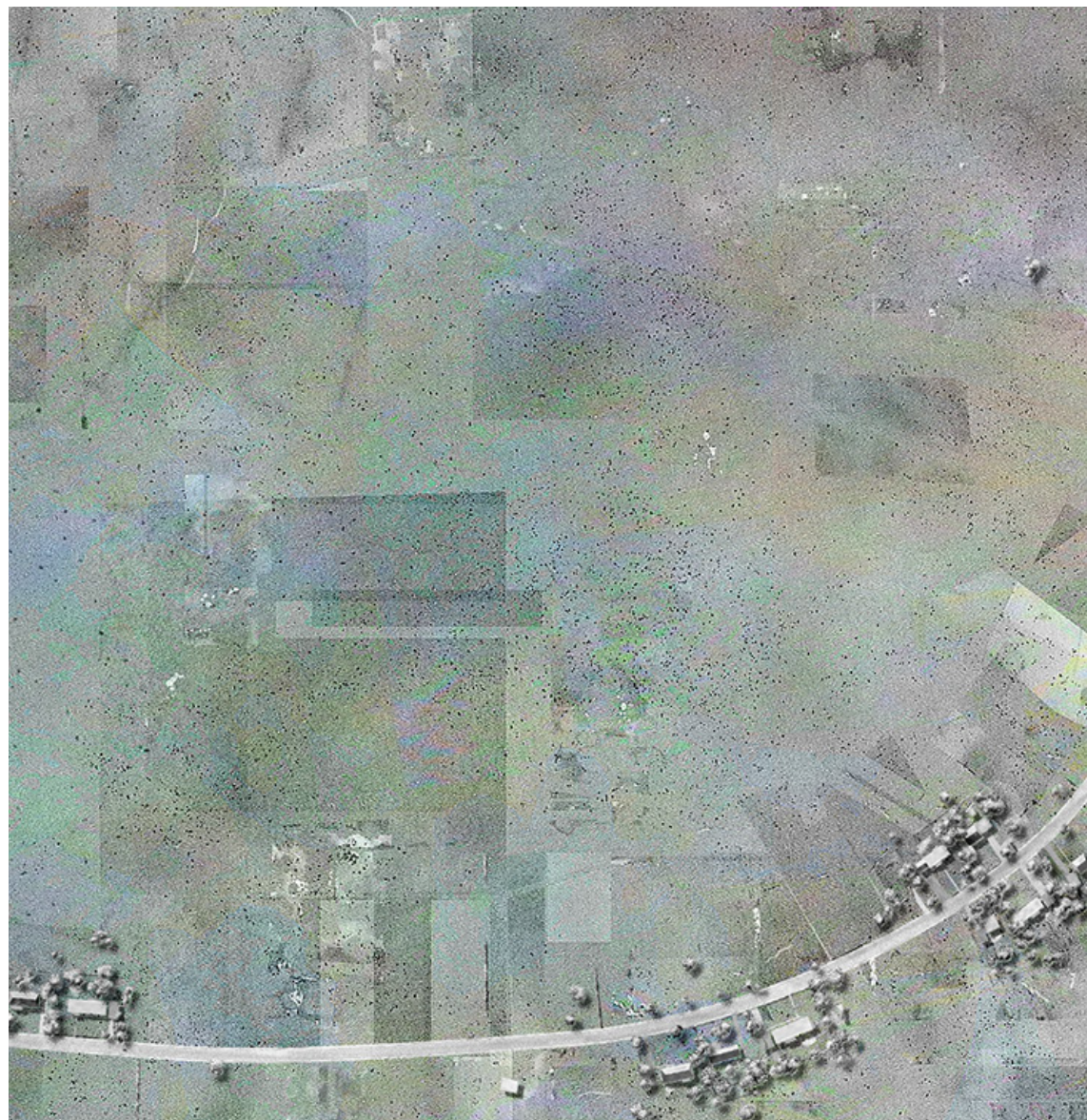
from gaze of power, have the opportunity to flourish at their own pace and without concern for negotiating the terrain of collective claims and agendas characteristic of the centre. Socio-political movements born in and of the peripheries can be of any combination of the multiple dimensions of urbanism-suburbanism; that is, they could just as easily be exclusionary as inclusive, as monofunctional as diverse.

Conclusion

Putting Foucault and Lefebvre into conversation on the suburban question leads to some productive tensions. On the one hand, a Foucauldian perspective points to how the relations of power fashioned within peripheries and suburbanisms can be understood as socio-spatial technologies in producing certain dispositions, citizen-subjectivities and perhaps even distinct forms of habitus. On the other, a Lefebvrian perspective allows for conceptualizing the political possibilities for the suburbs as interstices. There is a virtually infinite set of possible combinations and hence of political potentialities deriving from the tension between centre and periphery, although many will crystalize into identifiable constellations (of diverse suburbansims versus exclusionary suburbanisms, etc). But the latent potentialities of such combinations lead to radically-open fields of political possibility. It is here in the peripheries that many future modes of politics are being forged, and it is here that many of the problems and exclusions wrought by urban life are festering out of range of the dominant gaze. It is in the peripheries that political and social mobilizations are, and will be, most contested, and where they will have the most importance for the kinds of political ruptures that will only become visible when, later on, they have evolved to the point of seeking to control the centre. Because such possibilities are radically open, the content of such politics cannot be predicted in advance. They could be the source of much new social innovation, but also of dangerous new socio-political movements. The peripheries should not be overlooked or dismissed.

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Spectres of the Suburb Who's Haunting Hyllie?

Fredrik Torisson

Perhaps by habit, ghosts are regularly associated with the past haunting the present; however, a similar case can readily be made for lost futures haunting the contemporary. This latter category – ghosts of futures that never came to be – is the subject of this essay. Twentieth century architecture envisioned grand futures for the city, but in the recent past the grandest visions arguably concern not the urban core itself, but the suburb. In this article, I aim to develop a deliberation on the lingering influence of futures that never came to materialise, i.e., that are not present, but which at the same time are not absent in the physical landscape. I want to discuss more closely the spectral influences that may continue to exert an influence although they never had any self-identical presence. In other words, we will be talking about *hauntology* here understood in terms of the “agency of the virtual”.¹

French philosopher Jacques Derrida coined the term *hauntology* in his address at the conference “Whither Marxism” in 1993 (Derrida 2006). *Hauntology* is a play on the homophonous ontology, but rather than the nature of existence, it concerns itself with that which is simultaneously not-present and not-absent. Academically, this puts me in precarious territory; this hauntological experiment will not assert presence, but rather discuss the possibility of not-absence. *Hauntology* is in this sense not establishing truths, but instead introducing doubts and questions rather than proving something – to claim the latter would be a folly, dealing, as we are, with ghosts.

The ghosts of this essay are rather prosaic: speculative skyscrapers that “failed” to materialise.² This is a far more literal and reductive spectral non-absence than the term conveyed in its original form, but it does serve to pose questions of how planning and speculation work. What I am after is how these not-presences remain, nevertheless, not-absent in the suburban landscape of the suburb of Hyllie that is forming outside the city of Malmö. I will discuss certain aspects in the planning and architecture of Hyllie that indicate (without in any way proving) a lasting influence of these never materialised structures in the physical milieu.

In the current radically future-oriented economy, where, as Joseph Vogl (2015: 82) has noted, the future is always-already priced in, speculative development propositions are *de rigueur*, and planning, rather than leading development often follows and accommodates in response to speculative propositions that promise investments, work opportunities, and metropolitan swagger – the latter being perhaps the most sought-after commodity in planning departments that still are adhering

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¹ Mark Fisher (2014) discusses the haunting of lost futures in these terms.

² The scare quotes are in reference to the question whether this indeed was a failure, or whether their purpose was something else entirely. I have previously discussed this in Torisson (2015): whereas that article sought to discuss the economic incentives of simulated skyscraper proposals, the essay at hand focuses on the simulated skyscrapers' effects on the development of Hyllie.

to Richard Florida's (2002) by now rather trite discourse. This produces a peculiar situation for the planner: s/he is charged with asserting whether a proposed speculative project is feasible, in which case it should be accommodated in the plans, or conversely unfeasible, in which case it should be dismissed. There is a third, hypothetical, position: *what if planners accept a proposition which would otherwise be considered unfeasible in order to benefit from the gravitas of the proposed development through investments, media attention and economic momentum, but without necessarily making the coming materialisation a priority?*

Twentieth century architecture envisioned grand futures for the city, but in the recent past the grandest visions arguably concern not the urban core itself, but the suburb

The third alternative, which may or may not exist, is habitually curtailed by frameworks for calculating the economic viability of a proposed development, but what is interesting in the case of Hyllie is how these frameworks were impaired by a situation that for all intents and

purposes was unprecedented, making the scope of the feasible significantly more inclusive than otherwise. Following a logic of inference based on abduction,³ rather than induction or deduction, we may examine closer the hypothesis that the municipality did not necessarily consider the skyscrapers feasible, or, at the very least, that they considered their materialisation highly unlikely. And, furthermore, we can explore how this situation produced an improbable array of skyscrapers proposed for the wind-swept farmlands outside Malmö.

The Rapidly Changing Futures of Hyllie

The empty fields of Hyllie were suddenly ushered onto the national and international stage as the Swedish and Danish governments agreed to construct a bridge connecting Copenhagen and Malmö, Denmark and Sweden, in 1991, and the news broke that the Swedish bridgehead would be erected nearby. A rail-tunnel would be constructed under Malmö as part of the larger infrastructure investment package, and it would also have a future station in Hyllie. Hyllie was suddenly a site of enormous — if unquantifiable — potential; from Hyllie one would be able to reach central Malmö in 5 minutes, central Copenhagen in 20 minutes, and the international airport Kastrup in 12 minutes. Malmö municipality published a comprehensive plan in 1994 that attempted to plan for the coming bridge, including the future of Hyllie (Malmö: 1994). The plan envisioned that Hyllie would develop from nothing into a suburb of 5,000 residents and 4,000 workplaces by 2015. Hyllie's future was relatively modest, its form and structure inspired by the garden cities, with low density except for [the future train station](#), where four-storey buildings would house services and small-scale retail.

All of this was upended overnight in late 1997, when the Norwegian aspiring hotel tycoon Arthur Buchardt, apparently out of the blue, presented plans to construct [a 320-meter-tall hotel in Hyllie](#) that would rival the Eiffel Tower. The plans for the so-called "Scandinavian Tower" were controversial, but they put Hyllie firmly in the media spotlight. An architectural object of this scale radically contrasted the proposed low-rise Hyllie, and the infrastructural plans were basically rendered null and void in relation to a skyscraper of that magnitude. Scandinavian Tower would contain a multitude of perpetually changing activities, including a hotel, a casino, a swimming pool, a "dance palace", a 20-screen cinema, and a restaurant area that would mimic Gråbrøders Torv in Copenhagen, with a traditional Scanian Inn with timber frame as well as Norwegian and Danish-themed inns (Holmén 1998). Buchardt kept stressing the need for the skyscraper to be completed in conjunction with

³ Succinctly summarised, abduction is a speculative mode of inference where: "The surprising fact, C, is observed. But if A were true, C would be a matter of course. Hence, there is reason to suspect that A is true." (Douven 2011).

the opening of the bridge in 2000, and later with the rail tunnel's estimated completion in 2005. In 2000, a new comprehensive plan for Malmö was issued, where the disruptive change that Buchardt's proposition entailed was clarified in two consecutive paragraphs. The planners noted that: "The blocks nearest the train station will contain service-functions, workplaces and residential buildings. Beyond this, the more peripheral parts will be characterised by lower density development of workplaces and residential buildings". And, in the next sentence: "In 1999, the municipality adopted the detail plan for the construction of "Scandinavian Tower", a 285 m [note the discrepancy in terms of height] skyscraper located 250 m west of Hyllie Station" (Malmö: 1999, 78). The plan itself maintains this curious juxtaposition, where [Scandinavian Tower is located outside of the main development as a curious gargantuan appendix](#).

This violent juxtaposition was also one of the topics of critique of the project in the county administrative board's written assessment of the project. And, in this speculative hauntology, we can ask whether the planners and architects took the project seriously. The architect's drawing labelled "section" shows, for instance, [the façade, with very general labels for the program](#). Other indications suggest that the materialisation was not the essential aspect of the project: the building's content and height kept changing (and thus generated new publicity for both Buchardt and Hyllie). In addition, the analysis of the development's impact on the natural environment submitted by the municipal planning office to the county administration board was deemed inadequate. As the then-Deputy County Governor Lise-Lotte Reiter noted: "The municipality has copied Scandinavian Tower into photos of the surrounding natural landscape, but this is not enough . . . This image-material is illustrative, but it does not constitute an analysis" (Telegrambyrå 1998).

The plans for Scandinavian Tower were unceremoniously scrapped in 2004 (after a turbulent spell in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks in 2001 when the proposed height was briefly reduced to 32.2m instead of 322m), and shortly afterward the municipality drew up a more detailed comprehensive plan for the area, adopted by the municipality in early 2006 (Malmö 2006). Here, Hyllie is presented as a dense regional node, where the proposed arena dominates the skyline, and Hyllie is now predicted to accommodate a combined total of 25,000 workers and residents. As it were, these plans became obsolete before they were ratified by the municipality. Already in November 2005, developer Greg Dingizian struck a deal for another proposed gargantuan development along the southern edge of the not-yet-constructed square, a development that would later become known as Malmö Tower (The designs were presented in August 2006). Dingizian, and the company formed to carry out the construction, Annehem, were balancing as Buchardt had on the border of the feasible.

I will leave the question of intention – both of the planners and of the developer – open, but again, there are some indications suggesting (without proving) that the project's materialisation was not the central aspect. Financing was, at least initially, unclear, and according to the local paper, Dingizian would not account for the financing of the project (Uusijärvi 2006: C12). Furthermore, unorthodox arguments were presented continuously for the feasibility of the project, as well as for the dramatically shifting proposed height. The director of Annehem suggested that increasing the height of the (residential) tower was necessary in order to make it economically feasible (Sydsvenskan 2006), an argument that goes contrary to common knowledge from experience with skyscrapers unless the land is extremely valuable, which was not the case in Hyllie. In terms of planning, the placement of the tower is highly unusual: sunlight being a valuable commodity in Sweden, it is practically unheard of to place a 220m tall tower on the southern border of a square, [where it effectively blocks out the sunlight](#). Less than a year later, in August 2007, the proposed development was binned, but not before it had been featured in a land allocation competition as one of the main attractors/attractions of future Hyllie (Malmö 2007).

Less than three months later, in November 2007, Annehem presented a new proposed development for the same site: Point Hyllie, a sequence of buildings to be constructed in four stages, (in ascending order, approximately 23, 29, 65 and 110m tall) with the fourth and tallest to be completed in 2011. Billboards advertising the development were erected, and they remain there today, in 2017, as a faded monument to the slow passage of time in the physical realm compared to the rapid passage of time in speculative finance. The first two stages of construction, whose scale was by no means out of the ordinary at 5 & 7 storeys, were completed in 2010 and 2012 respectively; the third stage opened in early 2016, and [the final stage appears to be under construction, with completion estimated in 2019](#). The location is again on the southern edge of the square, but in the plans, the planners address this issue by suggesting that the overshadowing is essentially democratic, as different cafés with outdoor tables will each enjoy their fair share of sunlight over the course of the day, as the shade traverses the square.

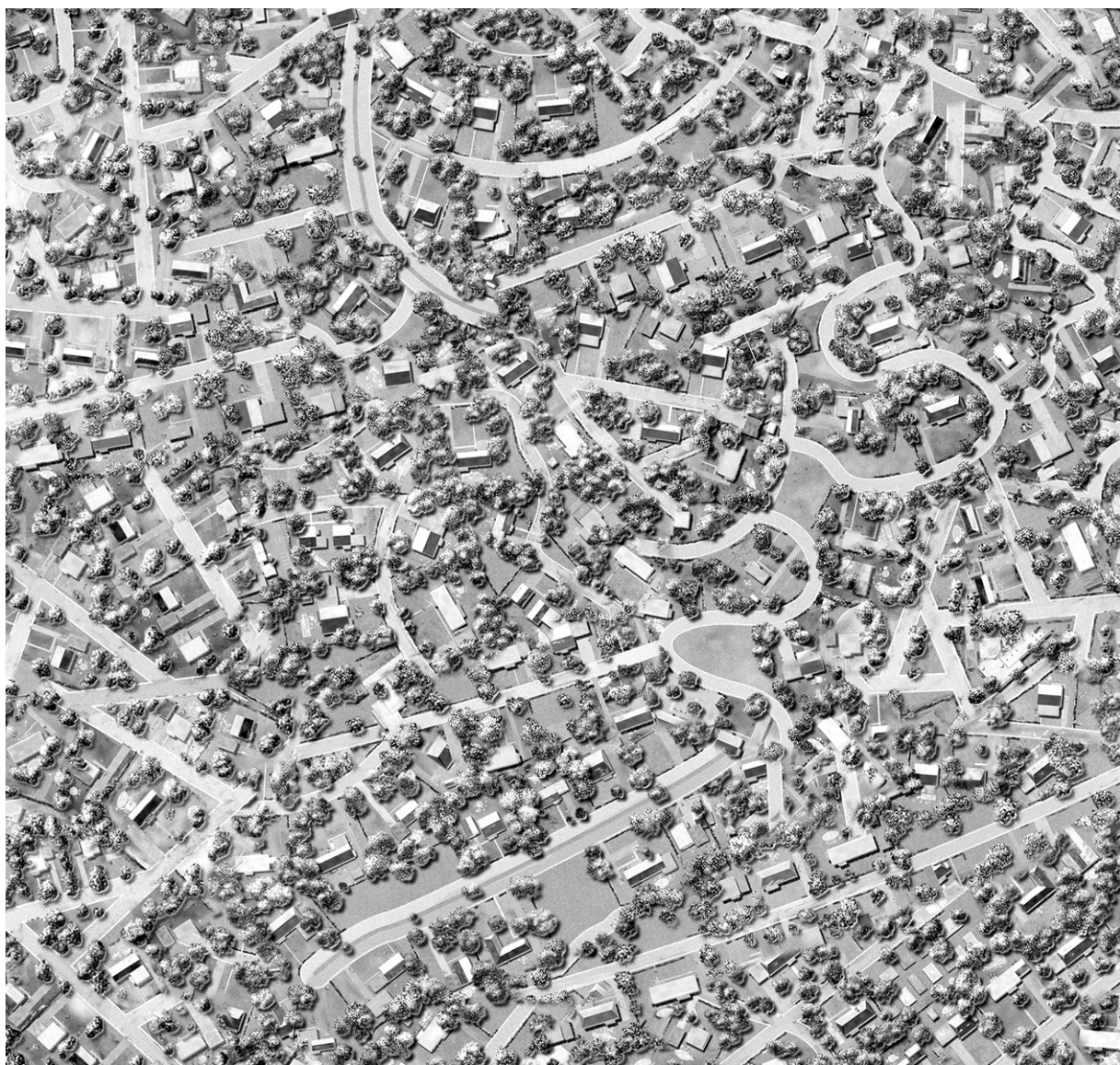
The Ghosts of Futures Past

Whether the parade of ridiculous skyscrapers was ever meant to materialise will remain a subject of speculation. Yet, if Scandinavian Tower and Malmö Tower were not expected to materialise, it would explain the curious peculiarities of each proposed development: the unclear and changing parameters of each proposed development in terms of height, content, completion, the inadequate material (sketches rather than drawings, the photo-montage submitted to the county administration board instead of an analysis), the awkward placement of each skyscraper (Scandinavian Tower outside of the main development, and Malmö Tower on the southern edge of the square). Each and every one of these peculiarities is circumstantial and could have a natural explanation. Having said that, all of these together make perfect sense *if* we entertain the hypothesis that the skyscrapers were never expected to materialise.

From such a perspective, the virtual agency of Scandinavian Tower and Malmö Tower becomes central to the development of Hyllie, and the now-rising skyscraper that will block most of the sunlight from the square must be the shadow of the ghosts of the projects that preceded it, but did not materialise. Scandinavian Tower shifted the scale and exposed the potential of projects on a vastly different scale than hitherto imagined, and Malmö Tower was locked into the plan in an awkward position, but just like Scandinavian Tower, it set a precedent for what could be imagined. Point Hyllie materialises, then, not as a result of a logical planning process, but as a testimony to the return of these ghosts, the returning influence of ghostly projects on the physical reality of Hyllie, from futures past that are simultaneously not present and not absent.

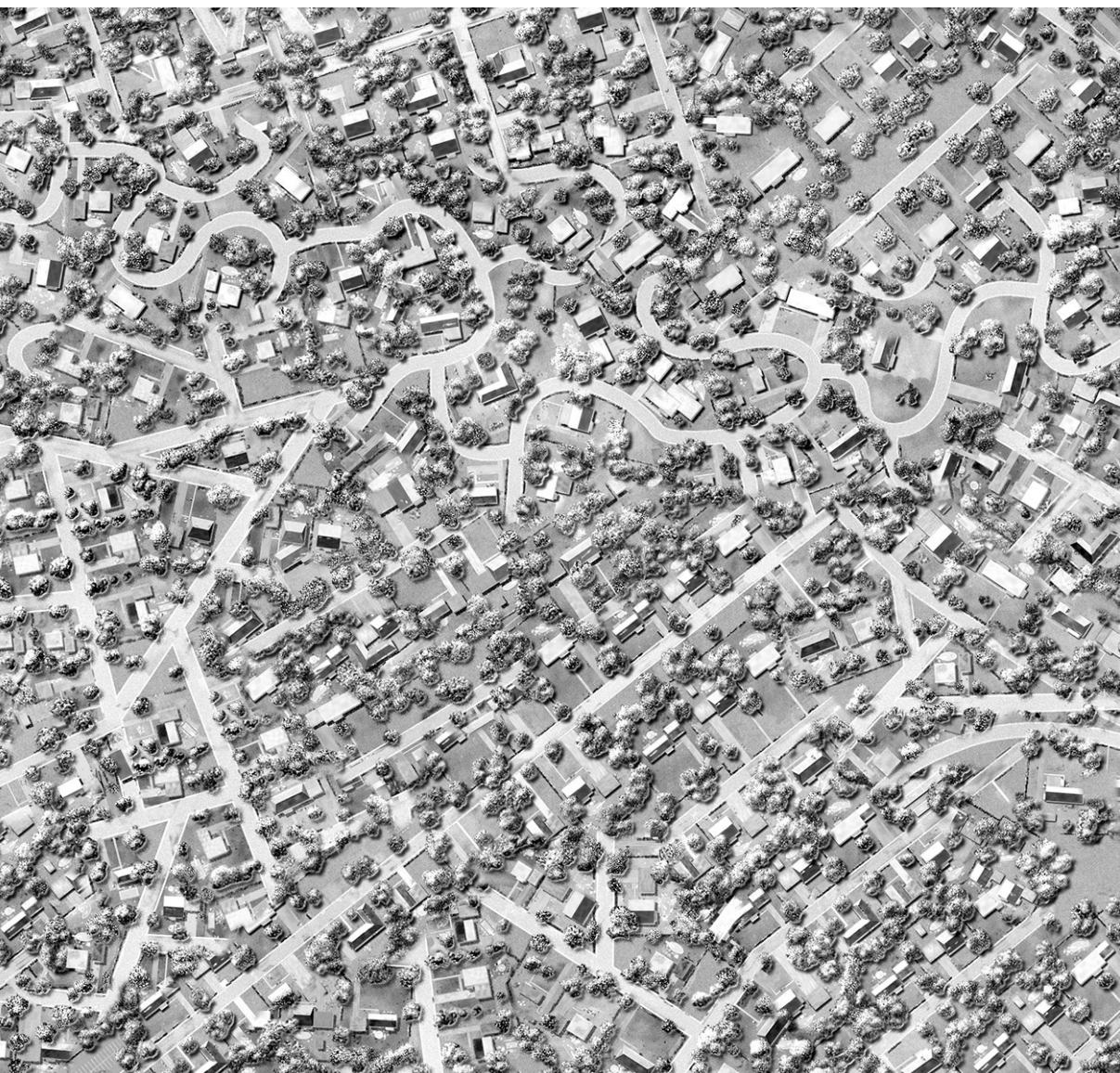
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In this issue, we feature the work of Ross Racine, a Canadian artist based in Montreal and New York. While it is almost inevitable to be immediately struck by his suburbs series, one is all the more so once informed that Ross works freehand, “stroke by stroke”, producing images that do not contain photographs or scanned materials of any kind. The photographic first-glance impression thus gives way to a more subtle compositional atmosphere.

As deceitful as the apparent realism is the “skeletonisation” of the suburban logic that Ross offers to us (here, we borrow the notion of skeleton from topology). In fact, the imaginal suburbs produced by Ross put before our eyes the neat endpoint of a process of planetary suburbanisation that, with its proliferation and recurrent (or recursive) morphogenesis, has lost reference to any organising centre. As the artist says, “these invented suburbs exaggerate existing situations and lead the subject matter into the investigative domain of science fiction.” It may well be that science fiction – more than horror – is exactly the lens needed to understand suburbs and suburban living in general.



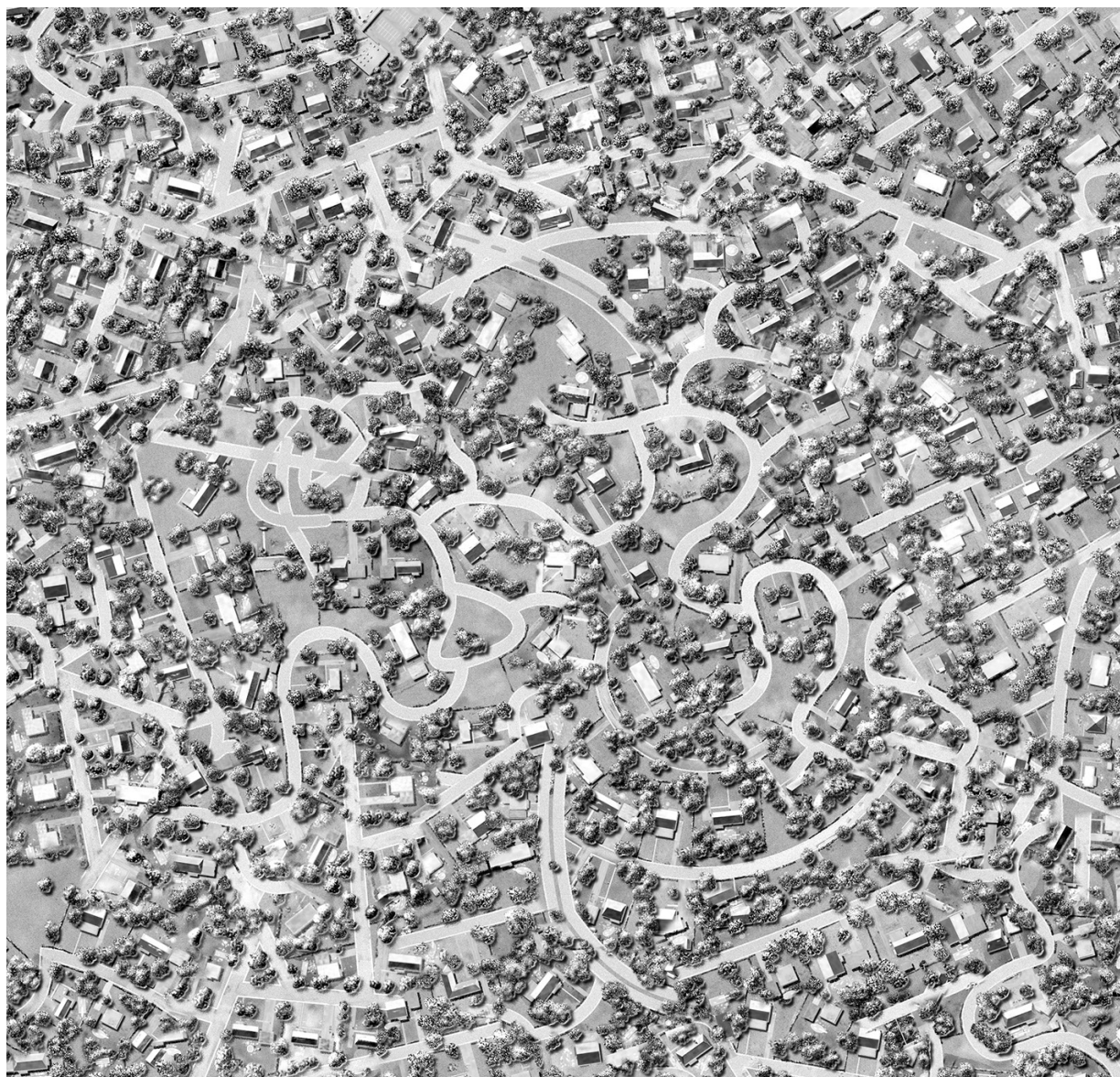
The suburb, as we know, has always occupied an uncomfortable locus in urban planning. Indeed, it can be granted that the suburb remains an uncanny presence in planning thinking. On this point, Ross comments: “Examining the relation between design and actual lived experience, the images subvert the apparent rationality of urban design. Beyond the suburban example, my digital drawings are a way of thinking visually about design, the city and society as a whole”.

Yet at the same time, Ross’ images implicitly beg one question: is there any rationality at all in urban design? Architectural modernism praised itself for being anti-traditionalist and thoroughly rational; but, most suburban development has been premised upon a more or less nostalgic view of Gemeinschaft and Gemüt. The ensuing foam-structure (or even, knot-structure) should not be surprising after all.

Is another Suburb possible? Ross’ point of view remains aerial. He eschews from bringing us into the lifeworld of the inhabitants of the places depicted here. Instead, he has chosen to deliver

to us, without comments (sans phrase), the bare outcome of the operation. If there is a point of hope in such scenery, we believe, it is precisely in the insurgence of the in-between. The production of suburban space is so generous in interstitial topologies that the challenge to the catastrophic endpoint immediately comes from the imaginal and political levels of spatial experience. Ross' science fiction suburbanism is, perhaps, an invitation to psychogeography and psychotopology.

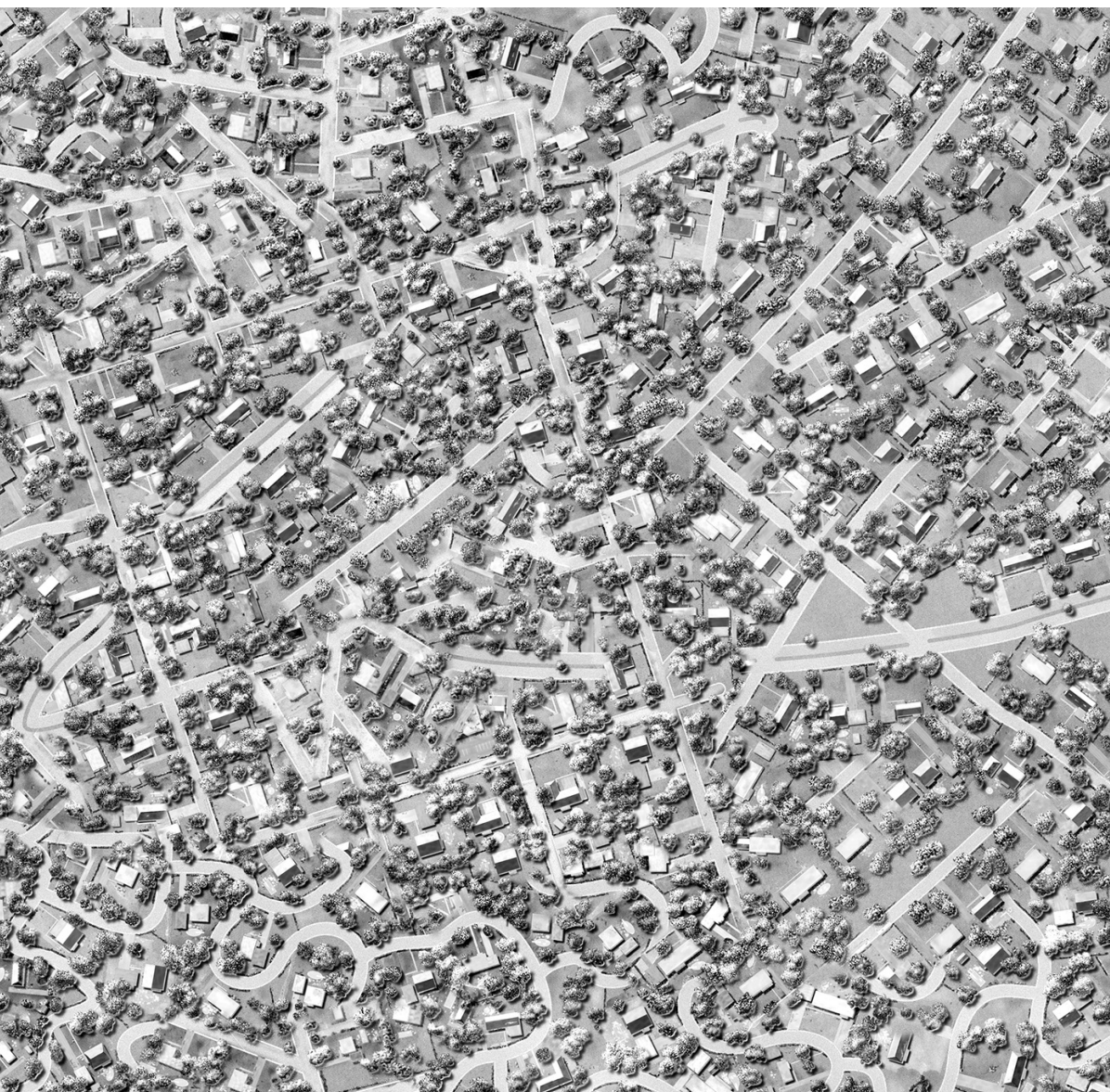
In this issue, we present two of his works from 2016, New Morning (60 x 80 cm, digital drawing, inkjet print on paper) and Fields (60 x 80 cm, digital drawing, inkjet print on paper), as well as The Hills Beckon from 2013 (60 x 80 cm, digital drawing, inkjet print on paper).



More info about Ross' work can be found at:

<http://www.rossracine.com/>

<https://www.artsy.net/artist/ross-racine>





A centre on the margin

Sandra Kopljär

The OECD suggestion from 1999 of a new spallation source¹ on the European continent has after considerable lobbying and negotiation (Hallonsten 2012: 13) resulted in the development of two large scale research facilities and a planned extensive urban development on the outskirts of Lund, a small university town in Southern Sweden (Lunds kommun 2010, 2012b). A possible advantage for the placing of the research facilities on the edge of the city could be that the location gives more leeway for the main stakeholders and landowners – the City of Lund, Lund University and Skåne Regional Council (Science Village Scandinavia 2013), in terms of incorporating large scale building structures with specialized technology and use, than in an already urbanized environment. The sheer size of the material research facilities MAX IV, a national synchrotron radiation laboratory, and ESS, an international spallation source, makes them difficult, if not impossible, to fit within an existing urban fabric².

As in the ideal cities of the Renaissance, when commerce was not connected to the individual local character, but steered by a power relation between the city core and the land value surrounding that core (Olwig 1992), [the Lund NE/Brunnshög planned expansion](#) is tilting the power positions within the region. The process initiated at Lund NE/Brunnshög can be seen as corresponding to the realization of a “God’s cosmic plan” (Olwig 1992: 17, my translation) or the consequence of a *synoptic view* (cf. Scott 1998: 73ff) where the actual landscape and topography does not have direct influence on the location of the city, which is rather relating to urban nodes on a bigger scale. The same top-down planning is exerted in the OECD decision from 1999 that acknowledges that there is a need for additional neutron research facilities in Europe, America and Asia; another “rational” and map based decision about activities placed in an absolute, utopian space. Once again the plan is a document that persuasively communicates an assumption of a quantifiable space (Kopljär 2016).

In contrast to the traditionally under-invested urban periphery, the case of Lund NE/Brunnshög is, if not as much for the local population as for an international research community (Region Skåne 2012; Lunds kommun 2012a: 3; Science Village Scandinavia 2013), a case of intense branding of Lund as a university town with a strong research environment (Lunds kommun 2012a: 15). When promoting the Lund NE/Brunnshög area, the municipality of Lund is repeating the arguments often used to describe Lund’s identity; it is a “city of contrast” and “a city of ideas”, where a thousand years of history

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¹ “Spallation is the process for producing neutrons by means of a particle accelerator and a heavy metal target . . . The enormous volume of data generated by what are essentially split-second encounters is picked up by detectors, recorded by computers and rendered, via software, into atomic models of the material under observation” (European Spallation Source).

² The ESS facility measures nearly one kilometer (European Spallation Source 2016), including the nearly five hundred meter tunnel for particle acceleration (Larsson 2016).

is supposed to blend with “modern knowledge and visions” (Lunds kommun 2011, my translation). The area is being used to promote innovation and economic development for the region of Skåne and Öresund under the label of “the world’s prime research and innovation environment” (Region Skåne 2012; Lunds kommun 2012a: 3; Science Village Scandinavia 2013). The research facilities have resulted in a planned new urban part of the city with dwellings, service and supporting facilities for the research as well as communication amenities for the research performed on site.

According to the municipality’s vision for the area, in 30–40 years up to 50,000 people are expected to live, work or study here. The ambition is to create the world’s best research and innovation environ-

ment and to let the area be a display window to world class Swedish sustainable planning (Lunds kommun 2012b: 2). Gigantic expectations are put on the Lund NE/Brunnshög area regarding future potential and outcome of its professional activities and as a future place for creativ-

In contrast to the traditionally under-invested urban periphery, the case of Lund NE/Brunnshög is a case of intense branding of Lund as a university town with a strong research environment

ity and innovation (Lunds kommun 2012b). The expectations about a sustainable city with world leading research facilities and a new recreational area for researchers and visitors create a general belief in a promising future (Kopljär 2016). A “double optimism” (Hallonsten 2012: 13f) has driven the promotion of ESS in Lund, where Lund already at the beginning of the ESS–Scandinavia campaign around 2002 was “forcefully promoted as a kind of perfect megaproject for Lund” (Hallonsten 2012: 13) and Lund as the perfect location for the project. A non-transparent political process promoted the building of ESS³ and, in 2012, without having any formal or legally binding decision behind it, the project was nevertheless “advertised and sold as such to various audiences and with a variety of promises and expectations attached” to it (Hallonsten 2012: 12).

The establishment of a completely new part of Lund on Sweden’s best farmland has been severely criticized by farmers and a local farming organisation for not considering ecological questions tied to agricultural production (Nebel 2014, Svahn 2017). Despite that, the area has also become a motor for the establishment of a “Science Road” and tramway along a path from the city centre towards ESS. The plans for the new part of Lund surrounding the research facilities communicate high ambitions regarding ecological sustainability (Lunds kommun 2012a: 3), which perhaps is a compensatory initiative thought to balance the occupation of high quality farmland.

The planning process of this new urban development relates to future implications on the research community on an abstract, international scale, where the research community can be considered to hold a central position, while the urban development at the same time is being established on farmland outside the edges of Lund’s current borders. A central and abstract situation (scientific research) is in this sense merged with an immediately sensed peripheral location (the suburb), usually associated with blandness and sleepiness. The strong position within a research community of this Big Science initiative, together with a peripheral location in the city, results in that the division between central and peripheral becomes intertwined and renegotiated. The vision of future research facilities functions on a big scale in its ambition to attract scientists from all over the world as well as being materially dominant at the actual site in the form of gigantic buildings. In this respect two big scales go hand in hand. The strongest defining activity at Lund NE/Brunnshög, with the biggest impact, is thus operating at an international, global scale relating to the professional activities of ESS and MAX IV and the visiting researcher’s position can be regarded as “central” within an intangible

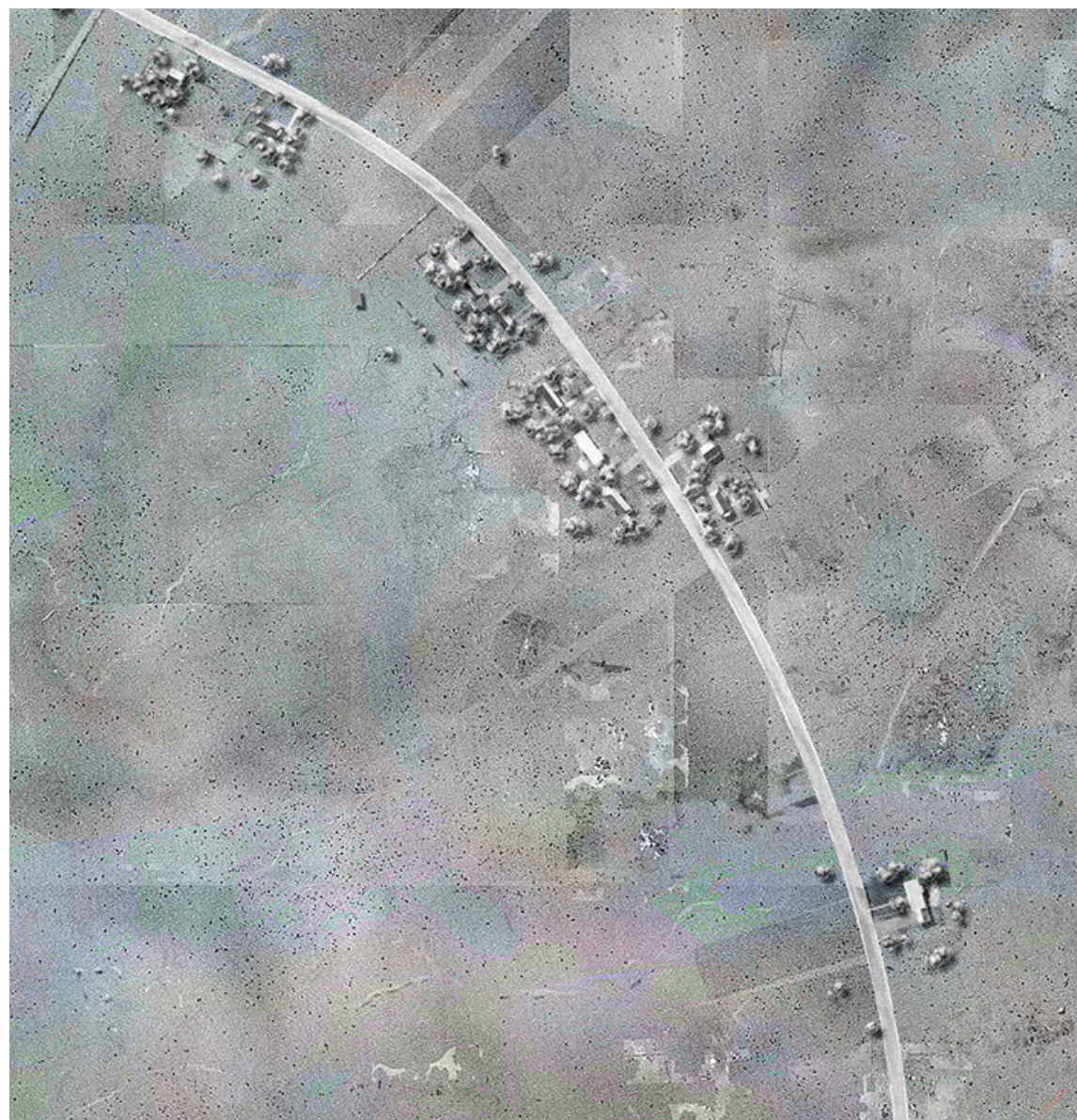
³ The ESS budget is 1,8 billion Euros and approximately three times the budget of MAX IV (Lunds universitet 2015).

research territory.

There is a focus in the municipal planning on the research facilities and the professional activities tied to them, as well as on providing service for visiting professionals as a part of the effort to make the area attractive for an international research community. This can have as a result that the less connected one is to the area, for example as a visiting international researcher, the more attention is put on one's needs for one's particular time of visit. On the other hand, as a local resident in the city of Lund, the research facilities and the activity connected to them could be regarded as essentially peripheral, constituting a possible recreational destination but lacking any bearing on an everyday life. Cases of paralleling and co-existent central and peripheral locations and situations can of course be seen at various sites within the city and are inherently dependent on individual agency and circumstances. Some of our cities' most vulnerable and excluded inhabitants, deprived of freedom of movement, live in a sort of parallel central and marginalized situation (cf. hooks 2000), spending long workdays in the absolute city centre, outside a pharmacy, supermarket or cathedral, begging.

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L'Arcella come periferia e come interstizio urbano

Alvise Torresin

*Se ci sono dei padovani rivendicanti una loro provenienza
extra urbana,
questi sono forse quanti nacquero all'Arcella.
G. Toffanin (1988)*

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Il capolinea nord del tram di Padova è un luogo che non stonerebbe come scenografia in un romanzo di fantascienza distopica. Ci sono delle pensiline in cemento, plexiglas e luci al led in mezzo a terreni vuoti, abbandonati, di terra nuda. C'è un supermercato della più grande catena locale vicino a piccoli stagni formati dal cattivo scolo dell'acqua piovana nelle aiuole non curate e un piccolo bar-biglietteria si staglia come un avamposto nel deserto del far west. In tutto, più di 41.000 metri quadri che avrebbero dovuto essere simbolo di rigenerazione urbana e credibilità delle istituzioni e che sono senza progetto da più di dieci anni: cinque aste pubbliche andate deserte e un deprezzamento del 67%, da più di sette milioni di euro a due e mezzo.

Ma le corse del metro tram partono da qui, ogni giorno, pronte a tagliare in due il quartiere Arcella, superare la stazione ferroviaria e arrivare al confine sud della città. I nomi delle fermate hanno tutti una forte valenza storia, cercano di richiamare delle immagini di un passato comune. Ma se nella zona del centro storico questo effetto è immediato, in Arcella l'effetto è straniente. In quanti sapranno davvero perché le fermate Fornace e Saimp si chiamano così? Chi ricorda quanto quelle fabbriche abbiano condizionato quei rioni con i loro camion su strade di quartiere, i loro problemi di smaltimento, ma anche con il loro apporto all'occupazione locale e al lavoro domestico? La storia non è ancora diventata narrazione condivisa, è ancora ricordo familiare, chiacchiera da bar, aneddoto da parrocchia e nostalgia sottopelle. L'ardua sentenza non è ancora stata data e forse i poster chiamati a giudicare non saranno i discendenti di chi quelle storie le ha vissute. Ma non c'è tempo di fantasticare troppo, ogni fermata dura quanto le altre, a prescindere dalle storie che potrebbe raccontare. . .

Il quartiere Arcella inizia a trovare una sua forma di zona residenziale nel secondo dopoguerra. Inizialmente la visione urbanistica fascista avrebbe voluto trasformare la zona a Nord delle mura, fino a quel momento quasi esclusivamente dedicata all'agricoltura, in una zona residenziale per la media borghesia e la classe agricola più abbiente (Saracini, 2001). Il primo Piano Regolatore per la città di Padova a opera degli Urbanisti Romani del 1926 e quello successivo e definitivo del 1933 detto Piccinato-Munarion prevedeva che un settimo di tutte le aree edificabili fosse adibito a servizi o a verde pubblico. Erano inoltre previste limitazioni al numero di residenti e alla possibilità di costruzione

(Torresini, 1975). Ampi spazi pubblici, bassa densità abitativa e parchi: questo era il paradiso residenziale immaginato all'inizio del Novecento. Lo scoppio della seconda guerra mondiale però cambia radicalmente il volto del quartiere. Trovandosi in mezzo a due obiettivi strategici dei bombardamenti (la stazione ferroviaria a sud e il ponte ferroviario lungo il Brenta a Pontevigodarzere) il quartiere è colpito molto più di altre zone e il costo in termini di vite umane e di strutture distrutte è altissimo.

Nello spazio tra due fermate si alternano il passato e il presente. Spazi progettati sull'onda di un ottimismo economico poi sconfessato e dimenticato. Separati dalle rotaie del tram da un lato ci sono le luci, i

*Ma a guardare bene non tutte le finestre murate sono intatte
e in qualche punto la rete che comprende le impalcature è stata
tagliata*

suoni e gli odori di una della pasticceria più famose della città e dall'altro un gigantesco edificio coperto da impalcature e rampicanti. Il complesso Configliachi, un pachiderma di oltre 13.000 metri quadrati con un parco della stessa metratura è abbandonato e senza destinazione da quasi sei

anni e anche prima funzionava a regime ridotto. Ma a guardare bene non tutte le finestre murate sono intatte e in qualche punto la rete che comprende le impalcature è stata tagliata. C'è qualcosa di romantico in un palazzo fatiscente creato per ospitare i poveri e i bisognosi negli anni Trenta che, a dispetto del tempo che passa e delle decisioni dei suoi proprietari, continua a svolgere quella funzione. Nuovi abitanti, noti a tutti ma tollerati solo finché restano nascosti, occupano quelle stanze vuote. Un paio di volte l'anno ci sono perquisizioni e sgomberi ma dopo la bufera tutto torna alla routine.

In meno di cinquecento metri il tram arriva alla fermata Palasport. Il nome ha un gusto retrò da quando c'è l'abitudine di mettere i nomi degli sponsor in quelli che una volta erano chiamati semplicemente palazzetti. Ma il Colbachini non è solo un palazzetto coperto, è anche uno stadio di atletica leggera, con tribune, spazi indoor, pista regolamentare e pedane per i salti. Se oggi c'è l'abitudine di inaugurare i progetti con la posa di simboliche prime pietre, alla fine degli anni Venti avevano posato lo stadio tutto come garanzia di riuscita e svolta per il progetto Arcella. Anche qui le storie si accavallano e le testimonianze hanno il sapore del racconto popolare. Ci sono i writers cui era stato concesso di realizzare murali sul muro di recinzione senza venire avvertiti che il muro sarebbe stato abbattuto pochi mesi dopo. Ci sono le lamentele per i fondi per le ristrutturazioni dati col contagocce e per le promesse di rilancio mai portate a termine. Ma c'è anche l'orgoglio, tanto, per essere una delle poche strutture sportive comunali della città, per la storia che è passata su quelle piste, per la buona prassi di mettere sulla pista ad allenarsi fianco a fianco bambini e atleti olimpionici. . .

Dal secondo dopoguerra il P.R.G. venne ufficiosamente sconfessato dando inizio a un'indimenticata stagione edilizia che vede le proporzioni di terreno dedicato alla comunità e al verde drasticamente ridotte. Si stima che nel 1977 anno in cui viene redatta la retroattiva Correzione del Piano Regolatore all'Arcella manchino più di 500.000 metri quadrati di spazi a uso servizi (Saracini, 2001). Solo negli anni Ottanta, nel silenzio delle amministrazioni, si conclude l'edificazione dell'Arcella moderna. Un quartiere che, alla fine dei giochi e malgrado la possibilità dovuta a uno sviluppo avvenuto in tempi molto recenti, manca di un piano e di una logica costruttiva generale. Non è eccessivo dire che già dagli anni Cinquanta l'Arcella poteva definirsi un luogo "sregolato" al centro di politiche private che ne progettavano una futura natura di quartiere per residenti di ceto medio-basso. Non stupisce, in quest'ottica, il permesso di edificare alcune grandi fabbriche in una zona già allora a alta densità abitativa (Saracini, 2001; Torresini, 1975).

Proprio quelle strutture che erano state create per i lavori di fascia più bassa (Case del Ferroviere in zona Prima Arcella o case popolari in zona San Carlo Borromeo) divennero successivamente i punti

di riferimento principale per le prime generazioni di immigrati che arrivavano a Padova. La posizione strategica vicino alla stazione e ai grandi svincoli extra-urbani si rivelarono caratteristiche particolarmente favorevoli all'insediamento di lavoratori immigrati alla ricerca di alloggi a basso costo (Vianello, 2006). Non stupisce inoltre che già negli anni Settanta l'Arcella fosse un territorio alla continua ricerca di un'identità: in trent'anni era passata dall'essere una zona prevalentemente agricola all'essere zona di nuova edificazione per ceti medio-alti e infine stava subendo un'opera di massiccia edificazione.

Con la fermata Dazio entriamo nella cosiddetta Prima Arcella, ultima tappa di questo viaggio, arrivati alla stazione ci saranno altre storie, attori, narrazioni... Non ci fosse morto il celeberrimo sant'Antonio da Padova probabilmente nessuno farebbe caso a questo quartiere, ma la storia ha posto qui il santuario di Sant'Antonino: lapidi e capitelli ricordano le varie fasi dell'agonia del santo. In questa zona i sogni del passato e la realtà del presente si uniscono e il confine diventa sfumato: ci sono case signorili del primo Novecento affiancate a condomini del periodo del boom, villette singole e case popolari, osterie e ristoranti etnici dentro a edifici che non nascondono di essere stati barchesse o cascine. C'è un fast food con la bandiera italiana in vetrina e negozi di estetica gestiti da cinesi, c'è una macelleria con tagli di carne tipici del medio oriente e una dei pochissimi multisala d'essai rimasti in città. C'è una libreria per bambini e un punto di invio denaro e facilitazione di pratiche per immigrati. La polleria-rosticceria è di fianco a un negozio di kebab. Sulle stesse panchine siedono di prima mattina i lavoratori rumeni che staccano dal turno di scarico nel supermercato, nel dopo pranzo le bandanti moldave o ucraine e alla sera i pensionati italiani. Alla fine, la zona più padovana di tutto il quartiere è allo stesso tempo la zona in cui gli spazi sono ridefiniti ogni giorno dai cittadini immigrati. La presenza di nuovi linguaggi, di nuove necessità e di nuovi conflitti non ha cancellato la storia, ma l'ha nobilitata rendendola fondamentale su cui edificare la nuova identità del quartiere.

Come dice il poeta Toffanin nella citazione in apertura del pezzo, se c'è qualcosa di cui l'Arcella e i suoi abitanti non mancano è l'autoconsapevolezza. Diversa è la consapevolezza della complessità della vita in questo quartiere che negli anni hanno dimostrato le istituzioni. Con una visione che ha dello schizofrenico il quartiere è considerato a volte poco più di un dormitorio per lavoratori immigrati o studenti fuori sede che non possono permettersi sistemazioni più vicine alle facoltà, altre volte descritto come un quartiere abitato da famiglie del ceto medio che vivono in perenne stato d'assedio a causa della solita, presunta "emergenza immigrazione". E con la stessa schizofrenia si susseguono le ordinanze, i progetti, le narrazioni dei media... Ma a ben guardare, le ri-territorializzazioni, la necessità di trovare soluzioni di compromesso a nuovi conflitti, il bisogno di un equilibrio tra tradizione e cambiamento sono una realtà che si manifesta in Arcella solo in maniera più evidente e marcata che in qualsiasi altro quartiere. E al di là della retorica facile, delle letture idealiste o romantiche, l'Arcella è sicuramente la migliore occasione che Padova ha per testarsi sulle sfide che in pochi decenni riguarderanno la città tutta.

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The Fragmented Neighbourhood and the Possibility of the Interstice

On the relation between home-making and public space

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In modernist neighbourhood planning, the suburban community was conceived of as a unit, with housing surrounding a neighbourhood centre, often including a park and a local school. The idea of the home was closely related to housing, and thus a good dwelling and good services were also associated with a good home. From the 1970s onwards, the discussion of home has, however, become more elaborate, and it has more and more also been seen as a related but distinct question. The practice of making home is complex, and recently it has been described from the perspective of multiple thresholds (Boccagni and Brighenti 2015; Brighenti and Kärrholm 2017). Home is not just what exists within the walls of our dwelling; it is produced as a pattern of overlapping tactics, appropriations and associations, and its borders shift depending on the circumstances or the perspective we take. Home gets its energy from peculiar domestic thresholds, such as gates, yards, community gardens, local stores, schools, parks and squares, and they are dependent on the hidden spaces and 'time machines' (or temporal thresholds) of garages, cellars and attics (Korosec-Serfaty 1984) where memories can be stored and forgotten only to be found again later on. Home making is a singular (it produces a home as different from all others) but complex and multifaceted process, and it can to a certain degree also be seen as a discontinuous process, both in time and space.

The place that we call home can differ from time to time, sometimes even from one moment to the next. Without denying the importance of home as a secure haven perceived from a centre, Boccagni and Brighenti suggest that:

domesticity could be reframed less as an accomplished state of things from within than as a processual and interactive endeavour from without – indeed, as a matter of thresholds to be crafted, enacted negotiated, and if necessary struggled upon. (2015: 4)

Whether we take the perspective 'from within' or 'from without', home is defined in relation to important places, memories, other neighbourhoods, and different kinds of communal, collective, social, public or private spaces. Different public spaces can indeed be domesticated to become appropriated and part of home (Mandich and Cuzzocrea 2015; Koch and Latham 2013). This complexity of home making is increasingly coming to the fore as the home and the neighbourhood no longer seem to be overlapping in the same ways as was expected during the modernist days. A simple relationship between geographical locality and home can no longer be taken for granted.

In Sweden, the modernistic and suburban neighbourhood units – many of them planned during the Million Programme Era, 1961–1975 – have slowly become densified and transformed over the years. This kind of transformation – and we are here more specifically referring to the area of Norra Fäladen in Lund which we now are studying – include the proliferation of borders, cracks and interstices inside the area itself. The identity of the area seems to be splintered into subareas or into 'areas of

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interest' that cannot so easily be geographically defined. Norra Fälåden is a typical Million Program neighbourhood built for 9,000 inhabitants during the years around 1970. In the wake of densification and expansion of the area from the 1990s and onwards, the tension between the different subareas seems to have increased. The number of inhabitants is now over 12,000, but the number of stores and services of the neighbourhood centre is slowly decreasing, the formerly public bath has been privatised and turned into a gym, and the neighbourhood magazine was discontinued in 1999 after more twelve years of service. The large annual neighbourhood festival is still there (Citroni

and K  rholm 2017), but according to the interviews we made, people of the new subareas of the neighbourhood do not tend to visit it as much. The new services that have appeared have rather tended to locate themselves to the outskirts of Norra F  l  den, which means that

The suburbs used to be spaces where residual spaces and large in-between spaces of unclear use and ownership created both problems and opportunities

people from the rentals in the south of the area tend to use one shop, the students of the eastern part another, and the villa owners of the northern part a third. In short, local public spaces and services seem to have been dispersed.

Henri Lefebvre once noted how upper-class housing tends to mimic the city and its spaces, with the dining room acting as restaurant, the garden as private park, etc., whereas:

Proletarian housing, for its part, has the opposite characteristics. Reduced to a minimum, barely "vital", it depends on various "facilities," on the "environment", that is, on social space, even if this is not well maintained. (Lefebvre 2014: 5)

In a case such as Norra F  l  den, this difference in terms of what we perhaps can call public space dependency seems to have heightened. Here we have the newly built large villas of Annehem, on the one side, and the recent experiments of student housing with apartments of only 7 square meters, on the other. Furthermore, the densification of Norra F  l  den, just as of many other Swedish housing areas of the 1960s and 70s, seems to have been dealt with in an ad hoc kind of fashion, slowly filling plots and former parks with new housing, without any ideas about how to rethink and rescale public infrastructures and services. Public space dependency is of course different from person to person, from situation to situation, and from time to time, but it becomes a pressing and even structural issue as polarisation and fragmentation increase.

The suburbs used to be spaces where residual spaces and large in-between spaces of unclear use and ownership created both problems and opportunities (Wikstr  m 2005). This has clearly changed. The latest big struggle and conflict over public space at Norra F  l  den concerned the main neighbourhood park and a schoolyard, both centrally located next to the neighbourhood centre. There, private developers wanted to build private flats in buildings up to twelve stories. Talking to the active group of the movement against this development, it became clear that it was the people of the rental apartments next to the park who were most concerned, whereas people from the new villas of the neighborhood were less engaged. This is of course no coincidence; the dense residential housing area next to the park have people living up to four families in one apartment, and so they are much more dependent on the public park for their everyday life.

Like most Swedish Million Program areas, Norra F  l  den was an area with a strong identity during its first decades, at times stigmatized, but still an area to which you belonged as a F  l  dsbo (resident of F  l  den). Starting with the densification and polarization of the neighbourhood during the late 1990s, the area has however become fragmented and less distinct as a joint territorial appropriation for its inhabitants. The infrastructure of public space seems to have an important part to play here.

Even though people of Sweden in average have better living conditions today than in the 1960s, an increasingly uneven distribution of privatized space and services is ongoing, and the recent slow densification projects have a part in this trend. In times of urbanization and densification when public spaces tend to shrink, it is easy to forget that making a home is not something that is done within the four walls of a house or apartment.

Even though neighbourhoods may not play the same role today as they once did for modernist planners, the quality and accessibility of public space remains a key issue for all home makers. In fact, it has turned out that as Swedish average living standards increase, so does polarization and number of the poor (SCB 2015), and thus the issue of public space dependency and public space accessibility has a certain urgency. Access relates to localization, affordability, distances and social space on scales that, at least to some extent, overlap with that of the former neighbourhoods. The neighbourhood unit as a strong territorial actor might thus have had its day, but its fragmentation remains a problem. Not only because public space is a resource of increasing importance, but also because home making depends on flows between multiple territorial productions where the operational scales evolve and change; this means that a continuous rather than a fragmented set of spaces is crucial. To predefine these territories at certain scales, such as the dwelling, the neighborhood and/or one of its subareas, is thus a simplification that actually endangers the interstitial spaces and thresholds on which all homemaking in the end relies.

One way to re-open the discussion on making home in the suburbs, we suggest, could thus be to generate more discussion — as well as perhaps subsequently also experimentation — on the ways in which various forms of territorial continuity could be sustained. In essence, the interstice offers a spatial imagination that contrasts both with the “centre/periphery” model and with the “fragmented territorial islands” model. In this sense, an interstitial approach to suburban space could emphasise how, at various scales ranging from the household, through the backyard, the playground, the local street, to the whole neighbourhood, a number of continuous navigations and continuous wayfaring practices are possible. In offering a fresh perspective on the meanings of belonging, the interstice also emphasises the fact that public space is only possible through the convergent action of a plurality of actors and their agencies, and simultaneously, through a perspective of hospitality whereby multiple territorial productions are entertained in a convivial and joyous manner despite the various “irritations” that they might generate and cause reciprocally.

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