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Thinking Community without Unity in Recent Makings of Public Space

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2019

Document Version:

Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

[Link to publication](#)

Citation for published version (APA):

Sandström, I. (2019). *Towards a Minor Urbanism: Thinking Community without Unity in Recent Makings of Public Space*. Department of Architecture and Built Environment, Lund University.

Total number of authors:

1

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TOWARDS A MINOR URBANISM

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Unity in Recent Makings
of Public Space

IDA SANDSTRÖM



The Department of Architecture and Built Environment
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The Department of Architecture and Built Environment
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Photographs by the author
Language editing by Justina Bartoli
Graphic design by Anna Nilsson
Printed by Mediatryck, Lund 2019
Svanenmärkt trycksak, 3041 0903

ISBN 978-91-7740-118-6

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I AM GRATEFUL TO EVERYONE who has helped, supported and inspired me along the way during my research studies: I could not have written this book alone.

First and foremost, I wish to express my gratitude to my supervisors. To Mattias Kärholm, my main supervisor, for indispensable advice, inspiration and guidance through vast theoretical terrains. Thank you, Lina Olsson, my co-supervisor, for support and committed readings all along, and thank you, Gunnar Sandin, my other co-supervisor, for valuable comments over the years, and for thinking with me on complicated matters. To all three of you: thank you for the encouragement, generosity and trust you have showed me during these years. I feel fortunate to have had the chance to learn from you.

I am also thankful to ResArc, the national research school in architecture, of which I had the great opportunity to be a part. A special thanks to Hélène Frichot, whose ResArc course *Philosophies* opened my eyes to research as an adventure. Many thanks to FORMAS for the generous funding that made my research studies possible.

I wish to extend my gratitude to the people who have read the manuscript of this thesis at various stages – to Emma Nilsson for

your devoted reading and your highly valuable comments on my half-time seminar, and to Hélène Frichot (again) for your generous and committed reading at my final seminar – your questions really helped me to bring the entire project together. A warm thank you to Andrea Mubi Brighenti, Nel Janssen and Albena Yaneva, who have all offered valuable input to my work at decisive moments. I am also deeply grateful to everyone whom I met in interviews and conversations during my field studies – you opened my work to new dimensions.

I am also thankful to two people who have been deeply involved in the making of this book: to you Justina Bartoli for editing the text of this thesis with a kind presence and extraordinary expertise; and to you Anna Nilsson for your attentive and highly skilled work on the graphic design of this publication.

I am very thankful to my colleagues and friends at the School of Architecture in Lund. Marwa Al Khalidi, Lena Andersson, David Andrén, Nina Aronsen, Laleh Foroughanfar, Mats Hultman, Laura Laike, Katarina Lans, Kajsa Lawaczek-Körner, Jesper Magnusson, Anna Pettersson, Maria Rasmussen, Catharina Sternudd, Lars-Henrik Ståhl, Martin Svansjö, Fredrik Torisson, Anna Wahlöö, and others – thank you for inspiration and encouragement, and for wonderful conversations at the lunch table. An especially warm thank you to Sandra Kopljär, Emma Nilsson and Paulina Prieto de la Fuente for sharing my joys and worries over the years.

Many thanks to PhD-colleagues and friends elsewhere: to Brady Burroughs, Jonathan Daily, Hannes Frykholm, Sabina Jallow, Sepideh Karami, Jo Liekens, Helen Runting, Maria Teder and Johan Wirdelöv – first you inspired me in person, and later through your writing. A special thank you to Janaina Teles for a fruitful and enjoyable collaboration in the early fieldwork at Superkilen.

I would like to extend my thanks to a number of former colleges in Malmö, Helsingborg and Berlin: Benjamin Foerster-Baldenius, Jan Holmberg, Gunilla Kronvall, Malin Rizell, and Cecila von Schéele – in a sense, you are all part of this book.

Thinking back on these years, I am forever grateful for my friends outside of academia. Thank you for taking an interest in my work, and making me talk about it and helping me understand what it is that I do – and just as importantly, for distractions and interruptions that made me forget my work in your company. A few of you have been particularly involved in this process: Karin Arbsjö, Tashy Endres, Elin Götmark, Julia Hultquist, Mina Jhowry, Laszlo Kügler, Tove Mattisson, Lovisa Ohlsson, and Lilja Åsberg –you mean the world to me.

A special thanks to my extended family: to Marta and Catherine Solis, the Johansson-Stödborg family, the Johansson-Götmark family, and the Jhowrys for encouragement, support and friendly queries on my work over the years.

A heartfelt thanks to my sister Maria, for your love and absolute loyalty – and for your perfect sense of humour! Also thank you,

Aline, Philip, Victor and Adam for great company over the years, and for being the wonderful people that you are.

My deepest gratitude goes to my parents, Inger and Torbjörn, who have been important to this work in countless ways. Thank you for practical help and loving support over the years and for your unwavering belief in my creative abilities – your contagious curiosity and warm enthusiasm for the world are what spurred my desire to find things out in the first place. A special thanks to you Torbjörn for valuable help with the final editing of the text.

Finally, the people with whom I share my daily life; Olof and Kerstin, my children – with what words could I possibly thank you? You have enriched my life beyond measure, and I will forever associate the years of writing this thesis with the blissful pattering of small feet running to the door as I come home from university.

And at last, Fredrik, my number one companion on this journey – whose love has carried me through long days of writing with an open heart. I am forever grateful for the kindness, care and practical solidarity that you have showed me during these years – thank you for encouragement, inspiration, and the continuous and ongoing conversation. You have made all of this possible.

To all of you – thank you.

BEGINNINGS

HELSINGBORG 2011. I'd like to start by re-visiting a presentation I gave a number of years ago. I was working as an urban planner in the Planning Office of the City of Helsingborg; my audience was a visiting delegation from Denmark, and my task was to introduce H+, the large-scale harbour regeneration project that I was working on at the time¹. Once the guests were seated, I started the presentation – not with the customary site-map, as I had done in earlier presentations, but with a photo shot by a colleague of mine that depicted a handful of people fishing from a pier in the industrial harbour. Using this photo, I could tell the story of a few individuals who, in order to be able to fish from the pier, had cut a hole in the fence encircling the industrial harbour. Following a semi-established narrative within the regeneration project, I presented this fence-cutting action as the actual starting point for the redevelopment project. I wanted to communicate the idea that the action of cutting open the fence had triggered a de-territorialisation of the industrial harbour, which had been, until that point, inaccessible to the public. In other words, I suggested that the actual cut in the

¹ / H+ is a redevelopment project in the southern district of the southern Swedish city of Helsingborg. Upon completion in 2035, the site will provide housing for 10 000 inhabitants (helsingborg.se/Hplus; Accessed 20 January 2018).

fence made it possible to imagine other forms of habitation within the industrial harbour zone.

Looking back, I have wondered why I chose to start the presentation the way I did. There were certainly a number of more recognised, and probably more accurate, ways to narrate the beginning of the project. Why foreground an act of urban dissidence as inspiration for a large-scale redevelopment project? I returned to planning documents that had been made within the project, hoping to catch sight of the characteristics of the planning culture of which I was a part. What were the common threads running through the early visionary planning documents? What qualities and values were we – i.e. the civil servants of the Planning Office – pursuing at in the early stages of the project²? Although planning documents are a kind of representation containing a multitude of ambitions, there are three aspirations that stand out: the project site is recurrently conceptualised as a site of *public engagement*; an area for *tolerance and diversity*; and a search for more *inclusive modes of working* within public-led urban planning. The vision states that: “a broad spectrum of actors will be invited to participate in the search for new forms and functions in the area” (Helsingborg stad 2011a, p. 25, my translation). It is further affirmed that local initiatives and temporary land-use are to be encouraged and stimulated, with the overall

2 / It should be said here that H+ has changed since the day of my presentation in 2011. The project was transformed somewhat in 2012, when a political decision was made to postpone construction of a subterranean railway cutting through the city centre. The decision not only changed the project’s physical and economical conditions, but also, I suggest, its understanding of its own agency.

objective of making H+ a site of ‘collaboration, community and diversity’ (Helsingborg stad 2011b, p.36; my translation)³. All in all, great emphasis is placed on public engagement, and on the making of public spaces.

Taking into consideration a number of recent urban design projects in Scandinavia, I suggest that the aspirations to create inclusive urban spaces are in no way exclusive to H+. Just as the history of modernist planning is full of intentionally iconic spaces produced with a wish to foster a sense of admiration or modesty in people, the values and hopes of our time are manifested in the spaces we make today, and visions to make cities inclusive and socially sustainable seem to be commonly adopted now for the making and shaping of public spaces. In situations when housing segregation is continuously growing, planners turn to the hopeful idea that inclusive public spaces will promote a more cohesive society. Public spaces are made to support civic engagement and community activities, as well as to foster tolerance and new ways of living with differences. In response to segregation and social and spatial exclusion, the making

3 / In response to that aspiration, a number ‘free spaces’ should be established. The idea behind those ‘free spaces’ is to leave certain areas untouched in the initial part of the urban renewal process, as a reserve for future initiatives and temporary uses proposed by the public. They are conceptualized as a complementary kind of public space – as sites of public engagement, which should ideally be managed and maintained by civic groups. Although no ‘free spaces’ have been established in Helsingborg at the time of writing, they are an interesting example of a designerly response to aspirations stated in the planning documents for H+: the desire for public engagement, for tolerance, as well as for more inclusive modes of working with municipal planning.

of public space is increasingly seen as capable of generating social values of closeness and diversity in Scandinavian cities. The power of public spaces to foster social aspirations and behaviours may be strong; once built however, they exist in their own right and will affect how people who use them act and their ways of being together in the city, as well as, I suggest, what they hope for in terms of shared urban life. It has been argued that the symbolic use of public space is particularly important in the creation of new imaginaries of society (Amin 2008). In this thesis, I adopt the view that the way in which public spaces are conceptualized and shaped through municipal urban planning and urban design is a reflection of the kind of society that is broadly regarded as desirable.

Parallel to the increased interest in inclusive public spaces, there seems to be a growing scepticism as to whether the traditional paradigm of planning can bring about the desired remodelling of public space; a doubt that asks for new or alternative ways of conceptualising and working with urban design and planning. Let us return to Helsingborg. Framing a large-scale project as the continuation of an act of urban disobedience could, perhaps rightfully, be seen as a cynical use of the drive of community engagement, but regarding that as the only explanation would be an oversimplification. I recall that despite a number of conflicting loyalties, there was a genuine ambition among a number of planners to find ways to make the practises of municipal urban planning and urban design in Helsingborg relevant for locals. In the light of the urban planners' aspirations, placing the story of fishers at the heart of the H+ project may be seen as an attempt to incorporate local accounts of the harbour area from outside of the dominant perspectives and stories

– successful or not, it could be seen as an attempt to act critically from within the municipality by acknowledging the making of urban space as situated and collective work.

I am an architect active in urban planning. At a certain point, I decided to take a hiatus from my practise position as an urban planner and undertake doctoral studies in architecture. My decision to enter research was motivated by a wish to address concerns that I brought from practise, closely linked to the quest for *collaboration, community and diversity*, as stated in the vision of H+. How, I asked myself at the time, could rather general political concepts like these be translated to actual design strategies? Or more specifically, how could public spaces be made in response to a call for community open to collaboration as well as diversity? Those questions called for a broad study of the ways in which public spaces are made, so as to allow a revision of the ways in which influence and control are distributed between professional, activist and civic formations, but also for a revision of the ways in which community is thought, built and enacted within urban planning.

The search for community *and* diversity in public space made me want to explore how public spaces could be devoted to particular interests, groups or uses, and still be inclusive. The tension between spaces designated for particular interests and spaces with universal qualities soon surfaced as a central problem; thus, another concern was added to my initial question: how can municipal urban planning and urban design embrace diversity and differences without

losing the promise to make spaces for all⁴? Together, these three concerns – explorative makings of public space, the search for community and diversity in public space, and the tension between particular and general interests in the making of public space – constitute the main points of departure for this thesis. I subscribe to an approach to architecture in which the social and the material are considered inseparable, and continuously produced by their relations. I understand planning and architecture as *relational practices*; the professional architect or planner is seen as one of many actors engaged in the production of public spaces. Here, I concur with Jeremy Till (2009), who suggests that the duty of the architect is not only, or primarily, to make objects, but also to support and facilitate others as co-creators⁵.

My work is located in the intersection of the three large themes urban design, public space, and community, and more explicitly in the intersection of theoretical notions of community and the hands-on design of public spaces. It is my hope that this thesis will be of relevance to those involved in the many processes of making public spaces, as well as to anyone engaged in the broader discipline

4 / For an extended discussion of this dilemma, see Mukhtar-Landgren (2012), who places the quest for diversity in relation to planning's broader obligation to serve 'a general public' (p. 148).

5 / Till writes: "The key ethical responsibility of the architect lies not in the refinement of the object as static visual product, but as contributor to the creation of empowering spatial, and hence social, relationships in the name of others" (Till 2009, p. 178).

of urban design, including research, theory and education, and interested in the unstable and lived ecologies hidden in the well-worn notions of community and public space.

INCREASED TRUST IN PUBLIC SPACE, DECREASED TRUST IN PLANNING?

In response to segregation and social fragmentation, public space is increasingly conceptualized in planning practice and theory as a device for fostering openness towards differences (Mukhtar-Landgren 2012). At the same time, there is a growing scepticism regarding whether the traditional planning paradigm can produce the kind of transformative public spaces that are desired. Drawing on the early planning documents from H+, the movement appears to be dual: on the one hand, there is increased trust in the transformative potential of public space, and on the other, a decrease in trust in the traditional urban planning tools among planners themselves, articulated through an increased interest in novel or unexplored working methods. This rather unstable condition is by no means exclusive to H+, and it will also be reviewed in relation to other recent makings of public space in this thesis.

The following section will briefly introduce discussions on public space and urban design with direct or indirect bearing on my work. First, I discuss the growing interest in public space and the debate on the value of diversity in public space among planners and urban

scholars. I then turn to the changing ways of working with urban planning and design in Swedish (and to some extent Danish) municipalities.

PUBLIC SPACE AND THE PROMISE OF CO-PRESENCE

From a planning perspective, public space has not always been regarded with the same enthusiasm as it is today. Confidence in public space as a societal asset hit a low in the late 1980s, when the management of parks and public squares was often seen as more of a problem than an asset for a city (Hajer and Reijndorp, 2001). Drawing on earlier advocates for vibrant city life such as Jane Jacobs (1961) and Jan Gehl (1987), perceptions of public space started to change in the 1990s. Many European cities began engaging in the revitalisation of existing city centres and public spaces⁶. Swedish cities were no exception; in addition to government-powered attempts to enhance the quality of public spaces, commercial interests in public space started to increase as retailers organised with the shared objective of attracting people to the city

6 / Among the more influential cities to make major investments in public space was Barcelona, whose strategy was to use the 1992 Summer Olympic Games as a catalyst for extensive urban renewal. By making large public investments in the regeneration of public spaces, the city managed to convince private stakeholders to follow suit (Rowe 2006). For a description of how Barcelona used the 'Olympic opportunity', see Rowe 2006.

centres. New economic realities also played a part in the growing interest in urban public life; salaries had increased and working hours decreased in the preceding decades. There were more people with more money to spend on shopping and dining out, and equally importantly, with more time to spend on leisure (Kärrholm, 2012). The increased use of mobile phones in the 1990s also played a role in what has later been described as a renaissance of the city⁷.

Parallel to this development, city- and place-branding strategies were gaining ground. Policies based on the idea that cities compete globally for new and highly educated inhabitants, new businesses and investments, created a symbolic economy that turned the image of the city into a commodity in itself (Sorkin 1992, Zukin 2010, Kärrholm 2012)⁸. The new interest in the image of the city made

7 / In the 1990s, 'city associations' (*cityföreningar*) were established as joint ventures throughout Sweden, linking the city administration to property owners and traders. Around the same time, Swedish municipalities started to use 'urban design programs' (*stadsmiljöprogram*) as a tool to make inner cities more attractive through the introduction of certain colour schemes and other design policies (Bergman 2003, Kärrholm 2012). In spite of an increased interest in 'local identities', general features were employed, such as a specific colour on all of a city's street furniture, why one could argue that the urban design programs failed to break with the modernist tradition of standardized design solutions.

8 / Zukin (1995) has used the revitalisation of Bryant Park in New York City as an example of what she calls 'domestication by cappuccino'; i.e. an expansion of commercial activities and increased governance through surveillance and a scheme of upgraded maintenance. The notion of domestication by cappuccino was later picked up by Rowland Atkinson (2003) in his critical examination of a number of strategies used for creating safe public spaces.

city administrations increasingly attentive to the production and maintenance of safe and attractive public spaces⁹. Attractive public spaces were now seen as a competitive advantage, and it is in the light of this thinking that the central role assigned to public space in recent municipal urban planning practices must be understood. In Scandinavia, the increased interest in public space has more recently resulted in numerous municipal policies with the objective to enhance 'public life'; i.e. to make people use urban public spaces more often and in new ways (see e.g. Københavns kommune 2009, Göteborgs stad 2012, Oslo Kommune 2014). The emphasis on encounters between strangers in public space and the confidence in co-existence as a way to create socially sound cities are common themes in municipal planning documents. The creation of public spaces characterized by urban diversity rarely emerges separately from economical motives. On the contrary, such attempts will often operate side by side with, or in close relation to, commercial interests. Many development projects have identified investments in public space as a way to achieve desired atmospheres of 'city-living' and urbanity, hence as a tool to increase the value of the surrounding land. Furthermore, from a political perspective, integration and

9 / Not only did the new IT-technology (cell phones and internet) change people's behaviour in favour of spending more time out and about in the city, they also enabled new structures for social activism. In the 1990s, in the wake of anti-globalisation movements and parallel to the city authorities' increased emphasis on 'urbanity, Europe saw a new wave of social movements using the city in new ways. Demonstrations were no longer necessarily linear and mass-oriented, but happened at several places at once and took on the form of street parties and festivals (Stahre, 2010).

social stability are increasingly discussed in terms of cost-reduction (Dahlin and Carlander, 2016).

Ideas of the transformative potential of encounters between strangers in public spaces are by no means new¹⁰. Although the effects of co-presence in public space are difficult to measure, some scholars see encounters with strangers in public space as desirable¹¹, arguing that the exposure to otherness is essential for a society to be inclusive (see e.g. Sennett 1999). Building on feminist theory, writers such as Iris Marion Young (1990, 2004) and Leonie Sandercock (1998) advocate the significance of public spaces as an arena for developing openness and tolerance through encounters among and within diverse groups and sub-publics. It has been suggested that an un-oppressive city must have public places "where anyone can speak and anyone can listen" (Young 1990, p. 240). The idea of spaces in which interaction happens, but where strangers remain strangers, is linked to the notion of public

10 / We find this idea in Aristotle, who saw cities as places where strangers with different backgrounds, traditions and lifestyles meet. In Georg Simmel and Walter Benjamin, we find the celebration of the city as a site of strangers, where anonymity and brief encounters have replaced the close social ties of village life.

11 / It has been suggested that this intermingling is typical for humankind as such. Sonesson and Sandin suggest (2016) that co-presence in open (public) city space is central to the evolution of human culture. The positive effects of co-presence in public space are also advocated by e.g. Ann Legeby, who sees the sharing of space as a central part of 'being in society', as it gives us the possibility to "participate in processes that negotiate social structures, acceptable behaviours and identities" (2013, p. i).

realm. Public realm is often discussed alongside public space, and may be defined as a condition where most people are personally unknown to each other.

The suggestion that co-presence will translate into respect for difference is not undisputed. Gill Valentine (2008) refers to a number of studies (Amin 2002, Dines and Cattell et al. 2006) when arguing that co-presence has been overrated as a catalyst for change, maintaining that it often produces little actual mixing or exchange between strangers¹². Meaningful contact often fails to establish itself in public spaces, as groups and individuals tend to self-segregate in particular spaces (Valentine 2008). Doreen Massey (2005) takes a similar standpoint when suggesting that co-presence, or what is referred to as 'throwntogetherness', is not sufficient to make meaningful contact that traverses differences happen¹³. Maarten Hajer and Arnold Reijndorp (2001) suggest that pleasant public spaces are not characterized by neutrality, but by the strong presence of certain interests and usages. The main quality of public space is

12 / Another line of interpretation is to be found in readings on cosmopolitanism, the emergence of hybrid cultures and the impact, that transnational connections, i.e. the flow of people, capital and ideas, have on physical urban space (Sassen 2007, Hannerz 1996, King 2004).

13 / Related theories can be found in post-colonial theory, where discussions on representation, ethnicity and space have contributed to an expanded understanding of non-neutral spaces (Edward Said 1978, Arjun Appadurai 1996, and Dolores Hayden 1995). Other critics have pointed to the risk of larger structures of the city being overlooked if the intersection of theories of living together and urban planning primarily focus on the scale of micro-publics and specific 'sites of encounter' (Amin 2002, Sarraf 2015).

thus not the number of potential encounters between individuals and groups there, but its status as a space in which different ways of being are confronted, and where people are ultimately inspired to change their perspectives (Hajer and Reijndorp, 2001, p. 89); this suggestion raises the question of whether the experience of co-existence can be intensified in public spaces.

In relation to the criticism of co-presence, a relatively large body of feminist research by scholars such as Doreen Massey, bell hooks and Gill Valentine has rejected the idea that space can ever be neutral by highlighting gendered aspects of space. So, what characterizes a non-neutral space? The question remains rhetorical. Although some spaces are more noticeably dedicated to a specific function or activity, there are no spaces that stay neutral in the sense that they remain equally open to all activities and individuals. Mundane experiences, such as sitting on a bench in the park, illustrate how one specific use can rule out all other uses in that space at that moment: no one else can sit or do anything else on the part of the bench that I am occupying – my activity impedes any other activity that could have taken place there.

I understand public space as characterized by social, political and cultural expressions, as well as by the interests of specific groups or individuals. With this approach, and drawing on my cases, I argue in this thesis that the widely held notions of public space as a neutral arena open to all ought to be challenged. Drawing on the discussions in this section, I moreover suggest that community in public space may be investigated through social formations able to support relations that last longer than brief encounters between strangers, but also through co-existence as an intensified and deepened experience.

I will return to discuss these two possibilities in the thesis, primarily in Chapters Three and Six.

CHANGING MODES OF WORKING: THE SOCIAL TURN IN ARCHITECTURE AND URBAN PLANNING

It has been suggested that we are facing a crisis of the legitimacy of urban planning in northern Europe, due to a general loss of faith in urban planning and its ability to contribute to a coherent society. Urban theorist Kristina Grange (2017, 2014) argues that part of the crisis is due to the way planning is described as an outdated profession, unable to understand and adjust to contemporary society and its particular needs. She suggests that ‘self-perception of failure’ prevents Swedish urban planners from practising professional digression (Grange 2017, p.276), and that a similar understanding of planning as outdated and insufficient is gaining ground in Denmark (Grange 2014)¹⁴. She also suggests that the new political demands and the planners’ self-criticism have resulted in a situation where the space in which planners can act as experts has shrunk in both countries. Drawing on my cases, it seems that a devaluation of more conventional practise has opened the door to minor ways of working, such as experiments dealing with collaborative or open-

14 / In Denmark, this attitude towards planning gained influence through a new national “culture change agenda” that was made in a public–private partnership between the Ministry of the Environment and Realdania. The aim of the new agenda was not primarily to change the regulations of planning, but the planning culture in Denmark (Grange 2014).

source configurations and design processes deriving from particular interests and personal narrations. Adding to Grange’s argumentation, I suggest that the professional ambiguity has not solely diminished the space of action for planners; it has also expanded it in new directions.

As will be seen in my cases, design strategies influenced by artistic and activist practices raise questions about the outline of public space design led by municipalities today. Such contemporary urban design practices should be seen in relation to the modernist planning paradigm and its penchant for general or all-embracing solutions, but also, I suggest, in the light of previous moments of professional re-evaluation among urban planners and designers. Central to a modernist approach was the conviction that urban planning could work through unifying subjects such as ‘the people’. This world-view continued to a great extent in the modernist notion of the ‘the user’ – a term that was widely used among architects and planners from the 1950s and onwards (Forty 2000)¹⁵. As the specifics of users’ identities are not addressed, differences are overlooked. A consequence of that thinking is that the category as such will

15 / As Forty also points out, Henri Lefebvre was one of the more influential voices to criticize defining urban dwellers as ‘users’. In *The Production of Space* (1991), he argues that the use of the term ‘user’ to refer to urban dwellers makes generalizations at the expense of specific lived experiences, with the consequence that it makes people unable to see themselves as anything but an abstraction (Lefebvre 1991). He was primarily criticizing the way the term was used as a device in modern urban planning, and not the term itself. As a contrast, Lefebvre offered an emancipatory understanding of the ‘user’. He saw people’s appropriation and use of a space as the main way to counteract spatial domination.

collapse as soon as the 'user' takes on a specific identity – at least if that specific identity differs from the imagined average human. Although the 'user' was conceptualized as a universal urban dweller without age, gender, ethnicity and belonging to no social class, it was however often depicted with the particularities of the male, adult, physically able body, which became universal¹⁶ – with the perhaps single exception of the Swedish studies of kitchens made in the 1940s, when the woman's body was 'the user'.

The late 1950s and 1960s were characterized by social movements such as the anti-war movement, the civil rights movement (primarily in the United States), and emerging environmentalist as well as feminist movements¹⁷. Alongside concerns of representation, material issues concerning urban poverty and insufficient housing were raised through these social movements. A growing number of architects and urban planners now called for the replacement of the early modernist models of the city with new models of city development that would allow complexities and better meet the needs of specific groups. In her seminal critique of the modernist planning paradigm, Jane Jacobs (1961) argues that modernist planning destroyed cities by rejecting their very fundamentals, namely

16 / This is illustrated for instance by Le Corbusier's 'modular man'.

17 / Moreover, the desire to change society was expressed through various approaches ranging from a culture of do-it-yourself constructions in the hippie movement in the USA (see Jacopetti, Vanmeter and McCall, 1977), to the artistic and socio-critical experiments of the Situationist International (SI, an organisation founded in 1957, drawing on avant-garde art movements and anti-authoritarian Marxism) in Europe (Fezer 2012, p.168 ff.).

complexity and chaos¹⁸. Although far from Jacobs' requests, the demands on the built environment changed with the expansion of the welfare state in the 1960s. Architects were asked to make architecture that communicated equality on a societal level. As interest in community grew (Smithson 1957, Jacobs 1961), many initiatives were also taken to support and strengthen local communities. The need for planners to address neglected or underprivileged groups was further articulated by Paul Davidoff (1996), who coined the term advocacy planning. Davidoff (1965) saw the modernist practices of urban planning and its habit of making 'singular strategies' – i.e. ignoring all interest conflicts – as an obstacle to pluralism (Checkoway 1994, p.142). He argued that democratic values and pluralism could be promoted by advocating the interests of weak or oppressed groups, that is, by becoming an advocacy planner. In Sweden at this time, the challenges of organizing life in growing cities increased the interest in neighbourhood units constructed with public, or publicly accessible, spaces in close connection to

18 / In contrast to modernist planning, Jacobs (1961) celebrates the inner city neighbourhood characterized by high density, mixed use and a vibrant street life. A similar request for a reinvented sensitivity towards the complexity of the social life of a city can be found in Jan Gehl's *Life Between Buildings* from 1971 (translated to English in 1987), where he advocates car-free environments in which public life can thrive.

local centres¹⁹. In spite of the interest in the local neighbourhood, the public spaces of the neighbourhood units were often generic and applicable anywhere. It seems as if the philosophy behind that was still part of a modernist thinking of a general, nonspecific public; the shift of focus from 'user' to 'community' did not change as much as one might imagine in terms of the actual designed spaces.

Although the critique of the 1960s and 1970s generated new and radical ideas of urban participation and distribution of power to the public, it did not manage to transform the established planning institutions in the way that many had hoped it would. Planning theorists Lehtovuori and Varna (2017) suggest that one reason why urban planning practices remained relatively unchanged during the 1970s was that they were part of a 'well-oiled system' that benefitted those interested in stable markets and property values (Lehtovuori and Varna 2017, p. 95). Although urban planning institutions remained relatively indifferent to the criticism, some of the ideas from the 1970s have managed to live on and affect planning practises up until now – in particular, I am thinking of expanded notions of local democracy and public participation.

Local democracy became a major concern in Sweden during the 1970s and 1980s. The notion of 'citizen dialogue' (*medborgardialog*)

19 / A phenomenon that can be studied in the so-called ABC-plans popular in Sweden at the time. ABC-planning was introduced in Stockholm, Sweden by the architect Sven Markelius around 1954. ABC stands for Arbete, Bostad, Centrum – i.e. Work, Housing and Centre (Franzén & Sandstedt 1981).

was developed in response to a request for new modes of citizen participation in urban planning²⁰. The wish to revitalize local democracy through more inclusive modes of urban planning has been approached in numerous ways since then. Today, most Swedish municipalities have incorporated forms of citizen participation, beyond the legal requirements, into their practice, but certain weaknesses have been identified in many recent municipal-led 'participatory projects'; one is the lack of evaluation. The projects are rarely followed up in a sufficient way, and thus tend to remain 'one-offs', with a limited influence on regular working procedures (Tahvilzadeh 2014). Another problem is the disappointment that may follow participatory processes where professional planners are assigned the task of mediating between inhabitants/public and political power, but in fact lack any real possibilities to change the outcome. Under such unfortunate circumstances, participatory planning runs the risk of becoming what Jennifer Mack calls an act of neutralization (2017). She suggests that participation is often used to neutralize critical voices, and to decrease appeals against the plan or project in question. Similarly, critical urbanists have

20 / The benefits of citizen dialogues were re-evoked by Swedish municipalities after the government white paper on the state of democracy in Sweden (*demokratiutredning*) in 2002 (Tahvilzadeh, 2014). The interest in renewing citizen participation ought to be understood in the light of the crisis in Sweden in the 1990s, when the general trust in politicians diminished, the established political parties lost around a quarter of a million members in a relatively short time, and the public sector struggled to keep its commitments with fewer resources (Tahvilzadeh, 2014). For an expanded discussion on the link between global recessions and new planning ideas, see Lehtovuori & Varna (2017).

discussed participatory planning methods as a way to control civic resistance rather than as a real distribution of power (see e.g. McQuarrie 2013). As the limitations of projects aiming at citizen dialogue have been revealed, other approaches to participation have been advocated. It has been suggested that the planner should not ‘mediate’ between actors, but instead act from “the middle together with all actors” (Querrien, Petcou and Petrescu 2013, p. 269). Since the late 1990s, a growing field of architects and urban designers interested in relational forms of urbanism have explored the suggestion to act together with non-professional actors. With reference to the art world, this field of urban practises has been discussed as part of a ‘social turn in architecture’ (Torisson 2018)²¹.

In the last 20 years, we have seen a mainstreaming of temporary interventions and event-based forms of participation around city

21 / Referring to the social turn in the art world, Claire Bishop (2012, p. 2) wrote:

“... the hallmark of an artistic orientation towards the social in the 1990s has been a shared set of desires to overturn the traditional relationship between the art object, the artist and the audience. To put it simply: the artist is conceived less as an individual producer of discrete objects than as a collaborator and producer of situations; the work as a finite, portable, commodifiable product is reconceived as an on-going or long-term project with an unclear beginning and end; while the audience, previously conceived as a ‘viewer’ or ‘beholder’, is now repositioned as a co-producer or participant.”

development. One of the more well known actors in this regard is the Berlin-based architecture collective raumlabor, which must be regarded as one of the pioneers in a wave of relational urbanism that influences contemporary urban planning and design²². An increasing number of cities have for instance started to use temporary interventions in public spaces as part of their place marketing strategies²³. Although influential in the discourse on contemporary urbanism, such practises still remain a complement to procedures of urban planning regulated by law²⁴. While activities that are productive, such as traveling to work, and reproductive, such as buying necessities, are often continuously organised by rather traditional modes of working, experimentation is mainly reserved for activities and spaces relating to leisure and entertainment (Kronsell, Mukhtar-Landgren 2018). Considering this distinction, the makings of

22 / raumlabor explicitly positions itself against modernist, rational planning on its homepage: “yes we do love the great ideas of the 60s 70s and the optimism which is inherent in changing the world at the stroke of a pen to the better, but we strongly believe that complexity is real and good and our society today does need a more substantial approach. therefore our spatial proposals are small scale and deeply rooted in the local condition...[sic]” (raumlabor.net, accessed 9 October 2015).

23 / One early example of municipally-initiated temporary public space is “Paris Plages”, an artificial urban beach that has been installed on a roadway along the banks of the Seine every summer since 2002. Paris Plages has become almost iconic, and many cities around Europe and North America have been inspired to install their own city beaches.

24 / It has been suggested that the contemporary municipality is placed in between a ‘hierarchical logic’ of formal and legal regulations, and a ‘horizontal logic’ characterized by collaborations and network governance (Kronsell and Mukhtar-Landgren 2018).

public space are strong localities for studying the relation between communities and explorative practises of urban design. I suggest that, to a large extent, experiments with urban planning – and hence with community – take place in the making of public space in Sweden today.

There is always a risk of exaggerating the novelty of trends in the present, but when considering contemporary urbanism, I suggest that there is also a risk of failing to see significant changes, since changes are plural and uncoordinated. On a related note, Metzger (2011) suggests that we are facing a condition where planning practices are “all the more seldom guided by formal statutes, guidelines, or frameworks for democratic accountability, transparency, and legitimacy” (2011, p.192) – a situation that calls for a major revision of the democratic procedures of urban planning and its ethical responsibilities. As a professional practise, urbanism has changed continually through an incalculable number of processes that together generate change that is heterogeneous; it is thus impossible to fully embrace what we call ‘contemporary urbanism’. My thesis is situated in the now, and although the present has shown itself to be a powerful site for investigations of community without unity, it exposes the future as open and to some extent always unforeseen. With this humbling insight in mind, I have attempted to understand more about the changing practises of contemporary urbanism through studies of the design elaborations that my cases represent.

Although features such as temporal interventions and event-based place building that we see in urban design practises today are far from new, they have never before been mainstreamed within urban planning. For this reason, I suggest that the broad contemporary search for openness and diversity represents a break with

the modernist tradition in architecture and urban planning. The Nordic City Network has published extensively on the topic of professional change, addressing efforts to develop collaborative planning practices as one of the greatest challenges of our time, and as a leap into something entirely new (2015, p.3). Although I question the suggestion that we stand before the birth of an entirely new planning paradigm, I do suggest that this represents a professional struggle to adjust to what it perceives as changing realities – and this struggle may in itself be the force that is making urbanism change²⁵. Drawing on that suggestion, and in relation to shifting notions of community, I see the relation between experimental urban practices, and more conventional municipal planning, as an increasingly interesting object of study.

PURPOSE AND AIMS

The overall purpose of this thesis is to contribute to an expanded and nuanced discussion about how communities open to diversity may be enacted and supported by architecture and urban design in shared or public spaces.

²⁵ / Lehtovuori and Varna (2017) suggest that major professional shifts are often preceded by an exploratory period of testing and experimentation. They exemplify for instance with the critical thinking within art and theory in the 1950s and 1960s, which opened the door for planners to think anew in the 1970s (Lehtovuori and Varna 2017, pp. 95-96).

The study has been guided and structured by the following three research questions:

- How can community be conceptualized in increasingly diverse urban situations?
- How do tensions between difference and connection play out in recently built public spaces that have been designed to embrace diversity?
- What professional practices of planning and what kind of urban design have the potential to support communities that are not defined by homogeneity and unity, but instead encompass diversity and difference?

These questions are discussed primarily through the study of two recent makings of public space whose stated aims have included diversity: Superkilen (*The Super Wedge*) in Copenhagen, Denmark, and Jubileumsparken (*The Jubilee Park*) in Gothenburg, Sweden. The public space Superkilen in central Copenhagen has attracted a great deal of attention since opening in 2012 for its principal design gesture – to collect more than 100 objects from around the world. Jubileumsparken is a temporary park that has been continuously in development since it opened in 2014. It is framed by Gothenburg's city administration as a pre-run to a new city park scheduled for completion in 2021, when the city will celebrate its 400th anniversary. I analyse both spaces through the tension of two opposing, yet related, conceptualizations of community: *Community of the Affected* (Marres 2012), and *Inoperative Community* (Nancy 1991). By putting those theoretical concepts in dialogue with my empirical findings, I identify two contrasting approaches to community in

public space that result in two different kinds of spaces when guiding design processes; these are referred to here as *Spaces of Collective Care* and *Spaces of Being-in-Common*²⁶.

On the basis of the two spaces Superkilen and Jubileumsparken, a number of design strategies are identified and investigated through which communities open to difference may arise. Together, they display a professional commitment to experimental forms of urbanism, transforming established practice of urban design from within the planning institutions. Drawing on the notion of a minor literature, described by Deleuze and Guattari (1986) as a minoritarian way of writing in a majoritarian language, I develop the notion of a Minor Urbanism to discuss transformative and suggestive urban design practices of this kind – and their ability to contribute to public spaces for community open to diversity.

OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS

Chapter One contains philosophical and methodological discussions relevant to the aims and objectives of this thesis. The chapter is divided into four sections, of which the first two, *Criticality from Within* and *Follow the Actors*, seek to establish an understanding of the situated, relational ontology on which this research is built. The

²⁶ / When I speak of contrasting approaches here, my intention is not to produce opposition, but to investigate and deepen the meaning of community by addressing it through dissimilar notions linked by shared concerns.

third section, *Designing the Field of Inquiry*, discusses the interplay of theory, method, and empirical work particular to this thesis. The fourth and final section, *Empirical Work: Designing the Fieldwork* describes, as the title indicates, the design of the empirical work of the thesis. This section includes comments on observational techniques that have been used and reflections on the choice of case studies.

In Chapter Two, the theoretical ground for discussions on the Minor is established through a number of reflections where the minor draws primarily from Deleuze and Guattari's notion of *Minor Literature*, but is also discussed in relation to architecture and theory. The chapter is divided into four sections: *Minor Literature*; *Minor Theory*; *Minor Architecture*, and *Minor Urbanism*.

Chapter Three presents and discusses theoretical approaches to the notion of community. The chapter is divided into three sections, the first of which, *The Local Community*, seeks to establish an understanding of conventional uses of the term community. The second and third sections, *Community of the Affected* and *The Inoperative Community*, introduce two contrasting theoretical concepts of community and make up the theoretical framework for later discussions on community without unity, developed in Chapter Six.

Chapter Four accounts for the empirical inquiry of Superkilen, the first of two public spaces studied in depth in this thesis. The chapter is divided into three sections. After an introduction of Superkilen as a space and a project, the first section, *Opening June 2012*, accounts for experiences from the inauguration of Superkilen. The second section, *Re-visit June 2017*, accounts for the use of the space experienced through observations and interviews.

The transformation of the space over time – and new perspectives on the notion of *Minor Urbanism* gained through the empirical work – are also discussed here. The third and final section of the chapter, *Design Strategies at Superkilen*, discusses three design strategies identified at the site: *Aesthetic Disruption*, *Objects as Openers*, and *Archival Space*. This last section draws on observations made at six occasions.

Chapter Five presents the empirical study of the second empirical case of this thesis, Jubileumsparken. The chapter follows a similar structure as Chapter Four – first, there is an introduction to Jubileumsparken as a site and a project. The first section, *Opening, February 2015*, depicts the opening of the public sauna, and the following second section, *Re-visit May 2017*, accounts for experiences, observations and conversations from a re-visit to the site in May 2017. The site is discussed in relation to theories of minor urbanism and empirically-driven insight on the risk of working with pre-defined categories or groups are discussed here. The third section, *Design Strategies at Jubileumsparken*, draws on observations from five occasions, and discusses three particular design strategies of the space: *Suggestive Prototyping*, *Exclude to Include*, and *Spaces of Commitment*.

Chapter Six seeks to deepen the discussion on community open to difference by putting the empirical findings from Superkilen and Jubileumsparken in dialogue with the theoretical framework established in Chapter Three. Chapter Six is divided into three sections, the two first of which, *Spaces of Collective Care* and *Spaces of Being-in-Common*, discuss Superkilen and Jubileumsparken through two contrasting understandings of spaces of community. The third section, *The Anatomy of Community*, develops these discussions

further by addressing the tension between the two understandings of community established in the previous sections. In relation to empirical findings, it also revisits a tension discussed in Chapter Five, namely planning's ambition to design spaces for everyone on the one hand, juxtaposed with aspirations to make spaces in response to particular interests or groups on the other. Community is discussed with the help of an analytical graph on which particular situations/spaces from Superkilen and Jubileumsparken are situated.

Chapter Seven develops the notion of a *Minor Urbanism* by addressing empirical findings through the theoretical notions of minor literature established in Chapter Three. The chapter's three sections follow Deleuze and Guattari's three characteristics of a minor literature: The first section, *Deterritorialization: Transforming Professional Roles*, is an attempt to account for minor ways of practising urban planning from within established professions or institutions – and to doing it in a suggestive and playful way. The second section, *Politicization: The Double Movement of the Minor*, foregrounds the potential of a minor urbanism by pointing to its ability to engage in two powerful movements at once: dissent and creation. The third section, *Collective Enunciation: Expanding the Actors that Matter*, draws on empirical findings in its call for an expansion of the actors – both human and non-human – that are considered important in the making of public space. It is argued that a minor urbanism has the potential to stay open to attachments between people and things through its experimental approach to the making of urban space. Minor practices' possible impact on major planning is also discussed in this chapter.

The final discussion of this thesis, *Towards a Minor Urbanism: Thinking Community Without Unity in Recent Makings of Public Space*,

closes this book with a concluding discussion on the outcome of the particular studies and their theoretical anchoring. Following the suggestion that understandings of community without unity cannot be established as a once-and-for-all attempt, this last part also seeks to open up for further investigations on spaces for community in diverse urban situations. A further elaboration of the notion of a minor urbanism is also outlined as a possible continuation of this study.

1

APPROACHES AND METHODOLOGICAL DISCUSSIONS

THIS WORK ORIGINATES FROM an interest in public space as sites where different modes of being together in the city are played out, but also from an interest in the urban design practises producing new public spaces. If studied together, would the two fields of inquiry – the processes of making new public spaces, and the actual use of those spaces – say something about the ways in which community is imagined and lived in contemporary Scandinavian cities?

Questions of various nature have guided my work continuously, some of them brought from practise, and others emerging along the way when reading and reflecting on a broad number of subjects relating to the social, political, and material dimensions of urban design, community and public space. My work is driven by genuine curiosity – for better or worse, I have not set out to test a hypothesis. Instead, I have endeavoured to follow Isabelle Stengers' (2015a) advice to the researcher: to try to pay attention as well as one can. In connection to my field of interest, I have traced relations and searched for connections, sometimes before knowing what particular data I was looking for. My broad empirical search was later narrowed by the theoretical concepts that I found useful to my investigations. I have chosen to recreate a similar order here in the final thesis. In this chapter, I discuss the methodological and philosophical approaches that have guided my work and the choices I have made – i.e. how I have conducted the research, hence presenting the ontological ground on which this thesis rests, before going into deeper, specific theoretical discussions in the two subsequent chapters.

One of the greatest challenges of this thesis has been working with contemporary conditions, always chasing the disappearing now in terms of the physical spaces, but also in terms of modes of working. My work is situated in the instance usually referred to as 'our time'. Although much has been said on the hardships of theorizing the present moment, it has also been suggested that the present is a powerful site for the making of architectural theory, as it demands that the researcher engage with the near and not-yet definite future (Runting 2018). By acknowledging time as a critical element, and by following my cases over the span of several years, I have grown to understand them as changing time-spaces. I have not followed them uninterruptedly during this time, but I have always returned with "new eyes". This rhythm has helped me to catch sight of subtle changes of use, atmospheres, and materialities of the spaces; I have been able to trace how the spaces have developed over time, and the development has at times been dramatic. Jubileumsparken has to a large extent been developed and constructed in the time of my writing, and the number of actors mobilized around the process of building the park has grown as the projects have developed over time. New strategies and ways of working have also been introduced over the years of my study. In the same time, Superkilen has been altered and adjusted to meet new needs and circumstances – the flooring has, for instance, been changed from rubber to tile. In conclusion, the material that I study – i.e. the spaces, projects, practices and phenomena – has not been static during my observation, but in constant change and transformation, a condition

that has demanded me to stay open and to follow the actors I have encountered.

Although I have visited the sites on multiple occasions, in this thesis I have chosen to highlight one early and one late visit to each site. The early visits are called the *openings* – i.e. the inauguration of Superkilen, and the inauguration of the sauna in Jubileumsparken. The later visits are referred to as *re-visits*. By using the word *re-visit*, my intention is to emphasize the evolution of the space, as well as my own process. Although there are some things that have not changed much between my visits in terms of physical appearance or use, I have seen them differently in the light of new insights with which my work has provided me.

CRITICALITY FROM WITHIN

During the time of my study, Jubileumsparken and Superkilen have both become known and recognized, if not famous. Both have been nominated for architectural awards and other honours²⁷, and have received much media attention. As they have become increasingly renowned, the material related to them has become more exten-

27 / A selection of awards and nominations for the two sites: Superkilen: Aga Khan Award for Architecture in 2016; Civic Trust Award in 2013; nominated for the Mies van der Rohe Award in 2013; Excellence in Economic Development Award in 2012.

Jubileumsparken: Sienapriset in 2019; nominated for the Kasper Salin priset in 2015. Moreover, the larger area of Frihamnen won the Swedish Architectural Association's award for best plan (Planpriset) in 2016.

sive and complex. Aside from the empirical material produced at the site, I have been faced with a diverse body of material including You Tube videos, blog posts, social media posts, newspaper articles, school essays, feature material from art, architecture and travel magazines, etc. I have also found myself in many conversations about the spaces I study. Although constantly in a process of selecting and deselecting, I have chosen to embrace the situation by integrating a diverse body of data into my work. Still, it has become impossible to account for all of the actors I have encountered in relation to the spaces. Whilst accepting that impossibility, I have nonetheless sought to avoid excessive rigidity in exclusion when assembling the actors of an event. Isabelle Stengers' article *Introductory Notes on an Ecology of Practices* (2005a) has been particularly helpful in reminding me to stay open to connections and situations that I do not fully understand or recognise. Stengers writes:

What is at stake here is 'giving to the situation the power to make us think', knowing that this power is always a virtual one, that it has to be actualized. The relevant tools, tools for thinking, are then the ones that address and actualise this power of the situation, that make it a matter of particular concern, in other words, make us think and not recognise (2005a, p.185).

Drawing on this, I have striven to challenge my habitual thinking by staying attentive to observations that I do not immediately know what to do with. Thus, to the greatest possible extent, I have avoided making on-site selections about which material to include and what to omit, waiting instead for a later stage of analysing the material at hand. The responsibility of the researcher is, according

to Stengers, to pay attention as well as one can to the particular situation and “not to obey the power of some more general reason” (2005a, p.188). Only then can one sidestep habitual thinking and general modes of explanation. This – leaving judgment and pre-established opinions behind, and remaining open to what is actually happening in a particular situation – is to think in what Stengers calls ‘a minor key’. Thinking in a minor key is thus silencing impulses that draw on pre-conceptions, hence moving away from the sense of knowing how things are. Interrupting the habit of turning to such familiar modes of critical thinking is no easy feat, and striving for embodied research is thus a continuous struggle. Responding to that challenge, I have tried to make broad registers; I have documented and collected seemingly redundant material, observations that might or might not prove useful in the context of this thesis.

Stengers (2005a) suggests that critique that is not primarily about judgment, but more about a lived evaluation where all parts that enter a situation are active co-creators of that event. Isabelle Doucet (2015) brings Stengers’ thoughts on immanent critique to the realm of research; suggesting that embodied and situated ways of doing research make better accounts of the world. Drawing on an article written by the feminist science and technology studies scholar Maria Puig de la Bellacasa’s *Nothing Comes Without its World: Thinking with Care* from 2012, Doucet (2015) argues that researchers who work from ‘within’ will develop a more empathetic approach to what they research, and thus care

about the effects of their research²⁸. The embodied way of conducting research becomes an ethical standpoint. Doucet (2015) expands the discussion on embedded research by conceptualizing a kind of practise that she terms *criticality from within*. By comparing oppositional activism with activist practices that act through collaborations (e.g. with urban policy makers), she advocates the influence of a situated criticality from within, and its potential to act as powerfully as critique articulated in opposition to institutions (Doucet 2015, pp.79-102). The suggestion that criticality must not be delivered from an external viewpoint, but can also emerge from the midst of the specific situation dismisses the requisite to create a critical distance to the object of study.

If there is no purely objective standpoint, but rather a passionate relationship with problems, the task of the researcher is not to search for ultimate explanations, but to consider how stories can be told in meaningful ways, with respect to the situated nature of each object of study (Doucet and Frichot 2018). Calibration of this kind demands a particular kind of listening. Stengers encourages the researcher to position herself in a civilized manner by admitting that her concerns are not universal, but particular. She writes: “Presenting oneself in a civilised manner means presenting oneself in terms of one’s specific matter of concern, that is, admitting that others also

28 / Doucet is inspired by the work of Isabelle Stengers, Rosi Braidotti and Donna Haraway in her discussion on “embodied accounts, based on ethics and care” (Doucet 2015, p. 23).

have their matters of concern, their own ways of having their world matter” (Stengers 2018, p. 101).

On a similar note, Eeva-Liisa Pelkonen²⁹ calls for researchers to stay with the fluidity and messiness of a situations, or, in her words: ‘to stay in the soup’. I have grown fond of this image, also because it indicates that research is conducted from within: staying in the soup means being in the soup, i.e. acting from the middle and together with other subjects. To be in the soup is also to endure the lack of overview. In his book *After Method: Mess in Social Science Research* (2004), John Law argues in the same spirit that slowness and uncertainties must not be avoided in research; we need methods that are able to deal with the messiness of multiple, vague and temporary realities (Law 2004). He draws the discussion further by suggesting that methods are not primarily useful to describe realities, but to *construct them*. To some extent, the choice of method becomes a choice of the realities that one wants to represent, and the representation is a process of construction – therefore, staying in the soup is also to be part of the making of the soup. As I see it, it is also to acknowledge the voices of the others, hence, acknowledging the soup as co-created.

29 / Eeva-Liisa Pelkonen is an associate professor at Yale School of Architecture. I had the opportunity to listen to her at the Making Effect Symposium, at ArkDes, 14-16 September 2017.

Turning to my own research: why does the notion of *criticality -from-within* speak to me³⁰? Earlier work experiences, as well as the fact that I continue to be employed by the municipality of Helsingborg³¹, have made me particularly observant of how I have positioned myself in relation to my research education. Over time, what started out as something I considered a regretful difficulty break free from ‘the mind of the planner’ has gradually developed into an appreciation for the different modes in which I find myself thinking and writing; my position as a student/researcher and urban planner/civil servant is not an *either/or*. My professional roles are by no means exclusive in informing my research. I have drawn valuable insights from a number of other life positions: as a woman thinking twice before going for a late evening walk in the park; as a parent experiencing annoyance when pushing a sibling stroller along a narrow paved street, as well as the considerate care from strangers at the playground; and as a citizen of Lund, seeing the rapid increase of people asking for money in the square I pass through daily on my way to the university – all of these mundane experiences affect my

30 / I worked with two of the project leaders of Jubileumsparken from 2008 to 2012. Moreover, I know the practice of raumlabor from an internship in 2004/2005, and I have used some of the ‘design strategies’ addressed in this thesis myself, e.g. making prototypes, events, and working with commissioned artists.

31 / I have been on unpaid leave from the Municipality of Helsingborg since May of 2012, when I started my PhD studies at the Faculty of Architecture at Lund University. I thus left one public institution (the municipality) and joined another (the university).

view on community and the complex interactions that constitute ‘urban life’.

Inspired by discussions on human geography (Cloke et al. 2004), I have attempted to reflect upon the ways in which my own values and ethical views have sprung out of this position. Although I am critical of many aspects of how urban planning and design are carried out, I remain somewhat sympathetic to urban planners’ professional struggles – a position that cannot be regarded as insignificant in relation to the research I conduct. I suggest that my position as an insider/outsider to the practises I research has been helpful in terms of avoiding drawing premature conclusions. While the student/researcher in me keeps me from blind enthusiasm for the projects I study, the urban planner/civil servant steers away from paralysing criticism by sustaining a projective and pragmatic approach to complicated matters. I have attempted to reflect upon the ways in which I construct and interpret data in relation to this double commitment. Self-reflexivity is a balancing act however (Pile and Thrift, 1995), and during the writing of this thesis, I have tried to avoid responding to the call for self-reflexivity in ways that might generate research that is more focused on the self, and less on issues that matter more in the world.

In line with the affirmative and eventful critique advocated by Stengers (2005a), I think of this thesis as written in the fashion of *a critical friend*, walking alongside the urban design practitioner, conversing on a number of shared concerns. This companion is familiar with the tangled landscape of contemporary urbanism and knows about the professional dilemmas that might arise between

concerns of social exclusion and growing inequality on the one hand, and expectations of competitive forms of city development on the other. While this thesis should not be read with expectations of finding a manual for the making of good or inclusive public space, in it I aim to describe the current conditions I have encountered in ways that may expand the thinking- and acting space shared by urban practitioners and urban scholars.

FOLLOW THE ACTORS

Before I discuss my methodological choices, let us briefly return to Helsingborg. *What happened to the people who cut the hole in the fence?* Once the fence was cut open, a number of people with no other shared concerns than the common wish to fish began using the pier. In the early 1990s, when the fence had been cut open several times, attempts were made to close off the harbour more efficiently. In response, the group of people who were using the pier for fishing got organised under the name of *Västhamsfisket*. Less than a year later, they were granted legal permission to use the pier, on the condition that they would assume responsibility for maintaining the part of the pier that they were permitted to use. The group of people fishing from the pier went from a casual gathering of people who enjoyed the same activity to a membership-based association with its own Facebook page. The pier continued however to be used by a diverse number of people, and at most times of the day. In 2010, the board of *Västhamsfisket* decided to add time regulations, and fishing was only permitted during *Västhamsfisket*’s

opening hours. The decision was underscored by a gate that was kept locked outside of opening hours.

In 2016, there was a controversy between different groups within Västhamnsfisket. Some members suspected that others were not using the pier for recreational fishing, but as their means of livelihood, that is, for commercial purposes. The opening hours were not being respected, and people had been seen with sleeping bags on the pier. There was a recurring question in the discussions on Västhamnsfisket's Facebook page: *Who are the people sleeping at the pier?* Supplementing the gates with electric fencing was discussed, but ultimately dismissed. Instead, new signs were put up stating that fishing outside of opening hours would be reported to the police (www.facebook.com/vasthamnenssportfiskeforening, accessed 10 February 2018). As the story of Västhamnsfisket has unfolded, it has increasingly been about regulations and borders. In 2018, Västhamnsfisket was an association with a board and a proper clubhouse³².

32 / In 2018, Västhamnsfisket had about 450 paying members and its own clubhouse, open every day from 08.00 – 18.00. Annual membership in Västhamnsfisket cost 350 SEK for adults, and members could fish between 05.00 – 23.00 every day of the year (www.vasthamnnsfisket.se, accessed 29 March 2018). When I researched Västhamnsfisket in 2015, the number of nationalities represented in the association was foregrounded on the homepage, but when I visited the homepage three years later, this information was nowhere to be found; I thus draw the conclusion that at some point between 2015 and 2018, the decision was made to remove information about the number of nationalities in the association from the homepage.

The suggestion that objects and technology are able to mobilize people and hence activate communities (Marres 2012) is central to my work. The decision to study two actual spaces, rather than to follow a number of groups or communities, is motivated by the assumption that communities are always also organized by material means. Puig de la Bellacasa (2017) addresses the necessity to see the world as 'more than human', i.e. expands agency beyond the human when trying to understand the mechanisms of care. She writes: "Care is a human trouble, but this does not make of care a human-only matter" (Puig de la Bellacasa 2017, p.2). I suggest that the same can be said about community. Community as it is discussed here is a human 'trouble', but this does not make community a human-only matter. The story of Västhamnsfisket illustrates how community will always and continuously emerge in networks of human and nonhuman relations. This short story shows how a vast number of actors proved themselves to be important in the making of the space as it is today – the people who cut the first hole in the fence, but also a range of other actors: the harbour administrations; the board of Västhamnsfisket; laws and regulations; the fences and gates; the location of the site (and the fact that it is surrounded by sea on three sides and hence easy to close off); the Facebook page of Västhamnsfisket – and possibly also the peak of the migrant influx in Sweden in 2015 and the fluctuating volume of fish in the sea. I will stop here, although the list could be extended by an almost countless number of actors. I also acknowledge that it is my task as

a researcher to make a selection, knowing that the composition is always partial and situated³³.

In the ongoing process of selection – of what to include and what to leave out of the research – I have drawn on approaches from Actor Network Theory (ANT), particularly by the methodological suggestions to ‘follow the actors’ (Law 1991; O’Neill & Whatmore 2000, Latour 2005). Latour goes as far as to suggest that the “task of defining and ordering the social should be left to the actors themselves” (2005 p. 23). The suggestion seemed odd at first, but after having conducted my empirical studies, I feel that I have experienced that at times: what I consider to be my ‘case’ (i.e. the researched network) has grown and reformed itself by actors pointing to other actors, the importance of whom I had been unaware. I am however accountable for the final construction, i.e. how the ‘research story’ is presented and positioned – the research story as ‘situated knowledge’ is my responsibility, as Donna Haraway has pointed out (1988). Although this thesis will in no way do justice to the full complexity of the ontology of ANT, it is influenced by ANT in a broad sense in its way of understanding agency as distributed across human and nonhuman actors (Latour 2005; Latour & Yaneva 2008; Yaneva 2016). I am also inspired by the ways in which strictly humanist definitions of ‘the subject’ have been challenged by feminist philosophers (Haraway 1991, Braidotti

33 / See Yaneva’s book *Five Ways to Make Architecture Political* (2017) for an interesting discussion on the selection, and possible expansion, of actors included in discussions on architecture and its making. Yaneva locates those actors in a diverse network, where the architect is only one part among many.

2006, Rawes 2013) – and how the necessity of seeing architectures as relational and material ecologies has been framed as ‘new materialism’ (Bennett et al. 2010). The relational ontology of ANT has also contributed to an increased awareness of the socio-material dimensions of public spaces, and also, on a methodological note, how such relational dimensions may be studied (Murdoch 1998; Kärholm 2004, 2007; Nilsson 2010; Magnusson 2016; Prieto de la Fuente, 2018).

DESIGNING THE FIELD OF INQUIRY

In addition to being guided by my empirical inquiries, my work has proceeded through an engagement with theoretical concepts from a broad field of scholarly writings. My work on communities engages primarily with two broad discussions with bearing on the understanding of community: 1) the pragmatist discourse on communities established through shared concerns (Noortje Marres, Walter Lippmann, John Dewey, Albena Yaneva and Mattias Kärholm), and 2) the socio-philosophical poststructuralist discourse on community as inoperative or unavowable (Jean-Luc Nancy and Maurice Blanchot). These broad discourses will not be addressed as a whole, but parts of them will be used in relation to my empirical findings.

It is my intention to make the theoretical concepts that I use operational; for this reason, there is no definite boundary between theoretical and empirical work. Any theoretical concept is seen as abstractions through which reality may be disassembled and analysed. Like Stengers (2005a) and Doucet and Frichot (2018),

I prefer to think of concepts as tools that travel from one hand to the other, transformed with every particular situation in which they are used. Concepts are able to change and be changed in each specific situation and through the relations and tensions they enter. Accordingly, I do not strive to create an account where concepts will always sit together harmoniously, but rather to allow for theoretical tensions and contradictions with the expectation that this may contribute to a more generous realm of thought, or even an expanded understanding of the concepts themselves.

Aiming at an embodied understanding of my cases, I have moved back and forth between theory and empirical data collection and sought to remain open to the actual, sometimes messy, situations that I have encountered. While I have allowed myself to work rather intuitively and eclectically, I have done so as systematically as possible and without finalising my findings prematurely. This approach resonates with the methodology Grounded Theory, which was first developed by sociologists Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss in 1965. Grounded theory builds on the idea that “a researcher does not begin a project with a preconceived theory in mind (unless his or her purpose is to elaborate and extend existing theory). Rather, the researcher begins with an area of study and allows the theory to emerge from the data” (Strauss and Corbin 1998, p.12). And yet, one tends to arrive at a ‘research scene’ with a set of assumptions based on readings and certain theoretical tendencies – this, I suggest, cannot be avoided entirely.

At an early stage of my work, I was interested in the notion of *Community of the Affected*, which thus guided my initial field-work-related decisions. I searched for places, times and particular

situations that would give me the chance to catch sight of such community formations (i.e. communities formed around a shared concern). One such situation was the fishing community of Västhamnsfisket mentioned earlier³⁴. At this time, I was also interested in Rosens röda matta (*The red carpet of the rose*)³⁵, a project initiated by Malmö Municipality in which a group of young women were commissioned to make a public space according to their own particular needs. To some extent, Rosens röda matta and Västhamnsfisket can be considered pilots; many questions emerged through my work with these sites, a number of which I have developed and discussed in greater depth through my main cases, Superkilen and Jubileumsparken. Rosens röda matta and Västhamnsfisket are both spaces whose design prioritizes one single activity – at Västhamnsfisket the activity is fishing, and at Rosens röda matta, dancing. This was the main reason why I chose to turn to two other cases when investigating the formation of communities. Although Rosens röda matta and Västhamnsfisket are not investigated and analysed in depth, findings and insights

34 / The example of Västhamnsfisket is primarily based on experiences and material that I collected in the years during which I worked for the municipality of Helsingborg with the harbour redevelopment project H+. It is also based on research on the Internet, i.e. Västhamnsfisket’s homepage and Facebook page.

35 / I visited Rosens röda matta on two occasions: at the opening in September 2013, and a re-visit in November 2013. On both occasions, I took photos and made notes of my observations. I also made films and sound recordings of the opening of the space, as well as conducting a semi-structured interview with one of the project leaders at Rosens röda matta in a café in Malmö (12 January 2015).

derived from my engagement with them are included in my concluding discussions.

In my early survey of Scandinavian publicly-driven urban design projects, I noted what seemed to be a growing interest in projects aimed at engaging people in hands-on forms of community building. This could be seen in the curation of Rosens röda matta, but also in a number of urban gardening projects, for instance at Jubileumsparken. Although this is an interesting development in many ways, I found myself wanting other, complementary accounts of what community could be in our time. As my field studies and my reading broadened and deepened, it became more evident that the notion of *Community of the Affected* – suggesting that communities are created around shared issues – alone was unable to capture what I was interested in. The atmospheres and connections I experienced at Superkilen and Jubileumsparken were more diversified, both in terms of stability and intensity, and more difficult to define. Together, they required a broader theoretical framework.

This is where I turned to Jean Luc Nancy and his critical understanding of the concepts of community (1991, 2000, 2003). Though critical on the verge of cynical, his post-structuralist take on community brought a somewhat hopeful opening to my thinking. In times when community is often discussed as something that must be built or supported in the context of urban design and planning – whether through grassroots initiatives or through curated processes of urban co-creation³⁶ (such as the community gardens mentioned

36 / For an expansion on the concept of Urban Curating, see Meike Schalk's paper *Urban Curating - A Practice of Greater Connectedness* from 2007.

earlier) – it is refreshing, and even liberating, to entertain the thought of *inoperative* forms of community. Nancy suggests that community cannot and must not be produced and made operative; it is a condition of being loosely (yet unavoidably) connected to one another that exists without any intentional work. This conceptualization of community was the missing piece of sorts in my investigation of public space and the quest for community and diversity. Not only did Nancy's notion of *Being-in-Common* (1991) cast new light on the empirical findings I had already assembled; it also affected my subsequent fieldwork. While it would be wrong to say that this theoretical turn made my empirical work easier, I do believe that it was enriched and became more interesting. I was no longer searching primarily for communities shaped by shared concerns, but observing a landscape of various modes and intensities of being related. The tension between *Communities of the Affected* and *Being-in-Common* was now my field of inquiry, and broad and open investigations were necessary in order to observe that field. I would go to my sites for special occasions, but also when there was no particular event going on, to walk around, sit there, and observe what was happening around me. Engaging with the sites in those various ways allowed me to enter into conversations with people in different situations; people spending free time in the spaces – parents, children, elderly, students, tourists and locals – but also people engaging with the spaces in their professional roles – designers, photographers and models, architects and landscape architects, civil servants and planners, maintenance workers,

swimming instructors, 'inventors', caretakers, teachers and early childhood educators.

To conclude, my engagement with the concepts I use has been a back and forth interplay; on the one hand, the theoretical concepts have helped me understand and interpret the empirical data, and on the other hand the social presence of those spaces have informed the concepts themselves. Although theory, method and empirical data were collected and developed together and simultaneously over the years during which this research was conducted, in this thesis, the majority of the theory is presented and discussed in Chapters Two and Three, i.e. before the main part of my empirical data.

EMPIRICAL WORK: DESIGNING THE FIELDWORK

As mentioned earlier, the empirical base for this thesis originates primarily from investigations of two recent public spaces in Scandinavia: Superkilen in Copenhagen, Denmark, and Jubileumsparken in Gothenburg, Sweden. I will briefly introduce the two spaces in the following.

Superkilen is a 750m-long linear public space in the centrally-located district of Nørrebro in Copenhagen. Inaugurated in 2012, it has since gained a lot of attention for its principal design concept: to fill the space with more than a hundred everyday objects from

around the world. The project was initiated and financed by the City of Copenhagen and the Danish association Realdania.

Jubileumsparken is a temporary park in Gothenburg, initiated in 2012 as part of the city's celebration of its upcoming 400-year anniversary, and as part of the major development project Älvstaden in Gothenburg. Jubileumsparken is based on a 10-hectare area in a centrally-located harbour area that is currently under transformation. The temporary park has been developed in phases and includes (in 2018) a number of features such as a beach, a play structure, a roller derby rink, urban gardening, a public sauna, two swimming pools and a small exchange library where visitors of the park can leave or take a book.

The cases were selected for their attention towards urban diversity and for their experimental take on public involvement, carried out through a broad spectrum of processes including temporary events, management plans and various forms of co-creation. Since I am interested in the initial planning process as well as the actual, resultant space, I have searched for projects with a specific approach to planning, and a potential richness of diverse urban life on-site. Superkilen and Jubileumsparken are thus investigated as urban design projects and sites of urban diversity. While this approach has proved challenging at times, it has nevertheless been rewarding, as it has allowed me to discuss the relation between intentions and conceptualisations of public space on the one hand, and lived situations and atmospheres on ground on the other.

Both cases are situated within the context of municipal planning and are hence subject to an extensive set of process-related regulations. I have chosen to engage with Scandinavian projects,

mainly because my initial questions have emerged in that context, and because it allows me to draw on my previous understanding of the Scandinavian (primarily Swedish) planning apparatuses. Superkilen and Jubileumsparken are comparable in scale – they are both relatively large public spaces – as well as in terms of participatory aspirations. Moreover, both are concerned with the notion of urban diversity and deploy a somewhat playful approach when designing for uses and collective practises beyond the expected functions of a city park. I am particularly interested in the intersection of such attempts and the procedures of formal planning, i.e. how questions of diversity and community are addressed within the institutional framework of urban municipal planning in which both projects are situated.

Though different in terms of their design strategies, Jubileumsparken and Superkilen are related in terms of social aspirations. As I understand them, my cases are: 1) publicly-driven urban design projects open to experimental ways of working with urban design, and 2) projects that aim to raise the level of urban diversity and community through a number of design strategies. I have chosen to study Jubileumsparken and Superkilen for those particular qualities, and also because they are contemporary in the strict sense of the word, made immediately prior to and during the period of my study.

PARTICIPANT OBSERVATIONS

In my wish to come close to atmospheres, people and objects, participant observations have been an important part of my empirical work. Participant observation is an established method in

disciplines such as anthropology, ethnology, sociology and geography³⁷. In participation observations, the empirical material is seen as created by the researcher; the researchers' relation to the object of research thus becomes a central concern. It is usually suggested that in order for observation studies to be entirely participatory, the observer must be a proper part of the group being observed. Gillham (2008) argues that this is only possible when the observer is an insider; that is, when she is already part of the group or phenomenon she sets out to observe. Although I draw inspiration from the way in which participant observations are used in the disciplines mentioned above, i.e. as a method with a specific set of rules (see Kawulich 2005), I do not follow those rules in any strict sense. I have adjusted the method to fit my field of inquiry, and the fact that my participatory observations differ from the classic definition is partially due to the nature of the sites I study: Superkilen and Jubileumsparken are spaces in constant change. The unstable and momentary group formations in which I am interested challenge the idea of insider/outsider – sometimes there is simply no group to be part of prior to observing the situation. In situations where temporary collectives are formed, the observer may well become a participant of the group without being part of the group beforehand.

Some of my participant observations have been conducted during formal events related to my cases: the opening of Superkilen, the premiere sauna-session at Jubileumsparken's public sauna, and on two occasions, 'Open Calls' at Jubileumsparken. I have also

³⁷ / In geography for instance, the methodological tradition of participation observation goes back as far as the beginning of the nineteenth century (Cloeke et al. 2004).

joined guided tours at both Jubileumsparken and Superkilen, one of which was conducted by one of the architects behind Superkilen and another of which was conducted by the manager of Passalen, the NGO that is responsible for maintenance at Jubileumsparken. The third guided tour, made especially for me and another PhD-student, was conducted by a citizen representative at Superkilen. I have refrained from engaging in any documentation during the participant observation studies. After each participatory observation session, I made extensive notes of my observations and conversations.

I have talked to an extensive number of people in relation to my two sites of investigation. To organize those conversations, I have placed them in one of three categories; *brief encounters*, *spontaneous conversations*, and *semi-structured interviews*. The category brief encounters includes any kind of brief social interactions: typically the exchange of a few words or sentences, but also the exchange of a look or a smile, and other wordless interactions such as for instance patting a dog, helping a child get water in her bucket at Jubileumsparken, and sharing the large swings at Superkilen. Spontaneous conversations and brief encounters were often initiated similarly: I went to the site where I encountered someone, introduced myself and my research, and tried to start a conversation. Sometimes this resulted in a spontaneous conversation, and sometimes the interaction remained a brief encounter. Although I made no clear definition of which interactions to term spontaneous conversations (in contrast to brief encounters), this did not turn out to be a problem. In the exchanges that I labelled spontaneous conversations, there was always a moment when I left the commonplace 'small talk'

and entered into another kind of more focused exchange. This is not to say that the brief encounters were without value to my work. Quite the contrary: they were essential in giving me an understanding of the mundane use of the space, and a sense of the atmospheres at play there. Although the spontaneous conversations were just that, they were guided by a set of initial questions that I had prepared before going to the site. I limited the number of questions to around five (few enough to call to mind easily). Once at the site, when entering into conversations, I also followed up on topics introduced by the person with whom I was talking. Although I didn't stick rigorously to the questions, they were valuable in giving direction to the conversation. I altered the questions as my interest in and my understanding of the spaces developed over time. The initial set of questions would typically address the relation to the space in terms of intention (*Why are you here today?*), use (*When and how often do you come here? What do you usually do here?*), and affection (*What do you think of this space? Would you like to change something about the space?*). However, the one conversation I didn't guide at all – a discussion between twelve women in a sauna – turned out to be equally, if not more, important and informative as the conversations that I conducted with an initial set of questions in mind.

I have expanded my investigation outside of the physical space of Jubileumsparken and Superkilen. Most of the semi-structured interviews were conducted in other locations, which gave me the opportunity to encounter other spaces of importance, e.g. the project office of Jubileumsparken and the studio of SUPERFLEX, the artists behind Superkilen. For instance, I relocated my workspace to the office of Jubileumsparken for half a day. This allowed me to converse casually with the interns working at their computers, to

overhear a meeting between the city and the consulting architects, and to absorb the atmosphere of the project as a working process that particular afternoon.

In total, I had 41 spontaneous conversations, 21 of which related to Superkilen and 20 to Jubileumsparken. They were held with both individuals and with groups; in total, I talked to 66 people in the 41 spontaneous conversations I had at the two sites. The spontaneous conversations with people encountered at the sites have all been anonymised; all of the names of people used in this thesis are fictional. I conducted a total of eight semi-structured interviews, three of which related to Superkilen, four to Jubileumsparken, and one to Rosens röda matta. The subjects of the semi-structured interviews are not referred to by their names, but by their professional role, affiliation or employment. Some of the interviews relating to Jubileumsparken were made in Swedish and have been translated by me into English.

PHOTOS, VIDEOS AND AUDIO RECORDINGS

In addition to participatory observation studies, I conducted other observation studies using other means of place documentation. In my collection of material, I primarily used notes, photos, films and audio recordings. I found photographs to be a particularly valuable way of taking field notes. My main focus was on interactions

between humans and humans and humans and objects³⁸, but I also used photographs to take note of the ways in which the materiality of the space changed over time. I made films to capture the goings-on at both spaces; again, the focus was on interactions between people and objects/spaces³⁹. I used both film and audio recordings to capture public speeches and guided tours. The same devices were used on all occasions – pen and paper, a camera, and a mobile phone capable of recording audio. The use of photo, film or audio recording made me less dependent on my own memory of the situation. Making recordings with a camera allowed me the opportunity to go back to the actual photo, film or audio recording, and thus sidestep some of my preconceived understanding of what went on in a particular situation. Besides its resistance to fatigue, the camera's last photo is as sharp as the first one, as Collier and Collier pointed out (1986, p. 9).

SOCIAL MEDIA

Today, the use of social media is so extensive that it is sometimes hard to clearly distinguish between physical and digital spaces. Drawing on that, it has been useful for me to place parts of my observation studies in the digital realm of social media. I have continuously followed social media flows and feeds for both projects

38 / For ethical reasons, close-ups and photos of children have been avoided. As far as possible, that deselection was made already in the documentation at the site.

39 / See Magnusson (2016, pp. 114-115) for an interesting discussion on the hidden normativity of the way in which photography is often used by architects to capture certain qualities of urban space.

on Facebook and Instagram. Including social media is an attempt to enrich the discussion on the uses, conceptions and the continuous production of the spaces being studied, and to highlight how this happens in the intersection of real and virtual spheres. It has been suggested that the expansion of social media and digital communication technology has “an increasing impact on people’s relation to places and is particularly affecting the conception, perception and experience of public spaces” (Manfredini, Jenner and Litterick 2015, p. 232). New layers of relations are unmistakably added to the spaces through the use of Instagram and Facebook⁴⁰.

On two occasions, I have used myself on social media to investigate the level of openness in communities that are represented there, but that also exist outside of the digital sphere. I conducted an experiment by joining two common interest user groups: *Västhamsfisket* (the fishing community in Helsingborg) and *Jubileumsodlarna* (an urban gardening community at Jubileumsparken) on Facebook. Whilst *Västhamsfisket* was a group open to anyone, *Jubileumsodlarna* was a closed group. My request to join *Jubileumsodlarna* on Facebook was initially accepted, but after three months as a member of the group, I was asked to explain why I had joined it. When I introduced myself as a PhD student interested in their work and community, I was expelled from the

40 / Launched in 2010, the social networking company Instagram is primarily used for photo-sharing. The social networking service company Facebook was launched in 2004 and is used for a number of things such as exchanging messages, posting status updates, and sharing photos, videos and links. Users may also join common interest user groups (e.g. *Västhamsfisket* and *Jubileumsodlarna*).

group (in a most friendly and polite manner) and directed to a group spokesperson in case of further questions. Reference was made to a policy stating that the Facebook group is only for members who participate in the practical gardening at Jubileumsparken. Out of respect for this policy, I have chosen not to use any material or information that I accessed through the participatory observations I made from within the *Jubileumsodlarna*’s Facebook group. *Västhamsfisket* was changed from a common interest user group to an open page on Facebook in 2018.

To further comment on the ethics in relation to social media, I have decided to use publicly accessible online discussions (anonymised), but not make use of any information received from online conversations that took place in closed groups or on the ‘wall’ of closed Facebook or Instagram profiles. I have also decided to use some publicly shared photos (from Instagram), always crediting the source and the photographer. Photos of children, close-ups or otherwise ‘personal’ photos have been deselected. Determining what should be perceived as (too) personal on social media has not been easy, however, and the challenge has made me increasingly interested in the ways in which uses of social media seem to blur the boundaries between what is perceived as public and what is considered personal. Instagram turned out to be particularly valuable for my wish to include a diverse number of voices. Instead of only asking people what they liked about a space, I was able to see what they had photographed and chosen to share; I consider this a valuable complement to the conversations and interviews I conducted. Drawing on Superkilen and Jubileumsparken on social media, I agree with the suggestion that the photos that are shared on social media become a collectively produced record of

our attention (Manfredini, Jenner and Litterick 2015). Looking at the spaces I studied, it is evident that personal interpretations and uses accumulate, becoming a collective record affecting the shared understandings of the two spaces, what they are, and what they can do⁴¹.

An analysis of Instagram shows that 987 posts had been posted with the hashtag #jubileumsparken by the 11th of November 2017. On the same day, 11 755 posts bore the hashtag #superkilen. To make the material somewhat comparable, I categorized the same amount of them, i.e. the 987 most recent. Since I address Instagram flows as records of attention, I am interested in the intention behind the documentation. The caption (i.e. the text) has therefore been included in the categorisation to facilitate understanding of the intention behind the photo, i.e. what the picture is intended to show. The figures below show how the Instagram posts from Superkilen and Jubileumsparken were categorized.

41 / This can be seen for instance in 'copycats' sharing Instagram posts that resemble other posts – a practise that can grow to a trend. An example from Superkilen: 30 of the Instagram posts categorized (17 November 2017) depict people making use of the lines on the ground and their own bodies to stage surreal photos. Such Instagram trends are sometimes also supported by the use of hashtags.

SUPERKILEN

191	Square/park with people
182	Areal photos/ the park without people
140	'Selfies'/ portraits / playing with scale
133	Objects without people
88	People with objects
49	Art and graffiti
40	Advertisements
40	Biking/basketball
35	Skating
31	Surroundings/photos taken elsewhere
26	Food/party/events
20	Details/materials
8	Signs/information on site
4	Process/work

Figure 1: Categorization of Instagram posts with the hashtag (#) Superkilen.

JUBILEUMSPARKEN

184	Areal photos/ the park without people
106	Food/party/events
104	Urban gardening
97	Process/work
86	Swimming/play in pool
85	Details/materials/sauna interior
83	Sailing-, swimming-, biking- for all
79	Beach/play
50	'Selfies'/portraits
42	Art and graffiti
40	Roller derby/yoga/boule
16	Signs/information on site
8	Media/ articles and TV-features
7	Advertisements

Figure 2: Categorization of Instagram posts with the hashtag (#) Jubileumsparken.

Although subjective, the categorization points to a number of differences in the Instagram posts from the two spaces. For instance, the posts from Jubileumsparken include a larger number of defined activities and/or group affiliations (such as biking-for-all, sailing-for-all, swimming-for-all, yoga, bowling and urban gardening). Compared to Superkilen, there are also a greater number of pictures showing work/labour related to the actual making of the space, but also more pictures of people, food and drinks. The posts from Superkilen include more commercial motives and more pictures of the space being used as a stage or a backdrop for taking portraits and 'selfies'. The distribution of the posts, i.e. the number of posts that show a particular use, site or activity, indicates that different aspects have been important to the Instagram-users of the two spaces. These differences will be addressed in greater depth in Chapter Six.

MEDIA AND OTHER SECONDARY SOURCES

I have engaged in my cases by reading local newspapers, articles, and exhibition material, planning documents, and other materials produced within the projects. In some cases, data is based on secondary sources. I should mention Barbara Steiner's book on Superkilen, entitled *Beyond Being Nice* (2013); the book has been especially useful in that it shows how the Superkilen project wishes to present itself. Similar insights have been gained from planning documents concerning Jubileumsparken. Besides the use of social media discussed earlier, I have also followed Superkilen and Jubileumsparken in traditional media (newspaper and TV). I have used newspaper articles to stay informed about the spaces, to remain in the know about planned interventions (e.g. maintenance

work) and events, but mainly to keep up to date on discussions and controversies related to the two spaces⁴².

FIELDWORK SUPERKILEN

I visited Superkilen on six occasions between 2012-2017⁴³. The first visit was before the official opening in May 2012, followed by the opening in June 2012 and re-visits in March 2013, two re-visits in May 2015, and another in June 2017. I visited the space during daytime hours on all occasions, spending the larger part of the day there, with the exception of my first visit, on which I only spent two hours at the site. I took photos and made films and audio recordings on all occasions. I also took field notes from my observations on all occasions. Moreover, I made a longer film from the opening in June 2012 in which I captured speeches and activities that were arranged for the public.

The spontaneous conversations were held on three occasions – two in May 2015, and one in June 2017. All conversations were recorded, except on two occasions when my conversation partners did not consent to being recorded. In those cases, I took notes during the interviews. The total 21 spontaneous conversations at the site varied in length from eight minutes to just over 45 minutes. Several attempts to approach people did not result in what I refer to

42 / During this time, I created an article archive consisting of 27 articles on Superkilen (mostly from architectural magazines and national newspapers) and 31 articles concerning Jubileumsparken (mostly architectural magazines and local newspapers).

43 / The visits to Superkilen were on 4 May 2012; 22 June 2012; 16 March 2013; 8 May 2015; 12 May 2015, and 20 June 2017.

as a spontaneous conversation here, but remained brief encounters. The conversations were held with individuals and with groups, in Swedish and English. Among the people I talked to were tourists, exchange students living in the area, Copenhageners who lived in other parts of the city, children from the local school, fashion designers, elderly people, photographers, teachers, and professionals engaged in the project. My initial spontaneous conversations were mostly with visitors there for leisure and recreation. In the final session of conversations, I intentionally searched for some voices that I was missing, e.g. the maintenance workers and employees from Nørrebrohallen. The fact that several of the people with whom I spoke on the last occasion used the space in a professional or semi-professional way – for taking photographs – was however a surprise to me.

I conducted three planned and semi-structured interviews in May 2015. One was with the artist and founding member of SUPERFLEX; one with Stine, a local citizen representative who had been involved in the process of the making of Superkilen since the early participatory process; and one with Simon, a representative for the Superkilen's skater community. Whereas the two first interviews were recorded, the third interview with Simon was written, conducted via e-mail. In June 2012, I joined a guided tour of Superkilen led by an architect from BIG – Bjarke Ingels Group. In May 2015, I joined another, alternative guided tour led by Stine; it was at this time that I interviewed her. The tour and interview with

Stine and the interview with the artist from SUPERFLEX were done together with a PhD student from Brazil.

FIELDWORK JUBILEUMSPARKEN

I visited Jubileumsparken on five occasions between 2014 and 2018⁴⁴: first, for an ‘open call’ (see below) in September 2014; at the inauguration of the public sauna in February 2015; in May 2017; in July 2018; and for another open call in September 2018. I took photos and made films and field notes from my observations on all occasions. As mentioned previously, I made notes after the participant observations. The dialogue from the opening sauna session, for instance, was written at the site, but following the sauna session. This participation observation was ultimately one of the more rewarding forms of inquiry.

I entered into 20 spontaneous conversations on a total of five different occasions. Several of them took place during open workshops that the project administration referred to as ‘open calls’. Between 2014 and 2018, twelve open calls were arranged on a variety of themes relating to the making of the park. In September 2014, I visited Jubileumsparken during an open call about building the sauna and entered into spontaneous conversations with professionals and participants whom I met at the site. None of those conversations lasted more than fifteen minutes, as people seemed eager to work. On the same occasion, I talked with two co-workers from

44 / Visits to Jubileumsparken were made on 19 September 2014; 18 February 2015; 19 May 2017; 12 July 2018, and 19 September 2018.

the raumlabor team whom I encountered at the project office. On my visit in May 2017, I had conversations with people I encountered by the play structure (among them a practitioner of parkour), by the greenhouse/barbeque, and by the beach. I also had spontaneous conversations with three people involved in urban farming at Jubileumsparken, and two employees working by the pool who were employed by the NGO Passalen (the organisation that runs the maintenance of the park).

My visit in July 2018 was connected to a conference in which I took part⁴⁵. I was interested in finding out how the project was presented to an audience of architects, planners and urban scholars. On the same day I had a conversation with the director of Passalen, also joining a guided tour led by the same. I also encountered three members of one of the roller derby teams, who have been using the rink at Jubileumsparken since it was built. They were willing to take a break from practising and sit down with me for a spontaneous conversation that lasted for 26 minutes. My last visit, in September 2018, was on a day when two parallel open calls were running, which gave me the possibility to talk to a number of people. Four of those conversations turned into spontaneous conversations: one with an employee of Passalen; one with a kindergarten teacher who was participating in the open call with a group of children; one with two commissioned landscape architects (from the German firm LeBalto and the Swedish firm MARELD); and one with a man commissioned to do experiments with water. The conversations were held with individuals and with groups, in Swedish and English.

45 / AESOP – Making Spaces for Hope, Gothenburg 10-14 July 2018.

In addition, I conducted four planned and semi-structured interviews: one with two project leaders of Jubileumsparken (employed at Älvstaden Utveckling AB and Gothenburg Municipality) in February 2015, and one written follow-up interview with one of the project leaders of Jubileumsparken in November 2015. In September 2017, I conducted one semi-structured interview with one of the founding members of MYCKET in Stockholm, and one written interview with Eva, a member of the board for Jubileumsodlarna.

2

ENCOUNTERING THE MINOR

MINOR LITERATURE

THE ORIGINS OF WHAT I WILL be discussing later in this thesis as a minor urbanism can be traced to Deleuze and Guattari's work on minor literature. Deleuze and Guattari use three characterisations to describe minor literature: *Deterritorialization of Language*; *Politicization*; and *Collective Assemblages of Enunciation* (1986, p.18). They draw primarily on the writings of Franz Kafka and the discussion of the nature of a minor literature in which Kafka's particular version of German is used as an example of a deterritorialized language⁴⁶. As Bohemian Jew in Prague, Kafka wrote in German – a language in which he was displaced. Deleuze and Guattari suggest that this allowed him to subvert the language from within; his German was 'Prague German', a deterritorialized language "appropriate for strange and minor uses" (Deleuze and Guattari 1986, p.16). While Prague German is German, it is simultaneously

46 / The concept of deterritorialization is derived from the psychoanalytical concept of territorialisation coined by Jacques Lacan, but it has also been influenced by discussions on territoriality relating to ethology, i.e. the study of animal behaviour (Kärrholm 2004). Lacan used the notion of territorialisation to describe the imprint maternal care has on the child's libido. For Deleuze and Guattari, deterritorialization is consequently the freeing of the libido from "pre-established objects of investment" such as the mother's breast (Holland 1991 p. 66). Deleuze and Guattari also use the term in another context to discuss the social process of freeing labour-power from its means of production.

a deviation from German: *It is German, and it is different to German*. Deterritorialization of language – the first characteristic of minor literature – is characterized by this impossibility: "the impossibility of not writing, the impossibility of writing in German, the impossibility of writing otherwise" (Deleuze and Guattari 1986, p.16). This deterritorialization cannot be reversed (re-territorialized) by any interpretations. When trying to grasp what this might mean, it is helpful to remember that Deleuze and Guattari do not define a territory by its borders, but by its ability to gather and organize intensities (Kärrholm 2004, pp. 60-61). Deterritorialization is thus the movement of something escaping some kind of organizing system. Deleuze and Guattari (1987, p. 508) suggest that such organizing systems can be "conceptual, linguistic, social or affective". What are the reasons for escaping? Deleuze and Guattari suggest that the primary desire is not to escape from interpretations, but rather to affirm alternatives. Therefore, in relation to a deterritorialized language, they propose experimentation as an alternative to interpretation.

The second characteristic of minor literature is Politicization. Put simply, this could be described as the belief that everything is political. In relation to minor literature, Deleuze and Guattari suggest that individual concerns are always linked to "larger concerns", e.g. to questions of commercial, economic, bureaucratic or juridical significance. They write: "the individual concern thus becomes all the more necessary, indispensable, magnified, because a whole other story is vibrating within it" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1986, p. 17). We cannot talk of the personal as something removed from the political; the individual is always connected to "a political immediacy" (1986,

p.18). Here, it must be remembered that Deleuze and Guattari do not use ‘the political’ in a conventional sense of the word: it does not relate to nation states, macropolitics or political parties⁴⁷. Instead, its political potential is embedded in its ability to generate alternative imaginings by creating unforeseen connections and alignments between diverse matters.

The third characteristic of minor literature, Collective Assemblages of Enunciation, relates to the absence of a single dominant author⁴⁸. Deleuze and Guattari enter into a conversation on their own authorship of *A Thousand Plateaus* in which they aim to reach “not the point where one no longer says I, but the point where it is no longer of any importance whether one says I”. They suggest that at that point, we are no longer our single selves: “We have been aided, inspired, multiplie” (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, p. 3). For Deleuze and Guattari, it is precisely there, in the absence of a single master, that collective enunciation may display how

47 / It is worth mentioning that Deleuze and Guattari’s understanding of the political is equally far from the effort to make disagreement the central feature of the political (as seen in the work of Chantal Mouffe or Jacques Rancière) (Barry 2017, p. 589).

48 / The deconstruction of the single author can also be linked to post-structuralism’s rethinking of the construction of meaning as something created in a specific context and through a set of particular relations (see e.g. Murdoch 2006). In relation to literature, this implies that the meaning of a text is not absolute, but relational, hence to an extent also produced by the reader herself.

everything takes on a collective value⁴⁹. They write (1986, p.17): “what each author says individually already constitutes a common action, and what he or she says or does is necessarily political, even if others aren’t in agreement”.

MINOR THEORY

Cindi Katz introduced the term minor theory in 1996, but the term only recently came into focus in a number of scholarly fields. As I will show in this section, scholars from a broad range of subjects are thinking with ‘the minor’. Although very different in application, I attempt to show how insight, valuable to my work on minor urbanism, may be drawn from the body of work that spans these different subjects.

In 2017, more than twenty years after her first article on minor theory, Katz revisited the term and reflected on what it might mean to work in a minor key in our time, as well as what it has meant for her

49 / On a related note, Sepideh Karami (2018) describes the construction of a plural I as a way for the author to become plural in order to critically inhabit dominant discourses. Karami explains her strategy: “I construct various characters that critically inhabit architectural sites, interrupt the existing established relations of those sites, construct performing grounds, and thereby become dissident.” (Karami 2018, p. 10).

own writing. She describes how she first encountered the minor in the following way (2017, p. 596):

The political is everywhere in minor literature, especially in what feels most personal. The deep resonances of that understanding of the inseparability of the personal and the political with feminist theory and practice struck a chord with me. It was the way I did and continue to do theory, and these works gave it a name and a new horizon for thinking and doing.

I should highlight here, as Katz does, that this – acting on something before having words for it – is precisely in line with Deleuze and Guattari's description of minor literature. For Deleuze and Guattari, concepts are rarely attributed with fixed and absolute meaning, but are rather described through what they express in the specific situation (Goodchild 1996). They describe how a minor literature “begins by expressing itself and doesn't conceptualize until afterward” (Deleuze and Guattari, 1986, p. 28). This position, together with Stengers' (2005a) image of the concept as a tool to be borrowed and used, has encouraged me in bringing the three characteristics of minor literature into my own conceptual-empirical investigation. As the scenario described at the opening of this thesis shows, I was interested in minor practises before I had a name for them. Similarly to Katz (2017), once I found it, the

name resonated clearly with ways in which I was already acting and thinking⁵⁰. The tension between major and minor practices, and the radical suggestion that the minor is placed at the heart of the major, was something that I had sensed already in my own practise. In relation to my empirical work, ‘the minor’ as discussed by Deleuze and Guattari (1986) answered to a more particular search for conceptualisations that would not close down on the emergent practices I was interested in – practise that introduced variation through a continuous resistance to the standard.

Interested in ‘minoritarian pedagogy’, Hillevi Lenz Taguchi (2012) suggests that the process of ‘becoming minoritarian’ is above all about rejecting world views in which subjects and objects are seen as separate and independent. The teacher thus does not have to play a role (e.g. that of a student or a child) to be transformed; it is the process of resisting normative ways of thinking that makes her minoritarian (Taguchi, 2012)⁵¹. If we exchange the teacher for a planner or an architect, the above argumentation

50 / I first encountered the notion of *minor literature* through a collective enunciation workshop held by Adrian Parr in 2015. Since then, my understanding and use of ‘the minor’ has evolved with the particular situations I have encountered through readings and lived experiences.

51 / For an extended discussion on minor pedagogy, see Kopljär, Nilsson and Sandström (2018), in which two colleagues and I reflect on a symposium we organized in 2018. The event aimed to display ideas and practices with a capacity to destabilize the relation between minor and major perspectives in an architectural educational framework, with the hope that a momentary shift of perspective (performed on a single day) might have the agency to affect future pedagogical activities at the faculty of architecture.

indicates that transformation is not dependent on the abandonment of professional roles, but rather on the departure from fixed or hegemonic ideas about how to do things, as well as a profound acceptance of the interdependence of all actors in a process.

Political philosopher Erin Manning uses the minor to discuss the possibility to transgress the boundaries of what is regarded as normal⁵². Interested in the minor as “the gestural force that opens experience to its potential variation” (Manning 2016, p.1), she draws an important conclusion: whereas the major is captured by social norms, the minor is variable. The minor thus has the capacity to open up experiences that would otherwise remain static and fixed. Katz (2017, p.598) expresses this thus: “Minor theory is not a distinct body of theory, but rather a way of doing theory differently, of working inside out”. Understanding the minor in this way is particularly helpful in relation to the practises of urban design that I study.

Although capturing the minor as a stable figure is difficult, valuable attempts have been made in order to discuss the particular qualities of a minor practise. In relation to my work, one of the more valuable explorations of the minor relates to architectural practises. Therefore, on my way to explore what minor urbanism is, or could

⁵² / Manning (2016) discusses this in a medical context. She suggests that the minor can be used to expand the narrow understanding of what is normal, and that we should talk of neurodiversity rather than deviations from a neurotypical norm.

be, in the following section I will turn to the conceptualization of *minor architecture* (Bloomer 1992a, 1992b, Stoner 2012).

MINOR ARCHITECTURE

The term minor architecture was first used by Jennifer Bloomer (1992a, 1992b), who coined it in relation to Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of minor literature and Manfredo Tafuri’s concept of major architecture. Bloomer used the term minor architecture to question the use of poststructural philosophy in writings on architecture in the 1990s. Suggesting that a minor architecture must operate critically on image-driven architectural debates, she addresses matter that is usually excluded from what is considered part of architecture – dirt, waste, a rural chicken hatchery. She describes her attempts to challenge the dominance of the visual in architecture as a revolutionary architectural criticism performed from within (Bloomer 1992b, pp. 179-180).

Twenty years later, Jill Stoner (2012) picked up and developed the term minor architecture, using it to discuss her own architectural practice. For Stoner, minor qualities are most likely to appear in fragmentary and temporary arrangements, as they tend to stay more open to multiple interpretations. Stoner expresses this openness in the following way: “opportunities for minor architectures emerge when the soul of a society is understood as more than a singularity” (Stoner 2012, p. 6). Consequently, in her own architectural work, nothing ever looks finished; on the contrary,

Stoner's practice seeks to reverse the process of completing a building. She writes:

to practice architecture in a minor mode requires not only the partial deconstruction of buildings and the structures of power that lead to their incessant reproduction, but also the deconstruction of the architect/subject. Minor architectures not only register a minor voice upon the major one, they also cause identities to collapse into one another. Works assumed to be finished are cast back into a state of becoming. (Stoner 2012, pp. 75-76)

As the quote indicates, Stoner favours design processes that are editorial and collective, suggesting that there is no singular author in a minor architectural practice. Instead, each user is a minor architect, able to change the project or the space by her interactions. Consequently, for Stoner, minor architecture is positioned in the relation between the everyday user and the architect. One example of such alternation is the now-famous *Bonjour Tristesse* building near Schlesisches Tor in Berlin. The architect Álvaro Siza designed the house for the International Building Exhibition 1987 in Berlin, but he was not the one who painted the significant 'bonjour tristesse' (recalling Françoise Sagan's 1954 novel) on the façade; that was done by an unknown person who took advantage of the scaffolding before it was removed in 1984. Although the graffiti was never claimed or explained by anyone, it has been interpreted as criticism of the building's architecture itself – its grey façade and its repetitive window placement. Since 2012, 'bonjour tristesse' has been flanked by a second message in bright red paint urging the viewer to *Bitte Leb'n* (please live; sic). The creator (author) of the

building is not one, but several. The suggested deconstruction of the architect/subject also points to other relational urban practices such as graffiti, flash mobs and parkour. Characteristic for those practices is the tendency to use architecture for purposes not sanctioned by its original design.

MINOR URBANISM

Although the notion of minor urbanism was developed through and in parallel to my empirical work, a working definition of a minor urbanism might be useful for the reader already here. I recognise a number of shared concerns between discussions on the minor (Deleuze and Guattari 1986; Katz 1996, 2017; Taguchi 2012; Manning 2016; Bloomer 1992a, 1992b; and Stoner 2012) and discussions on relational approaches to urbanism⁵³; there appears to be a shared concern for temporary, fragile and unstable conditions. In terms of methodology, theorists interested in the minor and practitioners of relational urbanism share an interest in situated and collective ways of working. By including discussions of the minor from a broad field, I have sought to show that the minor cannot be characterized as a particular set of practices, but must always be

⁵³ / In addition to the uses of the minor mentioned here, Mark Shepard's (2013) work on ubiquitous computing should be mentioned here. Although Shepard uses the notion of 'minor urbanism', the context in which it is used is so far removed from the themes of this thesis that I have chosen not to address Shepard's work outside of this brief footnote.

understood in relation to major practices. Although minor practices share a number of characteristics, they may take on different shapes depending on the shape of the major practices in which they are situated. One essential question thus remains to be addressed: what is the major?

As I see it, the major is constituted by practices that will constantly support and stabilize systematic and dominant way of doing things; the major does not want to change. Katz (2017, p. 599) refers to the major as “the material social practices through which hegemony is secured in everyday life”. Bracing against that definition, the minor is what may activate a powerful and elastic response able to “resist, rework, and undo those social relations and practices” (Katz 2017, p. 599)⁵⁴.

In my role as an urban planner, I had already noted how relational, experimental practices aimed at more collective or distributed forms of urban design had started to gain influence. A number of concepts have been used to discuss those practices lately: tactical urbanism, guerrilla urbanism, urban acupuncture and pop-up urbanism, to name a few of the more recognized. The term tactical urbanism is sometimes used to describe interventions initiated by municipalities, but it is more often conceptualised in opposition to long planning processes, referring to initiatives originating from

54 / Considering that particular quality, the intentional use of unstable concepts may be considered an experimental and minor act in its own right.

non-governmental organisations, developers or local citizens⁵⁵. The term has often been used for a particular kind of temporal and low-tech project, often with DIY-aesthetics (see Lydon and Garcia 2015)⁵⁶.

Minor urbanism's relation to major practices makes it hard to affix it to any particular aesthetics; the minor introduces variations to major projects of dissimilar aesthetics. The notion of minor urbanism, as discussed in this thesis, is also related to the more general notion of *relational urbanism*, which is sometimes used in discussions on practices concerned more with human relations than with the architectural object. Although this term is closer to

55 / See Mike Lydon and Anthony Garcia (2015) for an extended discussion on the relationship between tactical urbanism and formal planning. Lydon and Garcia (2015, p.12) describe three common applications of tactical urbanism: 1) “Protesting, prototyping or visually demonstrating the possibility of change”, used by citizens to bypass conventional processes linked to municipal bureaucracy; 2) As a tool for city authorities, developers or other interest organisations to engage the public during a development project; 3) As a ‘phase 0’, e.g. as the very first phase in a development project, i.e. a way for city authorities or developers to test ideas before long-term investments are made. These three categories described by Lydon and Garcia (2015) are not mutually exclusive.

56 / The typical expressions of DIY-urbanism are small-scale beautification or improvement initiatives, sometimes linked to activism, hacking cultures or public art. They are very rarely incorporated into formal planning processes or plans (Lydon and Garcia, 2015). Although local and small in scale, some expressions of DIY-urbanism are picked up by globalized DIY- or activist cultures and travel around the world. An example of this kind of contagious expression is ‘yarn-bombing’, a practice best described as textile graffiti. For an expanded introduction to the phenomena of DIY-urbanism, see Karin Bradley (2015).

my understanding of minor urbanism – a minor urbanism is always relational – it is still too broad to capture the specific relations in which I am interested, i.e. the critical potential embedded in the relations between the minor and the major when seen as two inter-dependent and emerging concepts⁵⁷.

This particular position of not acting in opposition to institutional frameworks, but from within the major practices, is central to my understanding of the term minor urbanism. Breaking down the term can help clarify this. The first word, ‘minor’, is understood as an elastic and critical force that acts in the cracks and crevices of major practises or institutions and affects them from within. The second word ‘urbanism’ is – in the context of this thesis – used for the professional production of city⁵⁸. Minor urbanism is thus the professional production of city that affects the major prac-

57 / There are also obvious overlaps with French philosopher Michel de Certeau’s conceptual pair strategies and tactics. Certeau (1988) uses the pair to discuss power relations in space. Urban scholar Lina Olsson uses the dualism of strategy and tactics to discuss practices of urban appropriation. She writes: “While the strategy refers to a steady power, the potential of tactics is within their mobility. As the proper represents the steadiness of a place it has no movement of its own. (Olsson 2008, pp. 251). She continues on the next page: “A tactic does not create its own place. It is a movement that disappears from one moment to the next. In the long run, and taken together, the small tactical adjustments can however produce durable changes. This is the productive potential of tactics” (Olsson 2008, pp. 252).

58 / The term Urbanism is sometimes used to describe the characteristic ways of life in cities, i.e. how people interact with the built environment of towns and cities. This understanding of urbanism differs from my use of the term in the context of this thesis.

tices of urban planning from within the institutions themselves. Consequently, a minor urbanism can become a counterpart to mainstream architectural or urban productions, but it can never happen outside or independently of it. This – the possibility of setting up a minor practice from within the major – is the revolutionary quality that Deleuze and Guattari describe in relation to minor literature⁵⁹.

I have identified minor urbanism as a helpful notion insofar as it provides a way to think about urbanism that does not aim for finalized answers, but rather encourages continuous experimentation⁶⁰. This is particular useful in situations where the challenges we face are too strange or unfamiliar to be tackled with the usual tools, or too complex to think through in one comprehensive plan of action.

59 / They write: “We might as well say that minor no longer designates specific literatures but the revolutionary conditions for every literature within the heart of what is called great (or established) literature. Even he who has the misfortune of being born in the country of a great literature must write in its language, just as a Czech Jew writes in German, or an Ouzbekian writes in Russian. Writing like a dog digging a hole, a rat digging its burrow” (Deleuze and Guattari 1986, p. 18).

60 / In spite of the artist from SUPERFLEX’s suggestion that no design should last more than five years (interview on 12 May 2015), one should remember that Superkilen and Jubileumsparken are major public investments, hence expected to serve the city for a long time, and that they exist in a complex field of tension between political, social and economic demands. Although Superkilen and Jubileumsparken embrace the temporal through events, happenings, and various forms of prototyping, they cannot be compared to the ideal art project in terms of potential autonomy.

Although the agency of a minor urbanism can be explored in relation to the diverse challenges faced by urban planning today, I am interested in it primarily in relation to the main objective of this thesis: to expand the understanding of community in public space. It is in response to that ambition that minor urbanism is explored as a way to support a continuous search for spaces characterized by community and urban diversity. Moreover, the notion of minor urbanism allows for a discussion where the kind of practices that I have begun to discuss are not seen as singular experiments or deviations from established planning practices, but can be recognised and observed in their own right, as a particular body of work and a collective effort among urban planners interested in change. The notion of minor urbanism will be developed further and in relation to my cases in Chapter Seven.

3

THE QUEST FOR COMMUNITY: DESIGNING FOR SAMENESS AND DIFFERENCE

THIS CHAPTER DEPARTS FROM notions of community closely related to the common use of the word in a western context, i.e. community as a conglomeration of people that ‘belong together’ through shared practises, values or localities⁶¹. With the objective to contribute to an expanded discussion on community, I engage in a critical discussion that leads to two complementary conceptualizations of community – *Community of the Affected* and *the Inoperative Community*. Together, they open up for notions that leave community less reliant on stability, similarity and unity.

THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

What is community? Zygmunt Bauman described community as “a cosy and comfortable place” and “a roof under which we shelter in heavy rain, like a fireplace at which we warm our hands on a frosty day” (2001, pp.1–2). Although there is no universal agreement or absolute definition of the meaning of community, its form and meaning have been in discussion more or less since

61 / While the word community is used liberally in i.e. the Anglo-Saxon world, for instance in the field of community studies, the notion of local community is much weaker in Scandinavian discourse. In fact, the word community is difficult to translate to Scandinavian languages (Trädgård and Berggren 2012). In Swedish, various words are used to express community, depending on the context: *samfällighet*, *gemenskap*, *samhälle*, *lokalsamhälle* and *samfund*.

the emergence of the city⁶². Bauman captures a common notion of community as a safe place where we are surrounded by people with whom we belong. Although attractive in its promise of connection and kinship, the image fails to include the variety of contemporary ways of living. Bauman refers to his own image of community as a world that is “regrettably, not available to us” (2001, p.3), and places this nostalgic view of community as a backdrop to our time, which he sees as characterized by its lack of warm and genuine connection. For Bauman, the contemporary situation becomes a negation of an idealised image from the past, which is where he places the notion of community. The term community has been criticised for leaning towards such idealised images of small-scale village life, as well as for its inability to capture the complexity of social relations today (see e.g. Butchard 2010)⁶³.

Among urban planners, community is often discussed in connection with people’s urge to live with others like themselves and addressed alongside phenomena such as ‘ethnic enclaves’ or gated communities. In the example of the gated community (as

62 / Aristotle is sometimes mentioned as an early thinker concerned with community; other early notions on community can be found in ancient Greek discussions about the polis (Delanty 2003; Miller 1993), and in critiques of modernity (Tönnies 1963, Weber 1947).

63 / Dalia Mukhtar-Landgren (2012) describes how homogeneity is central to the modernist notion of community, pointing to Bauman’s notion of the gardening state, used as a metaphor describing the state as the systematic gardener, making a master plan for the entire garden in order to create the best preconditions for his ‘plant’, i.e. the citizens. Bauman sees ambiguity as the primary enemy of modernity as it disturbs the notion of a rational unity (Bauman 1990 in Mukhtar-Landgren 2012, p. 150).

well as in the local community in general), place and location are seen as the main bonding qualities. Community is created through locality, spatial proximity, and sameness⁶⁴. This understanding of community operates with exclusivity as a characteristic feature. Members of the community are distinguished from those who do not belong to the community – insiders are distinct outsiders. The line of separation is drawn between a ‘we’ and a ‘them’. Those categories are important to maintain, as membership in such tight communities promises certain benefits⁶⁵. (This does not mean that all communities that separate insiders from outsiders are difficult to enter; some tight communities are easy to join and easy to leave.) The understanding of community created through locality is present for instance in the field of community studies, and can be traced back to Tönnies’ (1887/1963) contrasting concepts of *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* (translated as ‘community’ and ‘association’). Tönnies argued that the sense of community and local solidarity (*Gemeinschaft*) was lost with modernisation. The shift from *Gemeinschaft* to *Gesellschaft* was a shift from close-knit relationships

64 / Here, I use the same definition of sameness as Jonna Pettersson (2015, p.10): “the minimal definition of sameness deployed here is that sameness is either established against, or productive of, but in any case presupposes difference.”

65 / See Schwab-Stone et al. (1995) for an interesting, though appalling discussion on violence against youth, and the impropriety of talking of urban communities as ‘safe havens.’

between neighbours and family to work-based or interest-based relationships characteristic of contemporary urban life.

Processes of urbanisation and increased geographical mobility challenge the conventional understanding of community, suggesting that instead of geographical proximity, shared interests or common identities are what holds people together. An increased digitalisation of social interaction through the excessive expansion of social media in the last 15 years has made communities based on shared interests or identities even less dependent on geographical co-presence. Considering the anonymous and impersonal qualities of urban life, the suggestion that living in the same neighbourhood will create a feeling of belonging together seems an echo of a nostalgic form of community⁶⁶. Other voices suggest however that we

66 / Already in the 1978, Richard Sennett argued in *The Fall of Public Man* that public dimensions of society dissolve when people retreat into the private ‘warm’ sphere of home or community because of concerns about safety and crime. The cause of the crisis of the public is not explained by a disinterest in communitarian aspects of life, but rather by the rise of a new ‘emotivism’, described by Sennett as “a thirst for authentic, community, emotional expression of feelings and desires” (Sennett 1978 in Brighenti 2010, p. 118). The crisis of the public dimensions in society is portrayed as a crisis of the public dimensions within humans. More recently, it has been suggested that an increased level of intimate relations and ‘emotivism’ in public spaces makes it more difficult to come close to and relate to strangers in a positive way; thus, “intimate relations cannot be successfully projected as a basis for social relations at large” (Brighenti 2010, p. 118).

might see a revival of the local community in western societies in the near future, but in new forms⁶⁷.

Fundamental critiques of sameness as a pre-requisite for community have been voiced within political science (Pettersson 2015), sociology (Brighenti 2014), and philosophy (Nancy 1991, 2000). Sociologist Patricia Hill Collins (2010) compares the notion of community with the notion of family, suggesting that both terms exist within a dualistic view of society and social life. The construct of 'family' divides all social relations into a non-political private sphere of loved ones (i.e. family) and another public sphere of work, civil and political life. Collins (2010) suggests that community has been conceptualized in a similar way: community is apolitical space, a safe haven shared with kindred people and in which one is allowed to rest from the complexity of contemporary life. Whilst feminist theory has been challenging the binary division family/public sphere for decades, it is only more recently that the notion of community as a culturally homogeneous and apolitical entity has been questioned (Collins 2010; Young 2004). Although scholars of intersectionality have made relational thinking central in their analyses of constructed systems of power (i.e. intersections of race, gender, sexuality, capabilities and age), community is only rarely seen as a political construct in this literature. The notion of community as an apolitical constellation of people who 'belong together' seems hard to dispatch. At the same

67 / The Swedish research programme *Beyond GDP Growth: Scenarios for sustainable building and planning* explores how a sustainable future might look in four scenarios, one of which, entitled *Local Self-Sufficiency*, highlights the local community as a central social and economical entity in a sustainable society (Svenfelt et al. 2015).

time, societal changes such as increased transportation and mobility (e.g. more people commuting between cities) and an extensive use of communications technologies make it more difficult to say who belongs where, and hence who belongs together; this development in itself challenges the prerequisites for geographically defined communities. Similarly, social space and community are also becoming more flexible and open to overlapping and intersection⁶⁸.

As I see it, the attempt to construct community as a relevant political term must be made in relation to the societal challenges of our time. Much can be said about the broad challenges we face; Stengers (2015) speaks for instance of a triple devastation of mental, social and environmental ecologies, suggesting that we live in a time where questions of security and access to resources have become increasingly pressing. When problems manifest themselves as unsolvable, authorities seek to maintain a condition where it is difficult, if not impossible, to imagine other circumstances than the status quo (Stengers 2015, p. 22). Turning to Europe, similar concerns – i.e. the perceived deficit of safety and material resources – can be linked to nationalistic tendencies and anti-migrant politics⁶⁹.

68 / Collins expands on the possibility of constructing community as a political term open to change. She writes: Community can never be a finished thing but is always in the making. In this sense, participating in building a community is simultaneously political (negotiating differences of power within a group); dynamic (negotiating practices that balance individual and collective aspirations); and aspirational (a form of visionary pragmatism that places contemporary practices in service to broader principles) (Collins 2010, p. 25).

The recent influx of migrants to Europe has made questions of living together with cultural differences a growing concern in Scandinavia as well. Diversity and pluralism are central features of the idea of the cosmopolitan city, but they are also perceived as a source of conflict between groups and therefore a threat to community (Mukhtar-Landgren, 2012).

To frame today's discussions on multiculturalism, Mohammad Sarraf (2015) casts light on the history of planners and designers working with cultural diversity as part of the making of city, suggesting that their efforts can be divided into two main categories: the aspiration to mix people, and the drive to divide people spatially. On a related note, Mukhtar-Landgren (2012) points to planning's ambiguity towards strangers: migrants are associated with unemployment and social exclusion (hence a threat to progress), but at the same time, they are also thought to contribute to positive development through their unique qualities⁷⁰.

Within urban planning, diversity is handled in an equally ambiguous way: while practices of restricted or closed borders aim to keep out strangers, the discourse of place-branding seeks to attract people from outside⁷¹. Drawing on contemporary planning

69 / For a discussion on anti-migrant politics in Scandinavia and particularly in Denmark, see Schmidt 2011, 2014.

70 / It should be said here that Mukhtar-Landgren (2012) sees the schematic division between homogeneity and heterogeneity as a mere analytical construct, and does not suggest that they can be found in any pure form in practice.

practices, Mukhtar-Landgren (2012) suggests that the quest for diversity exists parallel to ideals of a community based on homogeneity, and that the way cities are planned is guided by either a homogenizing or heterogenizing ambition (2012, p.196). Both Sarraf (2015) and Mukhtar-Landgren (2012) describe a situation in which multiculturalism is seen as a challenge as well as an asset. Policies of multiculturalism, characterised by their wish to recognize and encourage group-specific practices and beliefs, have been a topic of discussion since they first emerged on a broader front during the 1960s. The spatial significances of multiculturalism have been explored in numerous notions about the multicultural city, where the right of minority groups to express themselves publicly has often been foregrounded. Young (1999) introduced the concept of 'together-in-difference' to counterbalance the notion of segregation, suggesting that spatial separation is not problematic per se, but might on the contrary contribute to justice in an urban multicultural context by allowing people to live together without losing their group affinities⁷².

71 / The focus on diversity and coexistence in urban planning and urban design can be seen as a counterweight to the tendency to focus exclusively on so-called 'ethnic neighbourhoods' when addressing questions of segregation, as Mohammad Sarraf (2015) points out.

72 / For an extensive discussion on the multicultural city, see Sandercock and Bridgman (1999).

Questions of how to build and think community in the face of complex realities are far from new: every era has its unique set of challenges. This thesis is shaped by the principle that living with people who are different in terms of background and life situations is an important theme for the work of contemporary urban planners. Increasingly complex relations between near and far away (see e.g. Valentine 2008) call for a revision of the somewhat dusty notion of community. In this thesis, I presume that an expanded and vitalised, if not radicalised, notion of community, may contribute to discussions on urban design and its capacity to make space for difference *and* connection.

COMMUNITY OF THE AFFECTED

In the architecture discipline, the notion of public is often understood as “what is of shared or of common interest, or as what is accessible to everyone” (Petrescu 2007, p.1). The idea that new relationships and alliances may be formed around particular problems or concerns can be traced to the American pragmatist Walter Lippmann. He argues in *The Phantom Public* (1925) that there is no such thing as a public per se; a public is always formed around an issue. Those who are concerned with or interested in an affair constitute a public. The American philosopher John Dewey voices a similar argument in his *The Public and Its Problems* (1927).

Part of that thinking relates to the correlation between experts and the public. In the 1930s, there was a widespread concern that technological developments would limit the public’s possibility to understand and engage in society. Lippman and Dewey both

acknowledge the democratic challenge that accompanies a more complex society, but they turned the problem around by rejecting the idea that democracy must build on clear and accessible information, instead suggesting quite the opposite: for Lippman and Dewey, a public emerges precisely when there is a complex issue that cannot be managed by any predefined group. Lippmann and Dewey both suggest that content is always what sparks public engagement – never the process itself. This notion can be compared to more process-oriented ideas of democracy, suggesting that participatory processes are valuable in and of themselves for letting people raise their voices as political subjects.

The absence of a body, institutional or civil, capable of dealing with the problem at hand calls for the formation of new groups, i.e. for people to organize themselves around an issue, and this creates opportunities for public involvement. Drawing on Dewey, an issue group such as this will typically comprise people who did not know each other previously and “do not belong to the same social world” (Marres 2005, p. 214), but who are linked to each other by their shared concern. This kind of interest-alliance is what Dewey calls “a community of strangers”; this is also his definition of a political community. A similar figure can be drawn in order to make a selection of who is affected by a given issue, i.e. who ought to participate in a political process concerning a specific issue - i.e. who is included in what sociologist Noortje Marres (2012) refers to as a *Community of the Affected*. Similar formations may also appear surrounding social protests. When a number of people join together around a shared

concern – provided the concern is persistent enough – they will become a kind of community, characterized by protest and resistance.

Delanty (2003) foregrounds the communicative nature of such formations, suggesting that the emphasis on communication in their configuration makes them different from communities based on symbolic values. A community of resistance may therefore be regarded as a communicative project, shaped by social action (Delanty 2003, p. 112 ff.). Delanty explains the open nature of communities as essentially based on communication. He writes: “Communication communities are not shaped only by the relation between insider and outsider, but by expansion in the community of reference and the construction of discourse of meaning. Thus rather than being sustained by symbolic boundaries and stable community of reference, communication communities are open horizons” (2003, p. 130).

The formation of a community constituted by those who share a concern can only occur if those individuals are able to recognise each somehow. The question becomes one of visibility, whether actual or metaphorical: what settings, configurations or objects will allow me to identify a stranger with whom I share a concern? Kärholm (2012) raises similar questions as he points to the challenge of visibility and identification in relation to public space: “how do we create a spatial landscape that makes the different members of a series visible both to each other and to others?”

(Kärholm 2012, p.125)⁷³. Inspired by Sartre’s notion of series/the serial, Kärholm (2012) introduces the concept of *serial collectiveness*, i.e. the possibilities of a number of individuals to recognize themselves as a series in order to form a group and act from a collective basis. The formation of a community of the affected is not only dependent on visibility and space, but also on time⁷⁴. People join together for a certain reason and at a certain time; temporary communities are created around an issue, a concern, or even an event. This can be illustrated by the story of Västhamnsfisket with which the reader is now familiar. Its formation draws attention to visibility and temporalities – time and space are equally important for the people fishing to recognize each other as a group. This group formation then makes them powerful enough to impact and alter the physical and legal space, and hence shift the status of their activity from illegal to legal and gain it the support of local authorities, and eventually turn it into a members’ club. This process shows the performativity of the pragmatic notion that issues spark communities. It draws a picture of the evolution of a community created around a set of issues and material practices, with its different stages from illegal, open and unstable, to a stabilized (formalised) community

⁷³ / The impact that visibility has on social life and thus on public space has been acknowledged by several scholars (Lynch 1960, Jacobs 1961, Lofland 2017). The sociologist Andrea Mubi Brighenti (2010, p. 36) goes so far as to suggest that the act of looking at someone who looks back at you may, in a sense, be seen as the beginning of all societies.

⁷⁴ / Numerous scholars have acknowledged temporality as a critical dimension in the production of urban social life (Hajer and Reijndorp 2001, Massey 2005; Kärholm 2004, 2012, 2017; Latour and Yaneva 2008, Till 2009).

with an increasing degree of closure and control, but also an increased level of commitment to shared rules and values. This stabilized condition depends on a certain level of sameness (i.e. a shared practice and understanding of fishing) and has been reached, maintained and protected over the years. This development appears to be beneficial for the fishing community in a number of ways: to start with, their legal status means that they no longer run the immediate risk of eviction; furthermore, seeing to its presence on social media, there now appears to be less conflict, as well as greater stability. Seeing as the high level of agreement (on practices and behaviours) seems to serve the community of Västhamnsfisket well, the call for difference may be questioned; what, if any, are the risks of building communities based on sameness or membership?

This question needs to be addressed on different levels. First, it seems as if the thinking of community in terms of sameness often turns the question of belonging into a question of membership⁷⁵ (as seen in the example of Västhamnsfisket). Political science scholar Jonna Pettersson (2015) suggests that such a shift of perspective – from belonging to membership – comes with the risk of rendering a number of democratic and humanist values that ought to be universal, conditional and dependent on whether one possesses the proper membership. This wide-ranging concern could also be discussed in relation to nation-states. On the level of particular groups and individuals, Pettersson (2015) suggests that there is a risk that a community based on sameness will start to discount

⁷⁵ / This argumentation, operating on a broad societal level, can be linked to Nancy's political concerns with tight community, which are discussed in the next section of this thesis.

those who were initially included in the community. Membership in a community predicated on sameness implies that one must conform to a number of features “in order to be perceived as a member” (Pettersson 2015, p.12). If sameness is perceived as the main bonding quality, difference becomes a move away from community. A community of the affected is not contingent on co-existence in time and place: it can emerge between people who have never met. The nation-state is an interesting community construct in that sense, since it blurs the distinction between community based on geography and community based on shared concerns. In *Imagined Communities* (1983), Benedict Anderson suggests that the construct of nations is always an imagined political community in the sense that members of a nation will never be able to meet every individual within that nation. Feelings of connectedness to the others are therefore always imagined, and nonetheless, those feelings are what make people willing to make personal sacrifices for the good of the nation (Anderson 1983). Such *Imagined Communities* are not dependent on social intimacy, but are instead shaped by symbolic structures (Delanty 2003).

Besides ‘community of locality’, one of the most prominent aspects of community in everyday speech refers to community based on solidarity groups formed around a shared struggle. Community formations of this kind may relate to race, ethnicity or sexual orientation – for instance ‘the black community’ or ‘the gay community’. Postcolonial and feminist theorist Chandra Talpade Mohanty (2003) addresses feminism as a community able to unite people of different backgrounds and social positions in a common struggle (Mohanty 2003, p. 47). In relation to the localized community

of the neighbourhood or village, formations of this kind may be thought of as an *expanded- or non-localized community*. Although a person might change her group affiliation several times during a lifetime, this use of the word, i.e. community based on identification and solidarity with a certain group or struggle, indicates that the affiliation would typically last for a period of time. The above examples – skin colour, gender and sexual orientation – are typically characteristics of a longer duration, if not for life. As the example of the feminist community shows, collaboration and solidarity may emerge across differences and between people who have never met. Such formations open up to a processual understanding of community, and are therefore especially helpful in situations in which globalisation processes have rendered insufficient definitions of community as a social phenomenon bound to the borders of one specific site.

What are the practical implications for urban planners and designers of perceiving community as formations that emerge around particular issues? In the search for more inclusive public spaces, power and influence are sometimes delegated to non-professional actors, usually those considered affected by a project or an issue. Besides legal regulations (deciding for instance who has the right to appeal against a plan), it is sometimes hard to decide who will be affected by an issue or a project. New participatory models, i.e. new forms of engaging the public, will possibly come with a demand to redraw the line around those considered affected by the project. The making of Rosens röda matta is a good example: the community of the affected there was not regarded to be the people living close to

the new public space (which would have been another possibility), but rather, women of a certain age in the area.

In formulating new forms of public participation, discussions on the community of the affected may be expanded to include non-humans. Marres (2012) suggests that the role of material entities has grown increasingly central in political participation. When it is hard to engage the public in great concerns such as climate change⁷⁶, one solution has been to shift scale; big concerns are tackled little by little through a ‘made-easy’ material participation. Device-driven solutions (for instance carbon accounting showers and ‘smart teapots’ that tell us when there is a surplus of electricity available) are introduced. Marres suggests that such device-driven solutions will enrol people in environmental programs without giving them the possibility to acknowledge or relate to the greater concern. Such an approach builds on low expectations about people’s abilities to engage truly – or better perhaps, consciously – with big concerns, and risks taking the initiative away from people altogether (Marres, 2012). It could also be expressed in another way: if people are made to lose sight of ‘the bigger picture’ of precarious issues that affect them, it will de-politicise the situation and undermine the agency of the community of the affected. Likewise, if the contrary is the case – when big political issues are made visible (hence relevant), there appears

⁷⁶ / A similar standpoint – i.e. that people tend to engage in issues that are close to them in time and space, but are unable to engage in issues further away from them – was presented in the influential report *The Limits of Growth*, published in 1972 (Meadows et al.).

to be a great potential in the figure of the community of the affected; the community of the affected constituted by those affected by climate change, could for instance be tremendously influential if climate change is understood as one singular issue.

In this section, I have shown how the community of the affected is not bound to any particular time-space scale, and may therefore be used as an active concept in a broad range of situations related to urban development, from the momentary group of concerned citizens converging around a new pothole in the street, to global and lifelong struggles for environmental justice. Moreover, the community of the affected is a notion that foregrounds the likelihood that one person belongs to multiple communities at the same time.

THE INOPERATIVE COMMUNITY

I have begun to discuss how the understanding of community as a collective quality characterized by unity, closure and continuity has been questioned from a number of different positions; the previous section addressed a pragmatist approach. Scholars from the feminist tradition, the postcolonial tradition, and the queer theoretical tradition, as well as scholars from the poststructuralist tradition, have all conducted critical investigations into the political, ethical and

ontological conditions of community⁷⁷. Poststructuralist discussion, especially the thinking of Jean-Luc Nancy, has proved valuable for my empirical investigations, particularly when attempting to discuss community. Before going deeper into Nancy's understanding of community, I will briefly address postmodern thoughts and their relation to community in more general terms as a background to the concepts to come.

In postmodern thought, subjects are no longer regarded as constant and singular, but as fractured, multiple and constructed⁷⁸. The idea of indisputable and stable identities (related to for instance gender, class, race and nation) has been exchanged for ideas of multiple belongings and more fluid group memberships (Delanty 2003). What hope is there for community when subjects are formed in recognition of difference rather than sameness?

Literary scholar Viola Marchi (2015) suggests that the search for community has not declined, but rather increased with the post-modern condition. She links the recent interest in community to a

⁷⁷ / Those traditions intersect and overlap and have in no way developed separately from each other. Although there are tensions between the different positions taken, the broader move away from the modern notion that subjects are coherent and stable is largely a shared struggle of many feminist, postcolonial, queer theoretical, poststructuralist scholars. For an interesting discussion on the historical relation between social criticism in feminism and in postmodernism, see Fraser and Nicholson (1988).

⁷⁸ / In *A Global Sense of Place* (1991), Doreen Massey argues that like people, spaces should be seen as able to hold multiple identities; this opens up for discussions on minor qualities in relation to space.

widespread sense of cultural decline, suggesting that a strong promotion of individualism on the one hand and a growing experience of the totalitarianism and conflicting identities on the other has given rise to an increased interest in what is shared and common (Marchi 2015, p. 143). Along similar lines, Delanty (2003) advocates that the recent movement towards multiple and fluid identities has not resulted in a decline of community, but in a renewal of the concept. He describes the new postmodern community formations that emerge as nomadic, emotional and highly communicative (Delanty 2003, p. 132)⁷⁹.

An important point in time for the European debate on post-modern thought and community (and for this thesis) was the year 1986, when Nancy published his essay *La communauté désœuvrée* (*The Inoperative Community*, translated to English in 1991)⁸⁰. Here, Nancy turns to Heidegger's thinking of 'being-with' in search for ways of thinking community outside the traditional figures of unity and fusion. Nancy also drew inspiration from Maurice Blanchot's essay *The Unavowable Community* (1988). While Blanchot's work inspired Nancy in his writing, Blanchot had in turn been inspired

79 / Marchi (2015) has described a similar condition as post-identitarian community.

80 / Although there was an American version of the discussion on the postmodern community, the influence of French poststructuralist thinkers such as Jacques Derrida, Jean-Luc Nancy, Maurice Blanchot, Giorgio Agamben and Jacques Rancière has been particularly influential in the debate on postmodern community forms.

by Nancy's earlier work – because their ideas are deeply related⁸¹, something must be said about what differentiates them. Whilst Nancy uses the term 'unworked' to describe his understanding of community, Blanchot (1988) discusses his view on community as 'unavowable'. For Blanchot, community is remote from anything that could be affirmed; why it becomes nonsensical for him to discuss it as operative or even as inoperative (as Nancy does). Blanchot suggests that community should rather be thought as 'unavowable'⁸².

81 / Both Nancy and Blanchot draw centrally on the work of George Bataille. In Bataille's work, community is more an obsession than a unified concept, as Mitchell and Winfree (2009) have pointed out. Considering that, I will not even attempt to do his extensive work on community justice, but just briefly address something that I find particularly interesting: the relation between community and what Bataille calls 'inner experiences'. For Bataille, human sociality is reinforced when people's usual perspectives are disturbed and distorted: the ability to be 'painfully open to other human fellows' is the foundation of social life (Brighenti 2014b). "A being that isn't cracked isn't possible" (Bataille 1988, p. 23), and emotional expressions such as laughter and tears are the basis for such transcending openings – such cracks – to occur.

82 / Thinking of community as inoperative is to perceive community as a condition that is not concerned with reproducing itself through work or ideology. This clearly relates to Blanchot's request to think of community as *unavowable*, hence as a condition that cannot be affirmed, but must remain hidden. Nancy takes a similar standpoint when he suggests that the thinking of community as essence is the closing of the political (Nancy 1991, p. xxxvii).

Nancy (1991) envisions community as a space of radical exposure, where the singularity and difference of each individual is exposed to the singularity of other people. Nancy writes:

Sharing comes down to this: what community reveals to me, in presenting to me my birth and my death, is my existence outside myself. Which does not mean my existence reinvested in or by community, as if community were another subject that would sublimate me, in a dialectical or communal mode. Community does not sublimate the finitude it exposes. Community itself, in sum, is nothing but this exposition. (Nancy pp. 26-27)

When trying to grasp Nancy's rather challenging notion of community, it may be helpful to think of it as a place where individual experiences meet and confront each other without reference to anything external in common, hence outside of any grand narratives. Blanchot and Nancy are aiming for a similar standpoint here⁸³; in their endeavours to rethink community, both are suggesting that community cannot be achieved through any 'agent of commonality' (Holmes, 1997) such as religion or nationalism.

For Nancy, community is a condition that could never, despite the greatest attempts, be achieved through work and effort. We are

⁸³ / Ian James (2010) goes so far as to suggest that Blanchot and Nancy are trying to say the same thing using different terms. He writes: "Perhaps the distance which separates Nancy and Blanchot on the question of community is, in fact, a matter of words, a matter of choosing the right words in order to mark an absence, empty space, or opening onto nothing. This distance, then, amounts to very little" (p. 177).

always already in relation to each other, and thus always in relation with difference. As I have begun to show, Nancy's proposal is an ontology far removed from traditional understandings of community. For Nancy, community is not based on a close-knit net of warm relationships or on shared values or practices; he sees us as always different to each other. Although desiring contact, singular individuals will always remain separate and singular. He describes how we lean towards others in search of "contact of the skin (or the heart) of another singular being at the confines of the same singularity, that is always other, always shared, always exposed" (1991, p. 28). Any connection of singularities will fall apart the moment it emerges; community can thus never be based on any communal unification, but must remain inoperative. Nancy (1991) discusses the condition of singular beings reaching for other singular beings as singular-plural. Drawing from Blanchot and Heidegger, Nancy suggests that the exposure of our mortality brings us in contact with the condition of being singular-plural⁸⁴. Ultimately, the passing of others is what will expose us to the singularity of all humans, hence the impossibility to fully unite. From this rather dismal picture, one

⁸⁴ / For an extended discussion on Nancy and mortality, see Parmett (2012). It should also be mentioned here that for Blanchot, the notion of community is always connected to mortality. (Delanty 2003, Kennedy 2006). Blanchot understands community as 'living for others' – a condition that depends on death as an absolute fact. If human finitude were not a fact, community would be lost to an undefined 'infinity of universes' (Blanchot 1988, p. 6).

might assume that for Nancy, a human being is always and inevitably alone. This is only partially true; for Nancy we are always singular, but our existence is always plural and relational. Being is always being-with. He writes: “That Being is being-with, absolutely, this is what we must think” (2000, p. 61). The question is not whether we have something in common, or what that might be, such as a collective origin or a shared destiny, but what it means that we *are* in common. According to Nancy, understanding this ontological condition of being-in-common is central to any real comprehension of community⁸⁵.

By emphasizing our ‘being-in-commonness’, Nancy abandons the separation of self-identity and difference, rendering the condition of *being-with* the basis of our existence (Devisch 2013, p. xi)⁸⁶. The idea here, as Flatley (2008) puts it, is not to integrate the other

85 / The notion of being-in-common should not be confused with or linked to discussions on urban commons. Commons, which were originally understood as natural or environment features free to be used by all (e.g. water and air), have been used of late to refer to urban spaces with a sense of belonging to a tight community, i.e. spaces that are collectively owned or collectively used. This use of urban commons relates more closely to what this thesis will discuss as *Spaces of Collective Care*, and less to the notion of *Spaces of Being-in-Common*. However, some attempts have been made to discuss processes of commoning in relation to difference (see Stavros Stavrides 2015).

86 / Nancy proposes breaking down the word compassion, arguing that it should not be understood as empathy or identification, but as the passion that operates between us: “Com-passion is the contagion, the contact of being with one another in this turmoil. Compassion is not altruism, nor is it identification; it is the disturbance of violent relatedness” (Nancy 2000, p. xiii).

with any pre-existing identity, and nor is it to seek connection by cultivating similarity or kinship; instead, it is to recognize one another on the most fundamental level, as humans that are living and will one day die, accepting that one’s own being is always bound to the being of others. We produce the world and ourselves together, and thus, for Nancy, no existence is possible before or outside its relationship with the outside world and others. Accordingly, no individual self exists prior to this difference.

In order to understand the work of Nancy and Blanchot, it is important to remember that both set their notions of community in a dark historic context. Their discussions on community are situated against an assumed background of destruction and violence. With totalitarian regimes of Nazism, Fascism and Stalinism in the recent past, they try to conceptualize the relationship between the individual and community in a non-repressive way. It is important to recognise that they do not consider totalitarian regimes as the breakdown of the modern political order, but rather suggest the contrary: that the emergence of totalitarianism is one of modernity’s political possibilities⁸⁷. Nancy and Blanchot both emphasise that community cannot be a task, it cannot be made a political project, and yet it must venture a politics nonetheless. Community is an impossibility, but at the same time fundamental to all human

87 / This suggestion is not unique to Nancy and Blanchot, but a central interpretation in postmodern thinking. During the second half of the twentieth century, other philosophical answers were given to the same challenge of thinking community after totalitarianism, for instance the liberal attempt to focus on legal ties, rather than identitarian binds.

beings. Nancy points to the risk of regarding society as something that can be designed according to fixed definitions, as such attempts have often historically lead to oppression and violence. In his preface to *The Inoperative Community*, Nancy (1991) points to the implicit historical context he addresses. He writes:

The community that becomes a single thing (body, mind, fatherland, Leader...) ...necessarily loses the *in* of being-in-common. Or it loses the *with* or the *together* that defines it. It yields its being-together to a being of togetherness. The truth of community, on the contrary, resides in the retreat of such a being. Community is made of what retreats from it: the hypostasis of the “common,” and its work. The retreat opens, and continues to keep open, this strange being-the-on-with-the-other to which we are exposed. (Nothing indicates more clearly what the logic of this being of togetherness can imply than the role of *Gemeinschaft*, or community, in Nazi ideology). (Nancy 1991, p. xxxix)

Totalitarianism and warfare are the threats with which they attempt to grapple. Stopping for a moment, one might wonder about the extent to which Nancy’s concerns are relevant in our time. How do they speak to the challenges of today? In the face of anti-migration politics and expressions of fear of ‘the other’, it is my hope that the notion of being-in-common may vocalise the possibility to be different, yet deeply related.

Nancy sees us as constantly in the process of being touched by the people and things that surround us, and therefore as forever in a process of change and alternation (Hole 2013). This – being connected, yet separated, and in a process of constant alternation

– is central to the condition of being-in-common. Nancy suggests that community depends on a distance across which we may reach for the other, for those (or that) exterior to our selves. He uses the French word ‘partager’ to address this *spacing* of community. *Partager* means both to share and to divide, and for Nancy this is precisely what community does; as he views it, the division, i.e. the space *between us*, is what makes sharing possible. A consequence of this thinking is that difference and division are necessary for community. Placing the drift towards difference at the heart of what constitutes community is a radical move.

Concluding this chapter, we now have two notions of community – *Community of the Affected*, suggesting that communities are created by people who converge around a shared concern, and *the Inoperative Community*, seeing community as a condition where we are always already in common – without any shared concerns or intentional work. Those two diverse notions of community will be discussed in relation to my cases, and to urban design practises, in Chapter Six.

4

PUBLIC SPACE AS WORLD EXPO: SUPERKILEN

SUPERKILEN (*THE SUPER WEDGE*) IS A public space in central Copenhagen. Since opening in 2012, its colourful and unconventional design has received a lot of attention. Financed by the City of Copenhagen and the Danish association Realdania⁸⁸, and designed by the Danish architectural practice BIG – Bjarke Ingels Group, the Danish artist collective SUPERFLEX, and the German landscape architectural studio Topotek 1, Superkilen comprises three distinct but connected parts that together form a 750m-long linear park. The surface of the park is continuous, but each of the three parts has a different colour – red, black, or green – indicating, it seems, different atmospheres and intensities. Superkilen's principal design concept, which was to fill the space with more than one hundred everyday objects from around the world (108 to be precise: of these, 103 are replicas, and five are objects that have been brought to Copenhagen from afar) makes it a highly furnished space. Each object is also a fragment of another place, and the design plays with relationships between far-flung places. The objects suggest a wide range of uses and activities; some objects are designed for specific activities such as square dancing, cycling, boxing, playing basketball, playing chess and barbequing, while others relate to more general activities like walking, resting, and playing. The space is also equipped with a café and the sports hall *Nørrebrohallen*.

88 / The City of Copenhagen and Realdania both put in DKK 50 million to fund Superkilen. Realdania describes itself as 'a modern philanthropist' and provides extensive financial support to architectural projects in Denmark. For a critical review of Realdania and its influence on the urban and architectural scene in Denmark, see Grange 2014.

Because of its collection of foreign objects, Superkilen has been compared to a world expo. When I met one of the founding artists of SUPERFLEX in the SUPERFLEX studio, he said that the concept had been born in response to the site, but also in relation to an international art practice: "We got to know that there were 70 nationalities. That became a trigger point and we did what we often do in the art world – we took objects from one place and placed them in another" (Interview 12 May 2015)⁸⁹.

During the design process, locals were asked to suggest objects of personal relevance that they wanted to see in Superkilen, their new public square. In addition to that invitation to the public, contact was established with a vast number of organisations, sports clubs

89 / It has been suggested that world fairs are testing grounds for top-down experiments, since they are among the few sites where governments have been allowed to spend money on temporary architecture and urbanism (Lydon and Garcia 2015, p. 34). In 2012 – the summer that Superkilen opened – the concept was put to work when the former airfield Berlin Tempelhof was turned into a world fair of sorts. The project was part of a temporary use strategy initiated by the City of Berlin as a means for deciding on a more permanent use for the space. Behind the large-scale outdoor installation, entitled *Die Grosse Weltausstellung*, were the architectural office *raumlabor* and the theatre HAU.

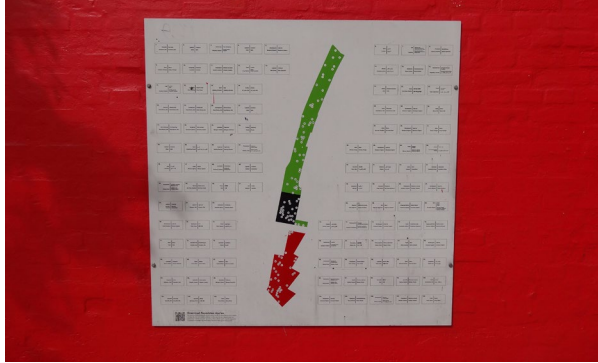


Figure 3: Billboard showing the location of the 108 objects at the site. All object names are in Danish and their original language.



Figure 4: Among the 108 objects are a bench from Zurich; a British litter bin; and an elephant slide originating from Pripyat, a town constructed for the workers at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant that has been abandoned since the meltdown in 1986.



Figure 5. A fountain from Morocco and in the background, an octopus-shaped play structure from Japan.

and other representatives from the civil sector⁹⁰. The artist from SUPERFLEX spoke of a philosophical idea based on the belief that incorporating objects from people's home countries and things to which people relate would create a sense of shared ownership. They worked with a number of groups during the initial phase of Superkilen: "We found people by finding community leaders, meeting people in the street, just being engaged in the area. We know about 40 different organisations here that the municipality doesn't know about – so we engaged with them, listened to their ideas, da-da-da... and then we said, ok, let's do the extreme – you want a dance pavilion? Where would you find that? Ok, let's go to Texas! We went to Texas. Looked with them for a long time, traveling with the elderly people, 80 years old... there were all kinds of relations and interrelations happening" (12 May 2015). The participatory elements in the design strategy of Superkilen have been criticized, however, for being too strictly curated and lacking authenticity. Stine (interviewed on 8 May), a local citizen representative who was involved in the project from an early stage, pointed out that many of the final objects had already been chosen

90 / Some of the local individuals, communities and organisations involved in the process were Nørrebrohallen, Områdefornyelsen i Mimersgadekvarteret, Ungerådet, Nørrebro Bibliotek, Heimdalsgades Overbygningsskole, Rådmandsgade Skole, Børneinstitutionen Asgård and Midgård, Mjølnerparken, Bazar Music Shop, Thaibokseklubben SIAM, Athlete Nation, Danish Muay Thai Federation, Boys Shawarma, First Floor, 2200 Kultur, Pigegruppen, Taikwondoklubben, The Nordic Walking Group of Mjølnerparken, Dane Age Association's Line Dancers in Copenhagen, and Lumpinee Boxing Stadium (Akšamija 2016).



Figures 6 and 7: Soil from Gaza, Palestine; and Thai boxing, Bangkok, Thailand.



Figure 8: “FOREIGNERS, PLEASE DON’T LEAVE US ALONE WITH THE DANES” – poster in the window of the SUPERFLEX office space in Copenhagen.

before the call for ideas. She said: “Please don’t believe that it was the local people who chose these objects; they had an influence, yes, but as you can see, many of the objects sitting in the square today were already there in the invitation [for suggestions]”.

Since its opening, Superkilen has been presented as a celebration of the neighbourhood’s ethnic heterogeneity, and the project has been affirmed as an out-of-the-ordinary project set in the interstitial terrain between architecture, urban design and art – a showpiece of diversity. In 2013 it was nominated for the prestigious Mies van der Rohe Architecture Prize, and in 2016 it won the Aga Khan Award for Architecture, an award for societies in which Muslims have a significant presence; the motivation was that the project promoted transcultural integration⁹¹. The area’s diversity in terms of ethnicity is not always considered an asset however. Superkilen is located in Mjølnerparken, an area that the Danish government called a

⁹¹ / Aga Khan’s jury writes of Superkilen: “Superkilen, a new urban park in one of Copenhagen’s most diverse and socially challenged neighbourhoods, emphatically rejects this view with a powerful mixture of humour, history and hubris” (akdn.org/architecture, accessed 15 February 2018).

‘ghetto’ in 2010⁹². Superkilen must therefore be understood as a political project made in response to a situation that has been described as an ongoing ‘ghettoization’ of the neighbourhood. The artist from SUPERFLEX, articulated this political setting, describing Mjølnerparken as one of Denmark’s most socially challenged neighbourhoods: “This part of Nørrebro is the most complex area in Denmark. Here you have a history of hard-core working class and then Mjølnerparken, where people from different places were put. It was an area with a very bad reputation; a ghetto, or as much of a ghetto as we get in Denmark” (Interview 12 May 2015). On a similar note, Barbara Steiner, art curator and editor of the book *Superkilen*, opens her essay “Beyond Being Nice” with a picture of a handful of young people in camouflage clothing on a burning street; the photo is from the 2008 riots on Nørrebrogade⁹³. Steiner describes Superkilen as an expression of a society that is becoming

92 / In October 2010, the Danish Government launched a strategic plan entitled “Ghettoen tilbage i samfundet” ([Bring] the Ghettos Back to Society) in which 29 areas in Denmark were labelled ghettos. The definition of a ghetto relies on criteria constructed to describe the level of exclusion from ‘Danish society’ and indicates a high percentage of immigrants or descendants from non-western countries, a high percentage outside the official labour market and/or high levels of criminal convictions (Danish Ministry for Social Affairs, 2010).

93 / In February 2008, cars were set on fire in different parts of Nørrebro. Several days later, a group of young people who called themselves ‘the boys from inner Nørrebro’ wrote an open letter to one of Denmark’s largest-circulating newspapers, in which they said the riots had been a protest against police racism and brutality (Politiken 18 Feb. 2008, in Schmidt 2011, p.1221).

“more and more heterogeneous and fragmented” (2013, p. 22). Garbi Schmidt, a scholar of Danish migration policies, questions that notion by highlighting the role Nørrebro has played in the recent national debates about multiculturalism in Denmark. In 2003, Pia Kjærsgaard, leader of the right-wing populist Danish People’s Party (Dansk Folkeparti) published the essay “Giv os Nørrebro tilbage” (*Give us back Nørrebro*); in it, she paints a picture of Nørrebro’s past in which the area is characterized by diversity and tolerance.

For us who grew up in Copenhagen in the fifties and sixties, Nørrebro appears in a special light. ... In Nørrebro you were not easily shocked, you’d seen it all before. There was no room for snobs. But there was lots of tolerance. Today, Nørrebro is totally changed ... the tolerance has gone. (Kjærsgaard in Schmidt 2011, pp. 1219–1220)

Kjærsgaard contends that tolerance was lost when Nørrebro’s diversity based on social class gave way to diversity based on ethnicity, thus giving voice to a common understanding of Denmark as historically homogenous in terms of ethnicity. Schmidt’s research shows on the contrary that Nørrebro has been home to large groups of immigrants since it was established in the nineteenth century, but migration has not always been a hot political issue why the categorization of people has changed over time. Schmidt describes how the current public discourse on migration and ethnic diversity is characterized by hyper-visibility and hyper-problematization. In Copenhagen, events and festivities such as Taste the World, the annual food festival in Nørrebro, have become municipal tools

used to generate more positive narratives of neighbourhoods with a high degree of ethnic diversity. The focus is on food, colour, and celebration, sending out an ambivalent message that diversity may be problematic, but it can be consumed and enjoyed (Schmidt 2014). Superkilen seems to use a similar strategy: here, the visitor is exposed to a colourful selection of objects – no fewer than 108, and from all corners of the world – ready to be used and enjoyed by visitors to the park.

OPENING, JUNE 2012

Superkilen's opening is an overwhelming experience. The city authorities prepared an extensive programme, and most activities were announced beforehand – and now the space is bursting with happenings: Thai boxing in the boxing ring, square dancing in the dance pavilion, capoeira, taekwondo, boy scouts starting a fire, tai chi, roller derby, yoga practice – all in their designated spots. People gather spontaneously – certain objects seem especially attractive, for instance the Bulgarian chess tables, which are not being used for chess at the moment, but crowded with people socializing. Another large group has gathered around the mural of Salvador Allende; there are flowers in front of the wall, and people are taking turns waving the Chilean flag while Chilean music plays on a record player.

Hundreds of red and green balloons are handed out to children and grownups at the square. Music is blasting from a pair of Jamaican loudspeakers, and a temporary stage has been erected at the Red Square. The loud music stops as people walk on stage – I count ten

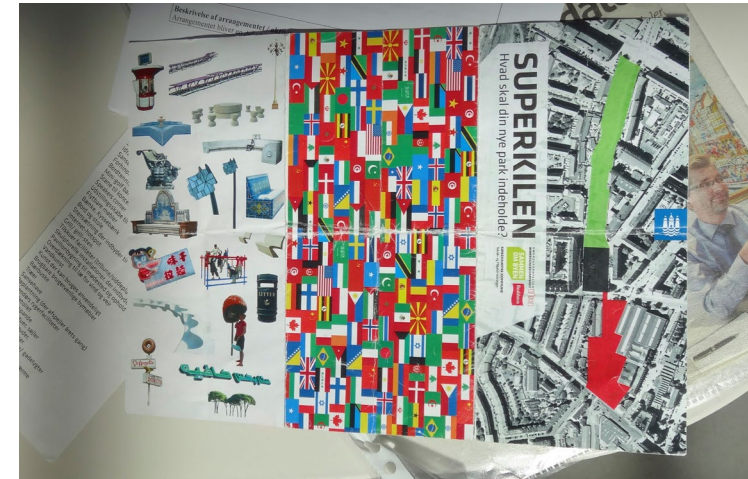


Figure 9: Extreme participation? The brief asking people to submit their ideas – several of the final objects are already in the initial material.



Figure 10: "Superkilen is opening – come and party". Billboard announcing the opening of Superkilen in June 2012.

of them. They are representatives from Copenhagen Municipality, Realdania, the three different architectural practices that were involved in the making of the space, and a representative from a technical consultancy. Copenhagen's technical and environmental mayor (*teknik- og miljøborgmester*) is first in line to speak. She highlights the diversity of the space, calling Superkilen "Nørrebro in mini format". Next speaker is the director of Realdania. He likens Superkilen to a lighthouse, and speaks in the following way:

With Superkilen, we have created a lighthouse in Nørrebro. A lighthouse whose light reaches all of Copenhagen. Superkilen is an example of urban renewal, which is based on the people living in the neighbourhood – in the multiculturalism that is Nørrebro's soul and strength. Superkilen connects the area with the surrounding city through its diversity. Its red asphalt is bursting with life around the clock, it is a meeting place for people who rest, who talk and enjoy themselves, people who run and exercise, people who play music and dance, all of which creates life between the houses⁹⁴. It is full of colours, full of surprises and full of stories, yes real stories from almost all over the world – here there is space for us to be together, space for us today and for many more – there is space for ten thousand more! Superkilen is not like the others, Superkilen is different, but Nørrebro is not like the others either – Nørrebro is different and Nørrebro should be different! I would like to say

94 / This was possibly a nod towards the internationally renowned Danish architect and urban consultant Jan Gehl, who argues for a re-orientation of urban design towards pedestrian space in his influential book *Life Between Buildings*, published in 1971.

a big thank you to the people of Nørrebro; without your cultures and stories it would have been anyplace, anywhere in the city. And a 'whereever park', if I may use that expression, is exactly what Copenhagen and Realdania did not want here (*my translation*).

At the end of his speech, he asks everyone to let go of their balloons. Soon the grey sky above fills with green and red dots that gradually grow smaller, and there is applause and the flash of cameras. The presence of media and journalists is evident; there are six man-high camera stands in the crowd. A group of children are playing with the pattern on the ground – one girl is pretending to balance between a pink and a red area while her friend jumps back and forth between different coloured areas. The music starts up again and a group of young men gather around the loudspeakers. The Red Square is still crowded with people when I leave for the other parts of the park.

The Black Square is not as busy as the Red Square, but I am far from alone. People circulate in small groups, looking at the objects and taking photos. The space resembles a museum at the opening of an exhibition and I think of the many years ahead – how will the space be used after this spectacular (and highly curated) opening? I return to the Red Square, where people have spread out across the open space; the group of representatives that were onstage before are now standing on the ground posing for photos. Another man has joined the group (later, I find out that he is the Czech ambassador to Denmark). It started to rain during the last speeches, and the water makes the ground slick and reflective; I see several people taking photos of their reflections on the ground. The colours on the ground are magnificently bright now. I notice that the coat of the



Figure 11: Tai chi practice at the Red Square at Superkilen's opening in 2012.

Figure 12: Yoga at the Red Square at Superkilen's opening in 2012.



Figure 13: Flowers placed by the mural of Salvador Allende, people waving the Chilean flag at Superkilen's opening in June 2012.

Technical and Environmental Mayor of Copenhagen is the same bright shade of red as the ground on which we're standing. I decide to go to a nearby café and collect my notes. On the way, I pass one of the billboards announcing the occasion, and I read that the opening party is scheduled to go on until nine o'clock that evening.

RE-VISIT, JUNE 2017

As I enter Superkilen at the Red Square, I immediately notice that the colours on the ground that I once found magnificently bright have faded into shades of dirty pink and dingy peach. I soon encounter a group of elderly people from a rest home outside of Copenhagen. Dorte, one of their caretakers, tells me that their initial plan was to go Christiania, but the parking and logistics turned out to be too difficult, so they decided on Superkilen instead. None of the elderly visitors has been here before, and when I meet them in the restaurant later that day Dorte says it has been a very nice outing for the group – in the city, but still exotic and different. One elderly woman tells me the history of the building that we are in – it was built as a roundhouse for the Copenhagen tram, did I know that? When I ask what she thinks of the building and its surrounding outdoor space now, she gives me a thumbs-up.

The space gets busier around lunchtime. Three women are eating kebab on a bench and a man in a pink shirt climbs onto one of the large swings to eat his lunch; a short while later, he is joined by a man that he seems to know. All of the swings are being used at this time, and for a while I share a swing with a woman who is texting on her phone. When she gets up to leave I stop the swing

so she can get off, but the communication between us is wordless. Later I meet Agnar by one of the public grills at the Black Market. He teaches at the nearby school, and he and his colleagues come here quite often to eat their packed lunches. Today, they are four colleagues who have decided to take a longer break and barbeque. Agnar, who has barbequed here several times before, explains that it can get busy by the grills sometimes, especially on sunny evenings. He has had to share the grill with strangers, but never experienced that there was no space for him to grill. “It’s not a shy place, you know, if you want to use the grill, you use the grill, if there are many people who want to use it, there is a lot of meat on the grill – it’s not a problem for anyone”, he says. I continue to talk to him about the space and the neighbourhood before I leave the group of teachers, who invite me to come back in fifteen minutes when the meat is ready.

Later, I notice a group of young adults sitting on the hilltop. Their laughter can be heard at a distance. They are exchange students here in Copenhagen. Marta from Spain explains that they have come here “because it looks great”. They are not aware that they are picnicking on the soil from Palestine, and when I point out the sign they seem uncomfortable and start to move their small spread. Because we are on a small hill, the attempt to move is not very successful; the picnic becomes more compressed, and the atmosphere becomes more awkward. The narrative of this particular spot is clearly making the students uncomfortable.

Not far from the hill, I encounter Karla and her two children. She has parked her Christiania bike next to the Moroccan fountain and is playing with her children by and in the fountain, and the nearby octopus-shaped play structure. She says Superkilen is a



Figures 14 and 15: Balloons were set to the sky at Superkilen’s opening in 2012. The Czech ambassador (to the left), the director of Realdania (second from left) and Copenhagen’s technical and environmental mayor (in red coat) with representatives from BIG, Topotek 1, SUPERFLEX and others during the opening ceremony.



nice place for kids, and that she likes to take them here so they can see “a variety of people”. The mixture of people is the main reason why she likes it better than other playgrounds. When I ask her whether she considers Superkilen a playground, she says: “No, it’s not a playground. It’s a space for children, yes, but you can’t think of them as the only people with the right to the space. Sometimes something else is going on here and you have to find another place for the kids to play”. We are soon interrupted by a large group of



Figure 16. A group of elderly people visiting Superkilen in 2017.

men and woman, all with bikes, that stops by the fountain. They are mobility planners from different parts of Europe, on a guided tour organised by a company that specialises in Copenhagen tours⁹⁵.

During the day, I notice that many of the objects at Superkilen look worn and shabby. The Portuguese bench is missing large parts of its tiles, and the red British bins that were installed as part

⁹⁵ / Overhearing the guide's short speech, I understand that he has taken them to the spot to show a failure – and an example of a situation where good intentions have resulted in an “un-bikeable space”. According to the guide, the main concerns are the surface, which becomes slippery when wet, and the amount of people in the space.

of the original design have been closed off with paper and duct tape. Instead most of the red bins have large plastic bins on wheels attached to them by a chain. Handwritten signs instruct visitors to use the larger bins instead of the red ones, but the request is not always followed – the paper signs are tattered and there is still rubbish both in and around the red bins. A woman is collecting cans in and around the bins. Later that day, I see a young man searching the same bins for leftover food. The graffiti at Superkilen is extensive. “Locals only” and “adios nazismus” is written in several places, as well as “OUTRAGE” in big letters. I notice that there is no graffiti by the red wall.

Interested in the maintenance work, I decide to search for someone who works at the site. A few hours later, I find two people working on the repair of a low fence around a tree. Their clothes indicate that they work for Copenhagen municipality, which proves to be a correct assumption when I talk to them. Karsten and Katrine confirm what I have already seen – that wear on the space has been extreme since it opened in 2012. This, they explain, has made Superkilen a very expensive space in terms of maintenance. They are required to go there in their capacity as maintenances workers much more frequently than to other public spaces. During the summer months, garbage is collected from the grounds twice daily. Katrine explains the extensive need for cleaning with the fact that there are more and more events held in the space and in Nørrebrohallen, and more use of the space means more garbage. The red litter bins were too small from the beginning, she says, and they will be removed sometime soon. Moreover, she tells me that several trees have already been removed; too many people walked on the soil around them,

which damaged their roots. The only trees that have been free from troubles are those with a bench around them. Graffiti is removed continuously, but returns immediately – only the red wall is not ‘graffitied’ on a daily basis, although it has been graffitied on some occasions. Karsten and Katrine don’t know why this wall has been spared, but they suggest that it has to do with the fact that it is used so frequently for photo shoots. Karsten explains that the tolerance for ‘roughness’ is higher now than when the space was brand new – it has to be. Although garbage and graffiti are removed continuously, keeping the site clean and tidy would be too expensive. “It’s a messy place for us, but people love it and it’s safer now. When a space is made for everyone, not just for pushers or shady people, it becomes safer. The space is used so much and therefore it is safe.”

Katrine describes how the Red Square has been particularly hard to maintain, both in terms of keeping it clean and of keeping the original design intact. The boxing ring there was cut and had to be repaired. “If something breaks we have to exchange it. And everything is specially made here. We have extras of some objects and materials – some things were bought as spares in the beginning, which was a clever thing to do. Other things were not so clever, for example that the benches are too close to the bike path – did you notice that people are sitting on everything else but the



Figures 17 and 18: Some of the original objects look rather worn, e.g. the Portuguese bench has lost several tiles. Several of the sealed-off bins have been forced.



benches?”⁹⁶ I notice that new objects have been added since my last visit. Signs with concrete bases are used as benches and chairs, and a kind of wooden rectangles added by the skaters as jumping-bumps. Katrine explains: “Yes, the skaters – they were actually supposed to use a skate park close by, but they love this space, and they are allowed to be here, but they bring many things here”. She tells me that the ground surface will be replaced in 2018 – the red rubber-like surface will be exchanged for red bricks.

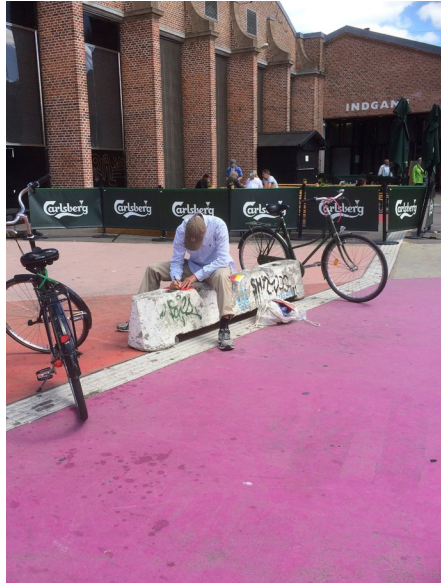
During this re-visit, I see two fashion shoots. The first takes place by the boxing ring. Three women are working with a camera and a cardboard box with clothes and props. The trio consists of Alisa, a newly graduated fashion designer; Larine, a freelance photographer, and their model, who leaves when the conversation starts. Alisa says that she has been wanting to stage a fashion shoot at Superkilen since she first visited the place a few years ago; she likes the graphic qualities of the space (“the colours make it kind of crazy, and the lines makes it clean”), and that she wants to juxtapose her designs with other patterns from the space itself. She was a bit hesitant to use the space, she says, since most people will recognize Superkilen in the photos, but Larine convinced her that it wasn’t a problem since most people like the space. “It’s a cool place that

96 / I recall that the artist from SUPERFLEX mentioned the tradition of standardized street furniture as one of the challenges that they had to overcome when Superkilen was implemented. He expressed it thus: “It is a project with many problems – you need to have objects from all of the world. In Denmark you have three benches – a bench called the Copenhagen bench, and two more, and that’s it.” (Interview 12 May 2015)

people like, at least the people that we talk to with our work, the kind of people we want to find our work interesting.”

Later that afternoon, I see a second photo shoot taking place by the red wall at the Red Square. Three women and a man with a bike are gathered around an Ikea bag full of clothes. The man tells me that he is the designer and that they are here to produce photos for a fashion label. He says that the main reason for them to come here is that they don’t have a photo studio to work in at the moment; he says Superkilen was their best option. While we’re talking, a veiled woman walks over the ‘stage’ they have set up for the photo session – i.e. the space between the camera, the bag with clothes, the bike and the people involved. She seems indifferent to the goings-on. The man tells me that he comes here for different reasons, but mainly to work⁹⁷. I observe a woman sitting at a bench close to the swings. She is wearing sports clothes and as I pass by her, I notice that she is making a video of herself; i.e. she is talking into the camera on her phone and filming. She says she had considered posting it on Instagram (“to show that I’m here at Superkilen”) but decided not to, since it was made during work hours. She is an elementary school teacher visiting Superkilen with her class, which is participating in a citywide sports day. She is familiar with Superkilen from media and friends, but this is the first time that she is visiting the actual space. She says she really likes the space and has been waiting for

97 / Later, I found a few photos from their session on Instagram (hashtagged #Superkilen #fashion). The same group of people appear in several fashion photos from Superkilen from different occasions. Judging from their Instagram posts, they seem to have engaged in at least four fashion photo sessions in the summer of 2017.



Figures 19 and 20: New objects have been added, and people are using those temporary objects as benches.



a reason to come here. Later that afternoon, I see what seems to be yet another fashion photo shoot: a young woman is changing accessories and posing in front of a mobile phone camera. As I get closer, I realise that this is something else. It turns out to be a group of friends who have come to Superkilen to take photos to send to friends with whom they will go to a festival in Roskilde. They are striking poses and playing around at the main open space of the Red Square. A man on a skateboard rolls into the circle of women several times – it seems to be an involuntary interaction, and it causes the women to laugh. Another man with a film camera who is accompanying the skater asks them to move aside at one point. The women relocate to the swings, where we continue the conversation. They tell me that they have come to Superkilen because it's a fun place, and they can make good photos here.

Later I see a young boy hugging a tree from Lebanon while his friend takes a photo. The intention behind the hug remains unknown to me, as we cannot find a common language. When leaving the space, I pass a bench where two women are resting from what seems to have been a long day of shopping. They are carrying several shopping bags and a large, new cooking pot. It is getting late and I decide to sit down to collect my field notes before heading for the train that will take me back to Lund. On the bench next to me, a middle-aged man takes his shoes and socks off, placing his white feet on the pink ground.

DESIGN STRATEGIES AT SUPERKILEN

In the following, I will use the diverse empirical material to discuss my findings through the three design strategies that I have identified as central to Superkilen. They are: *Objects as Openers*, *Archival Space* and *Aesthetic Disputation*.

OBJECTS AS OPENERS

Among other things, Superkilen is an attempt to create a public space through a number of hyper-present objects from around the world. Some objects relate strongly to migration and eviction, whilst other objects relate more to tourist adventures; one example is the bull from Spain, chosen by two retired Danish ladies who have been traveling to Spain since they were young. Still, the visitor is exposed to a number of objects with strong political connotations: Kurdish benches, soil from Palestine and play equipment from Pripyat, an abandoned town close to Chernobyl. Drawing on the exposure of such politically charged objects or situations,



Figure 21: Getting ready for a fashion shoot. The clothes that will feature in the photos are carried in a blue Ikea bag.



Figure 22: People playing and having lunch at the Thai boxing ring.

I argue that Superkilen aims at a certain level of provocation⁹⁸. Realdania's representative Astrid Bruus Thomsen explains the strategy: "If you have soil from Palestine or a manhole from Israel, will some people spit on it. Yeah, maybe, but still, of course, we hope nobody would do this. The idea is that everybody respects that we are coexisting together" (in Steiner 2013, p.70). Respect is to be achieved through situations that could potentially stir up anger, and the message is clear: here at Superkilen, we do not only coexist, but we coexist together. The experience of coexistence is in itself the shared experience.

Though present as physical objects, the objects at Superkilen emphasize the distance between their current location and their geographical origin: the Moroccan fountain fills me with an acute awareness of the absence of the Moroccan sun; the Chinese palm trees become a forest in exile. Superkilen becomes a locus for present elsewhere, employing spacing of meaning, and spacing as meaning. The reproducing of faraway places and atmospheres is not a new concept in spatial planning. In relation to Superkilen, Martin Rein-Cano, architect at Topotek 1, describes how the reproduction

⁹⁸ /Returning to Bataille's idea that the ability to be 'painfully open to other human fellows' is the foundation of social life, the design choices at Superkilen, made in favour of provocation, can be seen as an attempt to do just what Bataille proposes, using affect to 'break open' the visitor. The principal idea here is that subjects are deconstructed and reconstructed – hence transformed, through the encounter with the others (Karami 2018, p. 130).

of foreign atmospheres has since long been a common theme in English parks:

When people entered the landscape garden in the eighteenth century, they were in a different place. They went in and they thought: 'Goodness heaven, where am I?' They had never seen a tree or a temple like those before. So, how can we recreate these experiences today? Entering Superkilen, even if it is part of the city and is very urban, it should also open to a different world. I guess, in this regard, it was very forceful to avoid using any object from Denmark; basically all the objects are foreign (in Steiner 2013, p. 31).

The objects themselves are in the foreground when Rein-Cano describes Superkilen as the urban version of a universal garden. Whereas Danish objects are avoided, foreign objects are designated as 'openers' onto other worlds. When talking to people at the site, it is the diversity of attitudes towards the objects that stands out: objects linked to particular places and personal stories will not communicate with everyone in the same way. Sarah, a 12-year-old girl whose family comes from Iraq, had warm feelings for the swings from Iraq:

I like that house (pointing to the dance pavilion). We always drink milkshakes and sit there. You can watch the basketball games from there, but I am most happy because there is something from Iraq here, the swings! I know there is soil from Palestine too. I really

like to see something from Iraq here. I think I like to use the swings because they are from Iraq. (Interview 8 May 2015)

Ernesto, a man from Cuba whom I encountered by the cherry trees at the Black Square, demonstrates a different attitude altogether, letting me know that while he was aware of a Cuban bench at Superkilen, he had no intention of finding out its location:

This space is large. I come here to walk, to use my legs every day. I'm from Cuba. I like the trees here. The flowers. I was told there is a bench from Cuba somewhere, but I didn't see it. I'm not interested in it. (Conversation 8 May 2015)

Ernesto is not relating to the object representing his country in the same way as Sarah. Instead, he found his own ways to relate to the space: through the flowers and the trees. A third stance is expressed by Lukas, a student from Germany, who is visiting the space with a group of friends: he is not un-interested in the German object, but critical of it. He found the object chosen to represent him as a German too plain and too ordinary; he suggested that a piece of the Berlin Wall would have been a better choice than the large lamppost next to which we spoke. He expresses his critique in the following way: "There are so many beautiful things here, but this German lamp is so boring compared to let's say the Moroccan Spring – it is just a lamp. It would have been nice to be represented by something that means something – something like a piece of

the Berlin Wall, that would have been something really German." (Conversation 8 May 2015)

Each object comes with a complex net of relations. An example of this is Object 94, a sound system originating from a suburb of Kingston, Jamaica that was procured by two young rappers living in Denmark. There is a video about *Object 94* on the SUPERFLEX homepage⁹⁹; in it, the viewer learns of a similar sound system that was the centre of impromptu street parties in the ghettos of Kingston in the 1950s. It could be used by anyone and at any time. A similar impromptu use was encouraged when the speakers were installed at Superkilen in spring 2012; anyone with a 'bluetoothed' cell phone could play music on the loudspeakers. The open access proved a source of conflict when noise from the loudspeakers reached the surrounding houses, and the sound system was shut down already during its first summer. On one visit to Superkilen, I had the ambiguous experience of facing the heavy body of the loudspeakers, which had been muted, stripped of its primary function. An object intended as a vibrant sound transmitter, it was being used as a big piece of furniture, holding mugs and bottles. Later, when reopened, its use was mediated by restricted "play hours". With this situation in mind, where is meaning produced in the network of Object 94? Is it in the loudspeakers, in the phone, or in the person choosing music? Or is meaning perhaps produced through the neighbours' protests? Banal as they may seem, I ask

⁹⁹ / The film was viewed 6098 times in the first 10 months, between June 2012 and April 2013.

these questions to draw the attention to Object 94 as a complex socio-material figure.

Using a ball as an example, Michel Serres uses the notion of quasi-objects to describe a process of socio-material entanglement. A ball is only relevant when played with; its meaning emerges in action. The ball becomes a connector that allows cooperation between the social and the material, creating the collective through traveling individual agency – whoever has the ball is the active subject. The constantly shifting agency makes the ball hard to categorise: it is neither subject nor object, neither material nor social. Anthropologist Gregory Bateson (1972) turns to a blind man with a walking stick to question the boundaries between the social (human) and material (object). He asks in conclusion: “Where does the blind man’s body begin? At the tip of the stick? At the handle of the stick? Or at some point halfway up the stick?” (Bateson 1972, p. 318 in Tomas 2004).

For Bateson, these questions are irrelevant, since the mind is not determined by anatomical boundaries, but by context. Information travels between the ground, the stick and the man, making it impossible to draw a line of boundary between them. It is a feedback loop that involves both social and material components and is both internal and external to the subject. Bateson’s blind man is an early approach to re-thinking subjectivity and the entanglement of human and non-human actors¹⁰⁰. Similar questions have since been approached through assemblage theories, actor network theory

100 / A similar example – a man and a stick – was used already in 1923 by Paul Schiller in *Das Körperschema*, where he discussed man’s relation to himself and the surrounding world.



Figure 23: Stripes on the ground, guiding an elderly man at the Black Square

and theories of performativity¹⁰¹. Like the examples of the ball and the blind man, the material and technical body of the loudspeakers at Superkilen are intimately related to human bodies. If the ball makes sense when played with, so does the loudspeaker. Much like the ball, the loudspeaker can only be 'played' by one person at a time, which is why it may be conceptualised as a quasi-object producing subjectivities through a traveling agency. If the location of the subject is unstable in Object 94 (i.e. the subject is not delivered by the human alone), the same can be said about Superkilen as a whole; meaning emerges between human bodies and other materialities.

Superkilen is a highly designed socio-material experience. I have tried to show how it makes use of the entanglement of technologies, things and humans in its creation of particular atmospheres. The objects in particular – which come from all corners of the world and have been placed at Superkilen – have been assigned the task of opening the park to situations, spaces and people elsewhere. I have discussed the attachment to objects; whilst one man who spent time at Superkilen on a daily basis chose not to visit the bench that had been imported from his home country, an affectionate connection

101 / More recently, the increase of networked- and virtual technologies have expanded the theoretical scope further. N. Katherine Hayles (2006) describes how new technology – e.g. the internet and networked information devices such as cell phones, tags and GPS-networks, have emerged from the same forces that brought forth Donna Haraway's notion of the cyborg (1991). Hayles argues that contemporary formations have long since exceeded the concept of cyborg in terms of merging humans and technology, a process that is now moving us (humans) out of the human sphere and into the post-human.

to particular spaces and objects was evident for instance in the flowers placed by the mural of Salvador Allende at Superkilen.

ARCHIVAL SPACE

To someone just walking through, Superkilen doesn't come across as a space designed to counteract societal fragmentation; instead, it seems like a chance to acknowledge and promote it (Sandström 2015). Given that Superkilen has been presented as a response to a society that is falling apart (Steiner 2013), its design concept may come as a surprise. Why should the answer to fragmentation be more fragmentation? The term fragmentation is often used to summarize phenomena of societal and spatial segregation; to navigate the many uses of the term, it may be helpful to return to the word's original meaning. Fragmentation refers to the process of breaking into pieces, but also to the broken pieces themselves – a fragment of an entity that no longer exists. Fragmentation should thus be understood in a dialectic relationship between deconstruction and reconstruction: the fragment is a reminder of a former entity, but it represents a current state in which 'broken pieces' start to form new patterns, thus indicating a process of reconstruction (Deffner & Hoernig 2011, p.3). The polite and generous distance between the objects at Superkilen – benches, playground equipment, lampposts,

and signs – seems to emphasize their importance in solitude, recalling, as mentioned earlier, an exhibition space in a museum¹⁰².

Why would a public space mimic a museum? Star and Griesemer touch on the organizing principle of the museum in their work on boundary objects¹⁰³. A boundary object is “plastic enough to adapt to local needs and the constraints of several parties employing them, yet robust enough to maintain a common identity across sites” (Star & Griesemer 1989, p. 393). Boundary objects are in other words a means of translation, carrying different meanings in different social worlds, but their structure is sufficiently generic to render them recognizable across several separate social worlds. For instance, the loudspeakers discussed in the previous section seem to function as a boundary object in their production of temporary alliances.

Superkilen’s fragmentary condition is embraced as a design principle, yet all the fragments are systematized and indexed in a way that gives the visitor a full overview of the site, its objects, and its narrations. The same information is linked to each and every object: the country of origin, Danish title, and original language title, all written on a standardized plaque. The non-hierarchical structure in

102 / Epithets such as ‘Copenhagen’s New Museum’ have been used to describe Superkilen (inhabitat.com/bjarke-ingels-superkilen-transforms-copenhagen-in-to-an-outdoor-museum, accessed 8 May 2013).

103 / Boundary object is a concept that is primarily used in computer science and management theory, denoting the coexistence of diversity and cooperation. The word ‘boundary’ is often used to describe an edge or periphery; here however, it suggests a shared space where “exactly that sense of here and there are confounded” (Star 2010, p. 603).

which every object is treated the same makes Superkilen a modular construction, or a repository space, to use Star and Griesemer’s term (1989)¹⁰⁴. Parts can be removed without collapsing or changing the whole. This encapsulation of internal units is an advantage, as it allows heterogeneity to be sustained without being confrontational. The benefits of repository structures can be observed in another specific typology that springs from a European tradition, namely the open-air museum¹⁰⁵. The typical open-air museum is guided by a nostalgic longing for bygone lifestyles, and showcases traditional ways of life from different parts of the county. The open-air museum is a space of entertainment and leisure, but it is at the same time characterized by cultural conservatism in its objects to “represent the rural other” (Hancock 2010, p.101). The repository structure, along with the pursuit of the genuine, makes the open-air museum an archival space and a safe haven from processes of adjustments and hybridization. Superkilen and the open-air museum are similar insofar as they both enjoy the advantages of designed fragmentation,

104 / In analysing interactions between different groupings connected to the establishment of a natural museum, Star and Griesemer (1989) identified the following four types of boundary objects: repositories, standardized forms, ideal types, and coincident boundaries. The repositories are described as ordered piles of objects, indexed in a standardized fashion.

105 / Skansen, the world’s first open-air museum, was founded by Artur Hazelius in Stockholm in 1891. Some 150 objects, mainly houses, were shipped piece by piece to Stockholm. Today, there are hundreds of open-air museums around the globe, exhibiting vernacular architecture in response to what Hancock (2010, p.103) describes as ‘a global appetite for local pasts’.

but they are different in their political intentions. Whereas the typical open-air museum is a national memory-scape fashioned out of rural localities, Superkilen operates through globally collected localities – they can both be described as indexes of displacements, or patchworks of elsewhere¹⁰⁶. For Foucault, archival spaces such as museums and libraries are a kind of heterotopia, characterized by their desire to accumulate everything, including all times, in a stable structure. He writes: “The idea of constituting a sort of general archive, the desire to contain all times, all ages, all forms, all tastes in one place, the idea of constituting a place of all times that is itself outside time and protected from its erosion, the project of thus organizing a kind of perpetual and indefinite accumulation of time in a place that will not move” (1998, p.182). Foucault’s description of the archival space speaks to Superkilen’s extensive collectionism by foregrounding fixity and immobility, pushing the more obvious theme of motion and migration into the background. I have already mentioned some of the objects of this collection (for instance the loudspeakers from Jamaica, the Octopus from Japan and the elephant slide from the Ukraine). In the following section, I take a deeper look at another object with a different agency: *Object 46*, ‘Soil from Palestine’.

¹⁰⁶ / Deleuze and Guattari use the term patchwork in *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, referring to how pioneer women in America used to make large quilts by assembling many small pieces of cloth (Deleuze and Guattari 2004, in Querrien, Petcou, Petrescu 2013).



Figure 24: Object 94, a (silenced) sound system from Jamaica.

In 2011, the artist group SUPERFLEX travelled from Copenhagen to Palestine with Hiba and Allaa, two young women with family history in Palestine (but incidentally, barely any memories from there). Their mission was to reach the site of Hiba and Allaa’s grandparents’ former village and bring back something for Superkilen. I followed the women’s journey in an almost 30-minute sequence of four films uploaded on Superkilen’s homepage. Expectations mounted as the women, guided by Hiba’s grandmother over a crackling cell phone connection, searched for traces of their ancestors in the wide, undulating landscape. The redemptive turning point comes when a local shepherd appears and can point out the place where the family house used to be. His story is declared true by the old woman on the cell phone, and the search is officially over. The young women decide to bring back soil to Copenhagen, and the last part of the film



Figure 25: Alaa Al-Assadi and Hiba Marwan collecting soil in Palestine. Stills from the film on SUPERFLEX's webpage (Accessed 7 March 2018).

is a description of the process of transporting a plastic trunk full of soil from the Palestinian hillside to its final destination in Nørrebro.

How can the act of traveling 2000 miles to bring back a trunk of soil to the construction site of an urban park in Copenhagen be understood? The girls who made the journey did not go to explore a foreign country, but to meet their own family history. The act of bringing soil from one home (Palestine) to another (Copenhagen) is a self-encounter of sorts. It is also a design strategy that raises questions about the individualization of society (an insistent theme in science during the last century, see for instance De Cauter 2004),

and its role for public space: does Superkilen make more sense when regarded as a space for meeting not the other, but oneself? Philosopher Peter Sloterdijk suggests that we are facing a crisis of the second person, where individuals are taking themselves to be 'the substantial first, and their relationships to others to be the accidental second' (2007, p.96). Sloterdijk (2007) suggests that we live in a time of separateness where we are caught in "a centrifugal force that scatters individuals into their own world cells" (Sloterdijk 2007, p. 98). Separate world cells (egospheres) are produced and supported by the practice of self-objectification through ego-technical devices¹⁰⁷. This kind of hyper-individualism (also discussed by De Cauter 2004) celebrates the passage of information through the subject. A similar preference can be traced in the design concept of Superkilen, where objects are connected to stories, turning the site into a collage of strong subjectivities relating to memories and far-away places. As Lukas, the German student who wanted to be represented by a piece of the Berlin Wall, noticed, many of the objects are potential symbols of greater political, cultural, and geographical narratives.

A large number of diverse objects are placed close to each other, making Superkilen a space of extreme proximity. It is a space where one 'bumps into strangers' in a very literal sense, as was observed at the boxing ring: a group of young boys were playing around on one side of the ring while two men ate their lunch on the other

¹⁰⁷ / The devices that Sloterdijk (2017) mentions are mirrors and diaries. I suggest that the combination of cell phones and social media may be added to the list of ego-technical devices.

side. The playing boys and the eating men made no indication that they knew each other, but started talking by the second time a boy bumped into the men's side of the rink and made them spill some coffee. Their conversation lasted for a few minutes and seemed friendly and jovial (and to concern boxing above all). Given that the space hosts numerous activities in close proximity, some degree of negotiation is inevitable. To deal with fragmentation as an operational term is to deal with the tension between connection and disconnection. Intentional or designed fragmentation seems to benefit heterogeneity in a number of ways that have already been identified in this chapter: it enables an accumulation of entities (objects, pavilions, atmospheres) to exist side by side without having to enter into negotiations or processes of alternation. Moreover, a repository space is made robust by its modular, non-hierarchical structure, where single objects can always be substituted without affecting the whole.

One of the artists from SUPERFLEX described Superkilen as "a representation of the complexity of Nørrebro" (interview 12 May 2015), but watching the goings-on at Superkilen one spring afternoon in 2015, what stood out was not the representation of ethnical groups, but the mundane uses of objects and spaces: two chatting boys hanging out with their bikes by a couple of Kurdish benches; a young family moving through the space; a young girl collecting cherry blossoms in the Moroccan fountain, a woman with a pram following a small child's exploration of the bike stands; an elderly man walking slowly with a stick, pausing for a moment by the Chinese palm trees to check his phone. The student I had talked to earlier was at the boxing ring, shadowboxing with a younger friend. Superkilen is on one hand a rigorously designed

space filled with objects that can be surveyed. It is on the other hand an incalculable space in terms of use, pointing to a world that is not exhibited, but lived.

Rather than a fixed state, fragmentation is a process; the word suggests less the piece than what is torn. Each fragment stands for itself and for that of which it once formed a part. The fragment is essentially incomplete. Following that argumentation, the verdict on Superkilen as an expression of a fragmented society, as described by Steiner (2013), is in itself an expression of a particular notion of society, i.e. an understanding of society as a unit that can be shattered into pieces if the shared political and moral fundamentals are lost – this seems to be a common image in discussions in which fragmentation is considered one of the great societal problems of our time. I disagree with that image and thus turn to Nancy, who offers a quite different way to think about fragmentation. For Nancy, distance is the prerequisite for connection. Through my empirical and theoretical work, I have grown to see Superkilen as an attempt to build Nancy's notion of *Being-in-Common*, a condition that is equally dependent on the gesture to share and to divide, where our possibility to connect depends on the distance between us. It is a space where we may experience community as distance that we cross when we reach for someone or something exterior to ourselves.

AESTHETIC DISRUPTIONS

Superkilen and Jubileumsparken are both strange spaces, in the sense that they do not resemble the average Scandinavian city park

or urban square. In their use of humorous design, both can be seen as deviant, and as aesthetic disruptions of the surrounding urban fabric.

Although they are used frequently in artistic practices¹⁰⁸, aesthetic disruptions are not often employed as a conscious tool for social change in architecture or urban design. Since the early phases of the Superkilen project, an outspoken strategy has been to confront people with the unfamiliar, with the aim of disrupting habitual modes of seeing. My observations indicate that this aspiration is not entirely without success: the ‘strangeness’ of the space came through in many of the conversations I had with visitors to the site. The space was repeatedly referred to as fun, strange and different¹⁰⁹. One woman, Amina, described how her children had spotted the space when passing by it by bus, and how they had to go back and see what it was the next day. Once there, they still didn’t quite know what it was. Was it a playground, or was it not a playground? Amina said that while she still finds it strange, both she and her children like it. “They like the colours and the play-things. I like the fountain, and the colours too. I feel like a child here too.” (Conversation 12 May 2015)

Mathilde, a student living next to the red part of Superkilen, enjoys the strangeness of the place: “It’s not a pretty space, and that’s

108 / For an expanded discussion on art’s potential to change or challenge institutions, see Sandin 2015.

109 / Other remarks made about the space were: “It’s fun and weird, that’s what I like about it”; “It’s beautiful and fun, and so strange”; “Different, quite strange and kind of fun”; “It’s fun because it is different”; “It’s different, just like Nørrebro”. (Interviews 8 May and 12 May 2015)



Figure 26: Boys talking by the benches, which originate from the Kurdish part of Iran. The writing on the back reads: “A good town is not something you find – you have to build it yourself” (my translation from Danish).

what I like about it. When you see it the first time it looks weird – everything looks weird, and then you start to like it because of that” (Interview 8 May 2015). She gives me an example of how she had thrown a party in her flat not long before, and had gone down to Superkilen in the morning to get away from the mess:

We had a good laugh about these benches that you can’t really sit on – and that it doesn’t matter, it can be weird – it’s fun and it’s weird. And I like the swings, it’s quite fun, it’s sort of a children’s thing, but they are so large so grownups can use them. I have been drunk on these swings so many times. But there is space for the children too. Everyone knows this space now – the Red Square. When I tell people I live by the Red Square, they know what it is, and it doesn’t have a bad reputation or anything. I think it goes

really well with the area. Nørrebro is multicultural, and it creates a space for everyone to be in. It is not a space with one specific atmosphere. (Conversation 8 May 2015)

The many comments relating back to the aesthetics of the space suggest to me that the site is perceived as a fun and playful aesthetic disruption of the conventional city square and the surrounding urban fabric. Drawing on Deleuze and Guattari's characterisation of the minor (1986), one could think of it as an aesthetic stuttering. Moreover, my analysis of Instagram pictures from the space includes the use of humour and the making of surreal atmospheres. A popular theme is people playing with scale, i.e. making the space appear twisted, out of scale and surreal. The space is also used as a stage for atmospheric photos, sometimes with theatrical props – and for innumerable selfies. The use of the space as a stage or a backdrop for selfies on Instagram relates back to some of the encounters on site: the primary school teacher who had been waiting to come to the space and made a video of herself once there, and the professionals using it as a stage for fashion shoots. What makes a primary school teacher want to document herself at Superkilen, and why do designers photograph their creations there? Drawing on the conversations I had, it seems to be about added value; the clothes reap value from the space, and in a similar way I hope to acquire value or perhaps the *values* of the space by taking a selfie here. According to the artist from SUPERFLEX (12 May 2015), a local politician started her campaign at Superkilen; later, in my online research, I came across a wedding photographer who presents Superkilen as an epic non-traditional location for taking wedding portraits.

Occasionally, the strangeness of the site seemed to trigger a certain territorial uncertainty, such as when a man and a child (possibly father and son) were interacting by the Octopus, the octopus-shaped play structure from Tokyo. The man helped the child climb the structure, then ran to the front to catch the child as he came sliding down. They did this several times; both seemed familiar with the structure, its possibilities and obstacles. Unexpectedly, a small group of young men walked around from behind the Octopus, having entered Superkilen from the corner nearest the city centre. As they approached, the child went to his father, and together they retreated to the nearby fountain as the young men start to run up the slides. The asymmetrical Octopus then became a stage for a physical conversation, with the young men dawdling in its cavities and slides. The child returned to the Octopus when the group left, but the situation soon repeated itself as a group of older boys with kick scooters turned up. I was surprised by the weak territorial claim that the father and child made, and imagine that it would have been stronger had it been a more familiar structure, clearly intended for young children. The materiality of the Octopus also plays a central role here; its shape makes it impossible to overview the whole structure; no matter where I stand, there are always niches that are hidden from me. This makes the octopus different to the classic playground, which is often designed to be easy for a parent to survey (Kärholm 2004, p.233)¹¹⁰.

110 / The ambiguous atmosphere of the structure was captured in the Danish-Swedish TV-production Bron: Superkilen was assigned a key role in the final episode, and the Octopus served as a hiding place for teenagers on the run.



Figure 27: Playing with scale at Superkilen. Instagram photo by caro.pelosi, 27 Feb 2018; and Instagram photo By JolieOy 29 May 2018



The objects at Superkilen are presented as foreign, but they are not that foreign. Most people familiar with urban environments will recognize the typologies: benches, lampposts, litter bins, slides and swings. Nevertheless, some of the individual items are so dissimilar to the standard Copenhagen street furniture that their function might be hard to determine by someone unfamiliar with their origin, thus creating a tension through the interplay of the familiar and the alien. There is sometimes a delay in making sense of the object in which interpretations and associations can be made. As an example, the encounter with Palestinian soil makes me

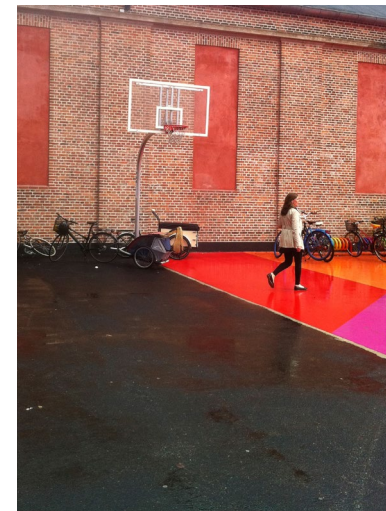
connect with Superkilen in an unfamiliar, and for me rather uncomfortable way. The discomfort that I feel when encountering the story of the two girls collecting soil in Palestine to bring to Superkilen is a temporary loss of certainty about the world. Such a small disruption, when one's habitual way of seeing the world is temporarily lifted, is also a chance for other understandings of being-together in the world to break through.

Linked to the making of strange atmospheres is the suggestion that material arrangements have a certain potential to enable particular actions to unfold (Metzger 2010). Metzger uses the German word *Verfremdungseffekt*¹¹¹ when discussing the possibility of getting out of the familiar and the taken-for-granted in a planning process with stakeholders by making new material formations, i.e. “a new physical environment to meet in” (Metzger 2010). While Metzger advocates for estrangement as a tool to be used in professional settings to open up a planning process, the case of Superkilen suggests that atmospheres of estrangement may have similar potential when speaking to a more general public on the nature of publicness itself. I suggest that there is a conceptual tension between a minor literature/urbanism and the issue of defamiliarisation and

111 / Estrangement is a device originally used in the literary and performing arts. In German, *Verfremdungseffekt* suggests both distancing (dislocation) and alienation (making strange). As a term, it was first coined by the Russian formalist Viktor Shklovsky in an essay from 1916, but it is best known thanks to the works of Bertolt Brecht.

estrangement. Whereas estrangement as it is used in theatre (by Shklovsky and Brecht) wants us to move from one condition to another, the minor is always unstable and becoming.

In this chapter, I have highlighted some of the suggestive and humorous qualities of Superkilen that are present both in social media and on the physical site to show how Superkilen's deviation from the expected public space disrupts the construction of 'the sensible' by creating what Stengers (2005b) refers to as a space for hesitation – an interstice where concepts such as 'good', 'common' and indeed 'community' can be examined and redefined. A space of hesitation is an unfamiliar space, or a space that is able to resist ready interpretations. A space of hesitation is also, I suggest, a space in which we can explore other ways of being together in public space.



Figures 28, 29 and 30: Aesthetic disruption, as seen at the edges of Superkilen.

5

THE RELATIONAL PARK: JUBILEUMSPARKEN



JUBILEUMSPARKEN (*THE JUBILEE PARK*) is a temporary park located in Gothenburg, Sweden's second largest city. On-site work started in the winter of 2013-2014, when fences were taken down and basic infrastructure implemented. Jubileumsparken is the pre-run for a new city park scheduled for completion in 2021, when Gothenburg will celebrate 400 years as a city. The upcoming anniversary has been used to frame an extensive dialogue on Gothenburg's further development, involving citizens, politicians and various experts and sections of the city administration. The dialogue has resulted in an extensive set of initiatives, many of which relate to public space. Making new public spaces has been identified as the key to strengthening the connection between the two sides of the river that divides the city into two parts; the city administration emphasises this as essential for the city to become a more coherent whole (Göteborgs stad 2012).

The making of Jubileumsparken is one of the most talked-about public space projects as the city's anniversary in 2021 approaches. The project responds to political aspirations of social integration: the making of Jubileumsparken is part of a controversial redevelopment scheme that will affect large parts of the central city, primarily the northern side of the centrally located river¹¹². Jubileumsparken is being created by the public developer Älvstranden Utvecklings AB in cooperation with the city planning authorities in Gothenburg. The 10-hectare area designated for the temporary Jubileumsparken

112 / For an extensive account of the controversies surrounding one major redevelopment project at Hisingen, see Katarina Despotovic and Catharina Thörn's book *Den urbana fronten: En dokumentation av makten över staden* (2015).

is near the former dockyards and is part of *Frihamnen*, a 30-hectare harbour area originating from the early 1920s containing three piers and a number of supplementary docks. The site of the temporary park, which is still largely covered with asphalt at the time of writing, is characterized by the industrial milieu, the surrounding traffic infrastructure, and the presence of cars and larger vehicles, but also by the presence of water and remains of the old harbour. Since there is no local plan (*detaljplan*) for Frihamnen at the time of writing, the exact area and location for the final version of Jubileumsparken has not been determined¹¹³. The municipality of Gothenburg frames the making of Jubileumsparken as a test pilot for a new way of working with urban development. An unconventional urban design scheme is being used to develop the park, shaped by the belief that public value can emerge already before the permanent construction phase. An extensive temporary-use strategy is implemented in order to establish the park gradually. The idea is to create an event-based dialogue with citizens during the initial years (Göteborgs stad 2014). The municipality describes the progression towards

113 / The making of the temporary park is run as a project of its own entitled *Jubileumsparken 0.5*. As the name indicates, the park being produced is not in its finalized state, but a 'phase 0', a prequel to the more permanent park with the working title *Jubileumsparken 2021*. In this thesis, I use *Jubileumsparken* to refer to the site of the temporary park. I have chosen to omit the suffix 0.5 in order to free myself from the municipality's definition of the project, leaving the door open to investigations beyond the delimitations of 'Jubileumsparken 0.5'.

a final park as a process of ‘place-building’ (*platsbyggande*)¹¹⁴.

Jubileumsparken’s design scheme centres on the notion of ‘urban prototypes’. The public has been invited to participate in the making of the park through a number of public workshops, referred to as ‘open calls’ – a form of public workshops that will be discussed in greater depth later in this chapter.

When I visited the space in September 2014, a roller derby rink had already been constructed as one of the first public prototypes. The public sauna was in the making through a public workshop (i.e. an ‘open call’) that was taking place on the day of my visit. Other structures were added later: a play structure, a swimming pool and infrastructure that enable urban gardening, biking and sailing. Jubileumsparken has been developed in cooperation with a number of architects and artists who have been commissioned to work with the park for a period of time. The project has received a great deal of attention for its planning strategies and working methods; the larger area of Frihamnen won the Swedish Architectural Association’s award for best plan (*planpriset*) in 2016. Jubileumsparken won the *Sienapriset* in March 2019, and the public sauna was nominated for the prestigious Kasper Salin priset in 2015.

114 / Because of the strong connotations inherent in ‘place-making’ I have chosen to use ‘place-building’ as the translation for the Swedish *platsbyggande* – a concept more or less invented in the context of Jubileumsparken.

OPENING, FEBRUARY 2015

I travel to Gothenburg in February 2015 to attend the opening of the public sauna at Jubileumsparken. The site’s industrial character is still strong; it is a patchwork of asphalt and concrete, sprinkled with structures from the temporary use strategy. I am here to take part in the opening session of the brand-new public sauna. On my way to the sauna, I pass a mural painted on stacked containers, an outdoor roller derby rink, and a sandy beach, which is empty on this winter’s day. The colour scheme on the site is bright and cheerful – concrete slabs, pallet collars and rough seating give the site a distinctive Do-It-Yourself aesthetic, amplified by spray-painted slogans at various spots. Some of them are well-known from the anti-globalisation movement, for instance ‘Otro monde es possible’ (*Another world is possible*), ‘Globalicemos la solidaridad’ (*Let’s globalize solidarity*) and Martin Luther King’s famous words ‘No one is free until we are all free’; others are written in Swedish: ‘Den Queera revolutionen är nära’ (*The Queer Revolution is nigh*) and ‘Odlå ditt mod’ (*Cultivate your courage*). In a conversation with Jubileumsparken’s project leaders, my initial suspicion was confirmed: the graffiti at the site, which might have been undesirable at another place, had been initiated within the project and painted during an event hosted by the invited artist and architectural collective MYCKET, which has been engaged in the making of Jubileumsparken.

I note that there are new structures in connection to the sauna – two changing rooms have been built since I was last here for the open call in 2014, and there is a library pavilion made from old



Figures 31 and 32: A sign in the development area Frihamnen in 2014 pointing in the direction of the temporary park, and a billboard announcing Jubileumsparken as 'A new way to develop the city'.

windows. While the materials and finish of the new elements align with the already mentioned DIY-aesthetics, they have a delicate and designerly look. The changing room walls are made of empty bottles, and the interior of the changing room with its wooden benches and lockers conveys care and craftsmanship in a simple and unspectacular way. Outside of the changing room, a wooden path has been created around a number of young birches. Where the quirky wooden path meets a stone border with the water, I sense the absence of right angles and ready-made building elements. The sauna is no exception; it is covered with re-purposed corrugated steel sheets, and its irregular shape gives it an eccentric and unpolished, yet somehow friendly air. It lets through light at the openings, becoming an almost iconic image where it sits several meters above the water¹¹⁵. We, the visitors this first day of the sauna, are guided at the site by one of the project leaders of Jubileumsparken. The social aspirations come in several narrations, for instance, there is the story about the local politician who referred to the sauna as 'Gothenburg's most intimate square', suggesting it is a space where a managing director and an unemployed person can sit side by side, sharing a moment of relaxation.

I follow a suggested sequence as I walk through the semi-industrial landscape towards the sauna, get undressed and shower in the designated building made of glass bottles, climb the steep

115 / The sauna in Jubileumsparken, as well as its pavilions and the surrounding landscape, were designed and built by raumlabor, supported by a number of public workshops, or 'open calls'.



Figures 33 and 34: Den queera revolutionen är nära; Globalicemos la solidaridad; Tyvärr inget bad idag (The queer revolution is nigh; Let's globalize solidarity; Sorry, no swimming today) - messages at Jubileumsparken, 2015



exterior staircase to the sauna – and then finally, enter into the hot interior space of the sauna itself.

I am the last to arrive to the sauna. As I enter, I count eleven figures through the mist. I have already seen the interior once, but it seems smaller now that it is warm and filled with steam and human bodies. It still smells of new wood. I find a place on the side from which I can see all the others: Marianne, Gerd and Irma, three women in their sixties who seem to know each other well; above them Elin, Amanda, Felicia and Matilda in their early twenties; and beside them Julia and Jenny who are, like me, in their late thirties. Julia smiles at me as I look their way. Susanne, a woman in her forties, lies down at the front of the sauna, stretching her legs towards the hot stones. Roxanna, a woman in her fifties, sits alone looking out of the window. The thermometer reads 78 °C.

On the following pages are excerpts of my notes from the conversations that took place during the opening session of the public sauna at Jubileumsparken. The conversations in the sauna surprised me with its explorative nature, its humour and intimacy. Given the vibrant atmosphere of the space and the richness of issues addressed, I have chosen to edit my notes from the dialogue in the sauna only minimally.

GOTHENBURG, 18TH OF FEBRUARY 2015

Roxanna: I never thought of the city from this angle. It looks so strange from here.

Me: Do you live close by?

Roxanna: No, not so close (shakes her head).

Irma: You know what, I used to live over there, you can't see the house, it was torn down, but it was right there (points out of the window). I paid 67 SEK, and I had a two-room apartment – toilet in the courtyard, and a cat.

Jenny: To eat the rats?

Gerd: No, no. She thought it was cool to have a cat. You probably knew of someone who had a cat, didn't you? Living alone with a cat, that's living independently. But for how long was it cool?

A week? A month?

Irma: Two months, actually! Then it was over and out. I had a friend who rented a three-room apartment close to me – she got herself an Italian man, so she needed a large apartment. Then, three months later the Italian was out, and she gave up the apartment and got a smaller one.

Felicia: What? Was it so easy to get an apartment then? You just called someone, or what?

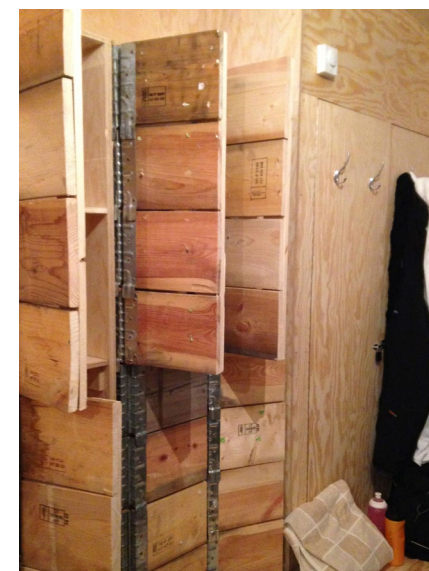
Roxanna: And so easy to get an Italian?

(Laughter)

Irma: I lived here, and I actually had my first job here too, at Frihamnen, at Banan-kompaniet. It was 1970. I'm tall you know, and back then I had such short skirts. Oh lord. My job was to serve the boss his meal and curtsey. The curtseying is actually all I remember about the job. Now that's a job I would never do today, but I didn't think of it back then. I was seventeen. And I got 1000 per month.



Figures 35 and 36: “Varmt välkommen till din nya bastu”, (A warm welcome to your new sauna). Changing room with lockers (that can't be locked) made of repurposed wood.



Marianne: Living on your own at seventeen! Now they are 30 or 40 before they leave their parent's houses.

Felicia: Excuse me, who exactly are they?

Amanda: But you are still living at home!

Felicia: Yes, but my parents moved out – so I rent the house from them. That's different. But listen, if you got paid 1000 and paid 67 in rent – that's so little of your pay!

Irma: – And we were two people sharing that rent.

Amanda: What? So 33.50 for housing? What did you do with all the money?

Irma: I'll tell you (smiling). I had to borrow money from my mother every month to make ends meet – and I tell you I had no interest in food then – it was all partying.

Marianne: And we had no money for the tram – we were always riding for free (laughing).

Felicia: The earlier generations were so... immoral.

Roxanna: That's why the economy is how it is now... full of big holes.

(Silence)

Susanne: But how did they come up with the idea to do this – to put a sauna in this place? It seems like a crazy dream to me.

Julia: Did you hear the sauna is fully booked for the next year and a half?

Amanda: A year and a half? That's crazy.

Jenny: Yes, but I think they'll figure it out – they're having an emergency meeting right now. They'll probably open it up, open it more days of the week.

Roxanna: It's only Tuesday, Wednesday and Saturday now, isn't it?

Gerd: I just had a thought – what if all the homeless people and EU-migrants book it to keep warm for bit? Is that terrible to say of me? We would be sitting here listening to all their stories.

Irma: All without clothes.

Julia: Without clothes we are all naked.

Susanne: Maybe that's why it is already fully booked?

Felicia: Yes, probably.

(Silence)

Roxanna: It's so cool that this is right by the water. I think it's really important for a city to reach the water, and Gothenburg has never really been good at that.

Gerd: When I worked here we couldn't enter the harbour, even though I worked here I couldn't get close to the water.

Julia: And what they did by the opera – that just wasn't very successful. There are still too many cars and too few people.

Gerd: We never wanted the opera in the first place. Do you know we used to demonstrate? So-called high culture was not well looked upon.

Irma: No no, it was all about hospitals and kindergartens then.

Gerd: Before the opera there was a women's prison there.

Matilda: What? Was there? So central! I bet the male prisons weren't built in the middle of the city.

Julia: When was the opera built? Twenty years ago?

Gerd: Fifteen years ago – I went to the last show. They stopped playing at the old place and we all walked to the new opera and the play continued there. I didn't say I had been demonstrating then of

course – I had a new style then.

Elin: Or a new income?

(Laughter)

Gerd: Funny, funny... very funny. I was getting at something else though. It was so different then. Did you know we couldn't tell fairy-tales to our children? To your generation. We were just reading books with black and white photos: Katja's Dad is in Jail; Maria's Mum has Diabetes.

Elin: And 'Little Brother is Hare-lipped'...?

(Laughter)

Gerd: You are so cheeky! I like that. It is so typical of Hisingen-islanders¹¹⁶, isn't it? Always so cheeky. Always ready for a round. I remember how we used to get into fights with the kids from downtown when waiting for the bus to go over the bridge, didn't we? (looking at her friend)

Jenny: How many are islanders here today?

(Nine hands raise).

It is getting dark when I leave the changing room. On my way back, I see a group of people waiting by the pavilion for the next sauna session. A sign informs us that the next sauna session is a

¹¹⁶ / Hisingen is a large island that forms part of the city of Gothenburg.



Figure 37: Entering the sauna from the external staircase at Jubileumsparken in 2015.



Figures 38 and 39: The crafted wooden interior of the sauna, and the view toward the former industrial harbour.

gender-neutral session, called 'Vän eller hen' (*Friend or hir*)¹¹⁷. I pass the cluster of people. Some are waiting in small groups or couples and some are standing on their own. When I leave, I hear them being welcomed to the second first sauna session at Jubileumsparken. Apart from this group there are only a few other people in the park. There is a bike parked by the roller derby rink, but I don't see anyone there. On my way back I meet one of the women from my sauna session in the park, and she asks me to take a picture of her in front of the silhouette of the sauna against the dark evening sky.

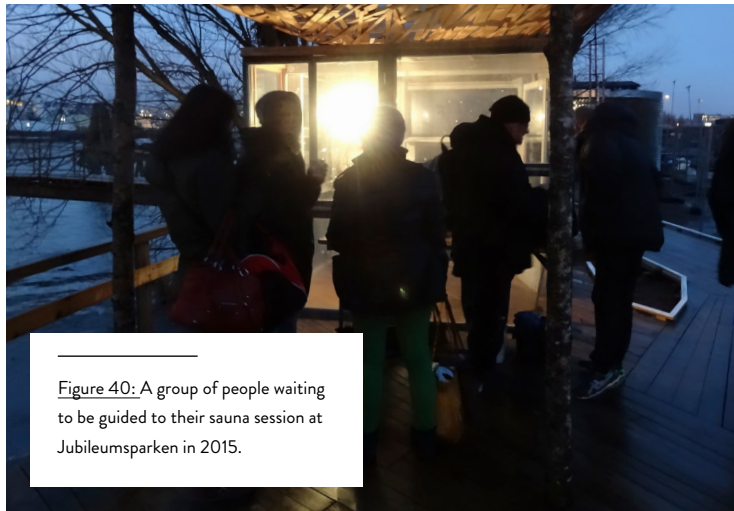


Figure 40: A group of people waiting to be guided to their sauna session at Jubileumsparken in 2015.

117 / 'Hen' is Swedish a gender-neutral personal pronoun that may be used as an alternative to the gender-specific pronoun 'han' (he) and 'hon' (she). The pronoun hen has generated some controversy and discussions in the media since it became popular around 2010. Although it was added to the distinguished Swedish dictionary Svenska Akademiens ordlista in 2015, it is still controversial in some circumstances.

RE-VISIT, MAY 2017

I arrive at the park on a Friday afternoon in May 2017. It has stopped raining, but the sky is heavy and grey. A man in a grey suit jumps out of a car next to me and walks hastily towards what has now become the most famous feature of the park: the public sauna. Apart from him, the space appears quite empty from the parking lot, but as I get closer to the water, I see that there are several groups of people present in the space at this time. The loudest crowd is by the water and play sculpture 'Berget' (*the mountain*), one of the structures that has been added since the opening of the sauna. I watch the goings-on at the play sculpture from a nearby bench. There are a handful of children climbing in the structure; I estimate that they are between 4 and 10 years old. The structure is challenging for the younger children, who appear and disappear when climbing the narrow built-in staircases. I notice that there are fresh scribbles on the ground – hearts and peace signs have been drawn with crayons that seem to withstand rain.

Not far from there, I encounter Essi, who is here with her boyfriend and their two children. They live close to the park and come here often. Essi says they like the mixture of play and the relaxed atmosphere. She says they have been waiting for the park to open this year; they say it's an "escape from the usual playgrounds". Essi's boyfriend is wearing training clothes, and one of the children tells me that he, her father, is training for a local half-marathon. The father smiles before running to the younger child, who fell while playing in a climbing net. Soon a group of young men arrive at the play structure. First they climb it together, leaving their rucksacks and jackets on the highest plateau. Someone puts on music (I don't see the device, but I assume from the sound that the music is being



Figures 41 - 43: The play sculpture 'Berget'. The sign calls it 'an experimental art installation'. Children and parents playing with water; a group of young men performing parkour in the play sculpture.



Figure 44: Children and parents climbing 'Berget' - the mountain at Jubileumsparken.

played on a mobile phone). Suddenly a video camera is being handed from person to person. The young men are filming themselves doing jumps and hand-stands on the structure. I watch them move around on the structure and when I talk to one of them – Andreas, a man in his late 20s – he confirms my suspicion they are here to do parkour. Andreas tells me that they come from different parkour clubs, and that they have come there together to ‘play around’. He explains that it is not a particularly good place for parkour in terms of physical challenges, but it looks nice on film: “it is a nice setting”. They don’t seem bothered by the children; instead, they are ready to include them in the performance when their paths cross. One of the performers plays peekaboo with a young girl, integrating her into a sequence of moves. He moves around her, making her laugh while his friend is filming.

I see two people skating at the roller derby rink behind the play sculpture. There is no fencing around the space, and in the time that I watch – about half an hour – curious children are told to leave the space twice. I note that the treatment of children seems to differ between the practitioners of parkour and of roller derby today. I also note the difference of material conditions; whereas the roller derby is performed in a space made for that particular use, the parkour is acted out at a structure with no stated preferred use other than the elastic notion of play.

Three young women are sitting by the water with two large dogs sleeping next to them. They do not want to talk to me. I continue towards the beach, where a group of people are just meeting by a set of benches and tables; there are six grownups and three children. One of the women, Anna, says that they meet here quite often: “It’s a perfect place for hanging out with friends, to have a bar-

beque. And when it rains, we sit under the roof there (she points to a roof structure of corrugated plastic). It’s nice and relaxed here.” (Conversation 19 May 2017). Her friend, Vanja, joins the conversation, asking me whether I got the impression that Anna is a host employed by the park¹¹⁸.

“She says that people mistake her for a park host (parkvård) all the time. Anna smiles broadly and seems amused when I ask her whether, when and in what sense she feels like a host of the space. She tells me that she is in the park as often as possible, and that she likes to be “out and around people, to help here and there”. I note that she consistently refers to the space, which is still mainly covered with asphalt, as ‘the park’. Another person from the same group of friends comes up to us to let me know that the glow is perfect now – do I want to put something on the grill? When I tell them I didn’t bring anything with me to grill, they invite me to share their food. I agree to share a corn cob with Anna. The third person returns to the grill, and my conversation with Anna and Vanja continues for a while. They say they both like the space as it is now. Anna says she sometimes worries about the future of the park and the risk of coming one day and suddenly finding “a neat and tidy park, where there is just grass and flowers and no room for spontaneity.” She says she feels welcome and at home here now, but she would not feel at ease in a tidy and orderly park. Before I leave, she tells me that there have been people sleeping in the play

118 / ‘Park hosts’ will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

structure Berget, but that she doesn't want to talk more about that since it might call for restrictions and fences¹¹⁹.

I walk towards the pool area. It is calm. A group of boys with wet towels are just leaving, and two women are sitting on a bench, talking quietly with their heads close together. There are three employees wearing sweatshirts with Jubileumsparken's logo – they are employed as park hosts. I talk to one of them. She says this is the perfect job for her: "It is the best summer job ever." I ask whether it was difficult to get the job, and she tells me that there were 500 applicants; out of them, only around 30 were employed. She believes that she got the job because she did well in an initial workshop, and because she "really likes people". She says that the most enjoyable aspect of the job is the knowledge that this is a place open to everyone. She points to the little pier and explains to me how Jubileumsparken's inclusive sailings school *sailing for all* works¹²⁰. "I like that everything here is free and for everyone. Some people get surprised by that, they think they need a ticket to swim. It's funny to see their faces when I say it's free. It is like they can't believe it."

I go to the urban gardening area, where there are 60 large wooden cultivation boxes on the pavement. They are all filled with soil and

119 / The suggestion that this specific play structure is sometimes used as a place to sleep by people without a home returns in *Urban Prototypes – A liquid method heading towards solid site creators* (Karlsson and Takman, 2018).

120 / A number of activities such as sailing, swimming, biking and sauna visits are accessible and free of charge to the general public at Jubileumsparken; this is discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

intended for growing produce and flowers. I see four people engaged in planting this evening. Two of them are working together. They are mother and daughter, and beginners at gardening. The mother, Inger, who seem to be around 70-years-old, tells me that she grew curious last summer when she saw all of the boxes with vegetation on an evening walk. She researched and found out how to apply for a box. She says it has become more popular since then, but that there might still be a chance to get hold of a box for next summer – something that she really recommends. "You get to know the other gardeners when you meet here. There are many things to decide together – so it's good to know each other, and there are meetings too. You can find us on Facebook." (Conversation 19 May 2017). Inger's daughter Susanne tells me that there have been problems with produce thieves. "We are not allowed to fence off the area, but it is really annoying for people who plant and water and care for their vegetables, and then – they're gone" she says.

A bit further down, I encounter Emelie, who is working alone, placing pre-cultivated plants into the wet soil of her box. She has only had her wooden box for a month, and says she was surprised when it was offered to her only a few months after she registered for one. She lives close by; we can see her house from where we stand. She says she has come here almost every evening after work this week to check on her plants. "It's Friday night, and I'm here with my plants. Drinking wine at home is nice too, but I just thought why not? Why not go here and see how the plants are tonight? I live alone, so it's nice to come here and see some other people, other gardeners". She is curious about the outcome, but isn't counting on anything in terms of harvest. She has also heard about disappearing



Figures 45 and 46: Member of Jubileumsodlarna next to her cultivation box in 2017. Sign announcing “Det som växer här tillhör Jubileumsodlarna” (What grows here belongs to Jubileumsodlarna).



produce and has decided not to plant strawberries or tomatoes, as the temptation for others to pick them might be too strong.

It is getting late and I am getting hungry. Two food trucks are parked on the other side of the harbour basin. One is serving Peruvian food and the other Creole. Simple tables and wooden benches are set up on the asphalt. I'm alone except for a group of people who are busy making new signs for one of the food trucks. For twenty minutes I'm the only eating customer, then a car stops just outside. Two men get out and order two plates of ceviche, then sit down at a table next to me and light the cigarettes they were holding. I am not familiar with the language they're speaking, but I understand from the sign on their car that one of them is practising driving. They seem to be about the same age as me. My attempt to enter a conversation with them is not successful. They talk, smoke, eat their food and are gone within fifteen minutes. I stay to make some final field notes. I write a note to remind myself to think further on the notion of a minor urbanism – how it must not make spaces for pre-defined categories of users only, but stay interested in the actual social formations it encounters at the site. I think of some of the encounters of the day and to what extent, they fit into the usual categorization of people in participatory urban design projects: the family escaping the ordinary playgrounds, a group of parkour practitioners meeting up from all over the city, a group of friends having a barbeque, two men smoking, eating and practising driving in the early evening hours.

DESIGN STRATEGIES AT JUBILEUMSPARKEN

As with the case of Superkilen, in the following I will use particular design strategies to discuss my empirical findings. I have identified the following three design strategies as central to Jubileumsparken: *Suggestive Prototyping*, *Exclude to Include*, and *Spaces of Commitment*.

SUGGESTIVE PROTOTYPING

Jubileumsparken is structured around a number of urban prototypes. The urban gardening, the pool and the sauna, the play structure and the basic infrastructure such as water and electricity are all framed as prototypes and trials. The pool and the sauna are for instance presented as a mean to try out, to *prototype*, what public swimming in the city centre could be. The idea of urban prototypes is not limited to objects and actual designed spaces at Jubileumsparken: one prototype, entitled *Yes, we say yes*, aims at supporting local and civil initiatives and can perhaps best be understood as a procedural social prototype. The idea of this prototype is to support Jubileumsparken as a place where civil groups can realise some of their ideas and receive help in terms of financing. One of Jubileumsparken's project leaders describes how the different elements at the site – the beach 'Playan', the roller derby rink and the sailing school – have also been framed as urban prototypes with

an estimated lifespan (projected endurance) of three to five years¹²¹. The project leader explains the process of one-to-one prototyping in the following way: "Rather than delivering a written report of two hundred pages, we report in reality. You should be able to step into the planning" (Segerlund, in Janson 2014)¹²².

The team behind Jubileumsparken is not alone in exploring the use of urban prototypes. The urban prototyping approach originated from an entrepreneurial start-up culture and has gained influence in the urban planning sphere as a quick way to get started with an idea without having to process policies or spend too much time analysing possible outcomes. Drawing on its popularity, it has been suggested that urban prototyping is "the new policy" (McQuillan 2012). Whilst traditional planning is based on designing a desired final state "for a client who has the means to also attain this condition"

121 / The work of Apolonija Sustercic is an interesting example of the use of prototypes in an urban context. Sustercic uses the 1:1 scale in a two-step process: first as a freely built prototype, then as a formally supported structure/building, still built by locals (Sustercic 2013). Urban prototypes have also been used extensively by raumlabor (see for instance Szymczak 2008).

122 / raumlabor highlight a complimentary aspect of the prototyping as they expand on the making of the sauna: bringing people together. They write: "'Living together' is not an end in itself but a process. That is why it is important to plan and build the prototype together with the people who will in the future use and manage it. 'Building together' is also an opportunity to bring people from different social classes and with different ethnic backgrounds together for a meaningful experience" (raumlabor.net/goteborg-bathing-culture/, accessed 01 November 2015).

(Fezer 2012, p.165), the basic idea of urban prototyping is that a project can become influential despite having limited resources and operating with a high degree of uncertainty. The prototype is a kind of temporary-use strategy. Fezer points to the fundamental contradiction of integrating temporary use in formal planning processes – temporary use initiatives “rely on the principle of spontaneous action by a group of participants and develop their vitality precisely through their renunciation of determining and enclosure a long-term ideal plan” (Fezer 2012, p. 165). The staging of temporary projects in order to add vibrancy and activity to areas that will be developed has been criticised for its negative long-term effects on the creative scene¹²³. Urban development projects operating with temporality as a strategy typically invite artists, but only welcome them to settle for a limited time – the artists’ presence becomes an event and a way to prototype desired urban qualities. This relates to a more general tendency in contemporary western planning to replace long-term planning policies by affective and performative interventions with an immediate feedback loop (see for instance Runting 2018). As the immediate act, hence the event, becomes more important in the urban organisation, it changes the hierarchy of the public space. Representation is no longer considered

123 / In his work on the art scene in Oslo, Smith Wergeland (2015) suggests that such municipal strategies have created what he refers to as ‘a constant state of temporality’ in which the art scene has to re-arrange itself in order to stay productive. Carson, Schmallegger and Harwood (2010) speak of an ‘institutionalisation of temporariness’ when describing a similar condition.

superior to the event; in fact, the opposite relation has been observed at contemporary squares¹²⁴. Jill Stoner identifies the event as a central feature of minor architecture. She writes: “Minor architectures are, in fact, opportunistic events in response to latent but powerful desires to undo structures of power as such, minor architectures are precisely (if perversely) concentrated with the privilege and circumstance of major architecture” (Stoner 2012, pp. 6-7).

At Jubileumsparken, the practise of prototyping is used to gain acceptance for ideas and designs that would probably not be approved if presented as permanent solutions. Although built in public, the making of urban prototypes seems to fly below the radar of formal instances concerned with the city’s building practises; meaning that the built prototypes at Jubileumsparken are not perceived as buildings, but rather as events, by some instances of the city. This ambiguous state of existence was displayed on stage at *Stadstriennalen*, an event on urban development arranged by Gothenburg Municipality in 2018, when a representative of the West Swedish Chamber of Commerce (*Västsvenska Handelskammaren*) expressed her concerns: “We talk so much about Jubileumsparken, but we have to remember that so far, nothing has been built there, nothing at all”. One of the project leaders of Jubileumsparken

124 / For instance, Kärrholm’s study of Stortorget, a central square in Malmö, Sweden, shows how the square has changed in terms of its territorial associations: it is no longer predominantly a space of everyday activities, nor is it a representational place for official activities. The square, as shown in Kärrholm’s study, has above all become a place of events (Kärrholm 2015, p. 18).

was also onstage, and she disagreed that nothing has been built at Jubileumsparken: “there are buildings at the site – if something is built or not depends on what and for whom we imagine building.” (Stadstriennalen, 19 September 2018, my translation). This sharp exchange captures, I suggest, the potential and also the risk of urban prototypes, displaying them as the opportunistic events that Stoner talks about. Considering that both voices speak from within the city administrations, the prototypes at Jubileumsparken can be seen as a minor practise initiating change from within. Or more pointedly: the prototype is tickling the major practises of the city administration (here represented by the West Swedish Chamber of Commerce) from within its own belly. If the minor is what varies (Manning 2016, p.1), how successful are the prototypes in their attempt to destabilize the ways in which urban development is usually discussed and carried out in Gothenburg? While the question will only be answered in full by future projects in the city, small shifts can already be traced.

Urban scholar Caroline Dahl (2017) addresses the tension between the practices particular to Jubileumsparken and other instances of the city. She shows for instance how Jubileumsparken continued to be discussed as something that would be created in the future – even after it had opened to the public in 2014. Dahl (2017) points to the fact that the urban prototypes that were already built in 2014 are not represented on any of the maps in a plan that was adopted in 2015 (Dahl 2017, p.83). In a draft for a detailed development plan made a year later, the sauna and the swimming pool were included in maps and illustrations. Based on that observation, Dahl (2017) suggests that the planning authority was initially unable to see the prototypes’ *catalysing power*, but that this started to change

in the time between when the two plans were made. Part of the shift must be linked to the sauna; since opening in 2014, it has become something of an icon for Jubileumsparken, if not for the city of Gothenburg. The director of the Passalen, the NGO commissioned to maintain the park and operate the sauna, the pool, and the sailing facilities, considers the sauna’s growing popularity key for the possibility to work in new and yet-unproven ways in the park: “Some people still didn’t understand what we are doing here, but suddenly there was a success to hold on to” (Guided tour, 12 July 2018). When the prototypes were introduced, they were meant to last only five years. For the sauna, this would mean demolition in 2020 – but considering its popularity, that seems improbable.

When the sauna was nominated for the prestigious Kasper Salin Prize, one of the project leaders wrote on Facebook that it was: “A small house - but part of a larger process in which we are fighting /.../ I am proud to be a small part of the process. Proud of all the talented brave people who participated! And proud of what the little sauna has managed to achieve in one year!” (16 November 2015, my translation). Her announcement reinforces the notion of prototypes as minor agents of change. The sauna is here addressed as an active agent of whose achievements one can be proud. Drawing on my own experience from the sauna at Jubileumsparken, being able to produce alternative, yet collectively shared, subjectivities, appears to be a main asset of the event in an urban design context. Years after visiting the sauna, the atmosphere of the event still stays with me. I remember how the conversation in the sauna unfolded: between discussions on the trivial, outbursts of resistance to the present social-political situation emerged in our exchange – some popular images were collectively dismissed (e.g. the notion of

Gothenburg as a harbour city) while other affirmative, slightly surreal imaginings – e.g. the idea of EU-migrants filling the sauna all winter – were produced between us. The sauna functions as a public space, but also, I suggest, as an active mediator able to make social connections. It is a kind of a boundary object (Star & Griesemer 1989) producing temporary alliances between people who would usually not meet, not to mention form a community.

EXCLUDE TO INCLUDE

Diversity is a central question for Jubileumsparken. The director of Passalen (12 July 2018) described how diversity depends on conscious work: “In order for diversity to organize itself, we must organize diversity.” Drawing on her statement, how is diversity organised at Jubileumsparken?

Jubileumsparken’s design is based on the belief that only where there is space for the particular is there space for everyone. This strategy has been articulated by the artist and architecture collective MYCKET, which has been commissioned to work on Jubileumsparken. One of the architects from MYCKET explains how they reject the idea of building public spaces for all, as “there is so much talk about how wrong it is with segregation, but there are people who don’t feel safe in any of the usual public spaces – therefore spaces must be made where it is rather normative uses that are excluded.” (Interview 17 September 2015, my translation). At Jubileumsparken, MYCKET was first invited to do a study of bathing culture. It was not the first time that they had worked with public space in Gothenburg; in an earlier project entitled *Exclude Me In*, they had explored public space in relation to the queer and



Figures 47: Bathing culture at Jubileumsparken, illustration used by Gothenburg Municipality, made by MYCKET.



Figures 48: “Ingen är fri förrän alla är fria” (No one is free until everyone is free). Writing at Jubileumsparken in 2014.

feminist club scene in Gothenburg¹²⁵. They wanted to include more voices at Jubileumsparken, and as a first step they went swimming with a number of groups that are not usually present in city planning processes (interview 17 September 2015). According to the architect from MYCKET, this participatory investigation broadened the scope and gave them guidance with regard to how a place for swimming might function at Jubileumsparken. For instance, the experience of going swimming with a group of Muslim women made them realise that the possibility to hang out near the water was equally important as, if not more important than the actual opportunity to enter the water. There was also a need for space for cooking and making food – and closely related to that – places for children and an area where strollers could be kept, within sight, but protected from rain and wind. The architect from MYCKET suggested that such insights can only be gained when one is willing to “risk one’s own body” in a situation with others. She thus considers the shared bathing sessions as having been essential to their research into future spaces for swimming at Jubileumsparken (interview 17 September 2015). The investigations done by MYCKET resulted in the making of the public beach Playan with its sand, tables, benches, a space devoted to barbequing, and a sheltered flexible space.

125 / The project ‘Exclude Me In’ was a re-enactment of a carnival that used to gather around 40 000 people in the 1980s. As part of the project, MYCKET made a mapping of the queer, lesbian and gay clubs that had existed in Gothenburg at that time. Some of those clubs only existed for a night, but the architect from MYCKET advocates the importance of such temporary spaces, suggesting that they can be life-changing.

In order to further explore some of the ideas expressed by MYCKET in relation to Jubileumsparken, I would like to make a small deviation to another Swedish city. In Malmö, the public space Rosens röda matta, mentioned earlier in this thesis, was made as part of a larger strategy from the city to build egalitarian public spaces. Rosens röda matta received a great deal of attention for inviting a group of young women to participate in the early concept-development phase for a new public space in Rosengård, a million-program area in Malmö. One of the project leaders has explained that they worked with the idea to ‘exclude’ to be able to include. In order to make a public space that would be used by young women, the civil servants decided to exclude everyone but the young women from the design process. The project leader explains the strategy:

By deciding that this was a space for young women, other groups were excluded – that was an active decision we made – we will remove everyone but this group! We excluded to be able to include; it was a conscious choice we made. In my opinion, we are on to something new here, allowing ourselves to make spaces that do not speak to everyone. (Interview 12 January 2015, my translation)

When I met the project leader, Rosens röda matta had been open to the public for a year and a half. I asked her about the results: In her opinion, did it meet its intention of making a space that young women want to be in? According to the project leader, although

the usual groups of young men hang out there, they seem to use the space in new ways¹²⁶. She expanded on these thoughts:

It is a situation where young men enter a space that was not designed for them, they adjust to the space, and the meaning of the space as such changes as they do that – it is no longer a space exclusively for the women who designed it, but it becomes a space that questions the images of young men and what they do. If the usual spatial suggestion is to play football or do sports this space suggests that you do something else – in that sense, one could say that it questions the ‘male norm’. (Interview 12 January 2015)

Returning to Jubileumsparken, one of the project leaders criticised the idea of making spaces for all: “We were hoping that the sauna would demonstrate the foolishness of talking about a meeting place for all – to talk about a park as an integration project, when in fact we know, and have known for a long time, that there is not a lawn in the world able to solve integration issues by itself.” (Interview 20 November 2015, my translation). This recalls the statement made by the director of Passalen three years later: “In order for diversity to organize itself, we must organize diversity” (12 July 2018), and reaffirms an approach where diversity and integration will not appear by their own accord, but must be worked for. This relates to a more general discussion on public space and spatial exclusion.

¹²⁶ / She maintains that the space is also more used by young women than the average multi-sport space – this was subsequently questioned however. For a critical examination of the project Rosens röda matta, see Ragnhild Claeson (2016).



Figures 49 and 50: In 2017, new messages had been added to the wooden structure by the beach and to the asphalt next to it.



Despite good intentions, the aspiration to make a public space open and equally accessible to everyone comes with the risk of repeatedly excluding certain groups who, for some reason or another, are unable to claim the space as theirs. There are many examples of spatial exclusion in public space. A recent survey conducted in Husby, Stockholm by the Swedish public housing company *Svenska bostäder* shed light on the hierarchy of men's and women's use of public spaces. Many of the women surveyed reported that they feel unsafe at the main public square in their residential area and

therefore avoided it, because they felt controlled by men occupying the space (Lund, 2015). Though complex and difficult to tackle, this kind of spatial exclusion is at least easy to detect – if the vast majority of people at a certain space are male, it tends to be noticed at some point. Processes of exclusion may be hard to detect in other spaces; we see the mix of people using a space, but never the people who are not using it. The diversity in uses/users of a space does not guarantee that everyone will feel welcome there. Amin (2008) argues that far from all public spaces with a high level of co-presence should be regarded as sites of true multiplicity. On the contrary, he suggests that the unregulated public space may bring suffering to certain groups:

Simply throwing open public spaces to mixed use and to all who wish to participate is to give way to practices that may serve the interests of the powerful, the menacing and the intolerant. We know thus from the daily abuses suffered by vulnerable people such as migrants, minorities, asylum seekers, women and children, those who look different; all victims of the cruelties that unregulated co-presence can bring. (Amin 2008, p. 15)

According to Amin, this is the kind of consequence that has forced progressive urban planners to seal off and safeguard certain public spaces or parts of public space for vulnerable groups. Under certain circumstances, this is a necessity “to ensure that multiplicity does not result in harm” (Amin 2008, p.15). With spaces such as playgrounds, memorial parks, youth centres and libraries in mind, one could argue that the production of spaces for vulnerable groups is already part of any conventional urban planning practice. Examples of separatist spaces are also to be found, for instance in

the history of separatist women’s public baths (Iveson 2003)¹²⁷. At Jubileumsparken, the idea of a single user has to a high extent been replaced by a *series of users* – hence, there are a series of user needs to take into consideration. In order to make relevant public spaces, the discipline of urban planning must depart from the notion of a singular public (i.e. *the public*). Abandoning the idea of a universal user is not synonymous with giving up on the aspiration to make spaces for everyone; on the contrary, acknowledging that users are heterogenous presents the opportunity to make spaces that are relevant to more people. Designing for a diverse series of users comes with its own set of challenges. What spatial aspirations should be foregrounded and accommodated when designing for specific users or groups, and what should be left out? This question points to the problem of selection and categorisation. Time is also a challenge here; any categorization will be temporary, new categories will come, and others will dissolve or transform in such a way that they no longer fit into their designated category. How can an urban design practice in need of categories stable enough to work with avoid making normative choices that will risk locking people in fixed positions? There are different scholarly views regarding how to approach the problem of categorisation and classification; whilst a number of scholars from gender studies (Friberg and Larsson 2002, McDowell 1999) see categorization as a chance to change the order of things by recognizing the conditions and needs

127 / The discussion of whether or to what extent the city should sanction separatist bathing spaces has recently been re-activated in Sweden, where a number of public baths have introduced women-only sessions.

of particular groups, queer theorists (Bonnevier 2007, Butler 2004) point to the risk of preservation and conservancy.

When the aim is a public space influenced by particular groups or interests, those groups must be part of the making of the space itself. Problems of normative choices will primarily occur when someone, e.g. the urban designer, makes the categorization from the outside. I would thus argue that participatory or co-operative design, together with an open process allowing new communities to emerge along the way, is one possible answer to the problem of stereotyping. An open process is particularly important since the truly weak communities are sometimes as yet undefined, or located outside of all recognizable categories; 'open' should also be understood in a temporal sense, i.e. as a process with a sufficiently long duration that new generations of concerned groups and individuals can be identified. Hajer and Reijndorp (2001, pp. 88-89) discuss an interesting paradox: people tend to experience spaces dominated by one group as the most pleasant kind of spaces, provided that the dominant group is only moderately different to their own group. The presence of certain activities will add vitality to a space by introducing certain norms that suggest how the space ought to be used (Hajer and Reijndorp, 2001). The flipside of such spatial domination is, I suggest, the possible exclusion of certain groups or behaviours. This may be counterbalanced by geographical proximity; if one group dominates a central spot, other groups or expressions might be able to claim other spots. It can also give rise to struggles in which the dominance over a certain spot might shift from one group to the other. There are also overlaps created by time: several different groups can appropriate the same spot at different times

of the day. Kärholm (2007) discusses the relations between urban design and territorial complexity in relation to different types of public squares¹²⁸. Contrasting the large, open and un-programmed city square with the exceedingly furnished square that has been popular in Europe since the 1990s, he discusses the emergent nature of spatial neutrality:

A neutral space open to the public might seem a good recipe for publicness and accessibility. However, this would not be revealed until some kind of territorial complexity had, in fact, evolved. Multilayered territorial productions involve accessibility for different groups and uses, and thus constitute a certain neutrality of space. Neutrality must be seen in this sense as the result and not as a point of departure (Kärholm 2007, p. 449).

What is the probability that a diverse and multi-layered territorial production will take place in an open un-programmed space? Although the answer would certainly vary depending on location and time, I would argue that anyone familiar with the local conditions would have a fair chance of correctly predicting the uses most likely to evolve at a certain site. While I agree with Kärholm that the neutral space must not be seen as status quo, and that territorial complexity is always supported by some kind of materiality (Kärholm 2004, p. 280), I question the likelihood that neutrality will ever be achieved as a result of the unregulated use of spaces open to all.

¹²⁸ / For an expanded discussion on territorial complexity see Kärholm 2004, pp. 270-277.

As seen in the example of Husby, there seems to be a risk that un-programmed spaces with few or no territorial inscriptions – especially if they are located centrally, or are attractive to many people in other ways – are more likely to accommodate existing hierarchies than to contradict them.

The idea of designing particular spaces for particular groups or interests should not be mistaken for an exclusive take on public space. Instead, it is an attempt to include people and bodies that are outside of the norm: accessibility for all is strongly emphasised at Jubileumsparken, where activities such as ‘swimming for all’ and ‘biking for all’ enable adults, mainly immigrants, to catch up on particular skills, and ‘sailing for all’ enables people with functional variations, mainly children and youngsters, to sail in boats that are accessible to all. Furthermore, events such as lesbian sing-alongs (2014) and the closing party of the pride parade (2017) and a large gender separatist festival hosted at the nearby Bananpiren (2018) suggest that Jubileumsparken has had some success in establishing itself as a significant gay- and lesbian site in Gothenburg.

Jubileumsparken calls for a more compensatory understanding of the role of urban design, suggesting that spaces designed for everyone are never really neutral in terms of social norms and symbolic representations. A design made with everyone in mind risks suiting some better than others. If some groups are more successful at presenting their particular norms as universal, thus making their specific public look like the public, the result is that what is represented as public is aligned with their subjectivities and interests. If one hierarchy establishes itself easily, why not start with another? Along a similar line of thinking, feminist theorist Sandra Harding (2004) suggests that the perceptions of marginalized groups or

individuals should be prioritized, as they can help to create more objective accounts of the world. These groups or individuals hold an outsider-within position, which enables them to make observations that representatives from the dominant group are unable to recognise. Harding introduces the notion of strong objectivities to explain how an objective standpoint needs a strategic and uneven distribution of attention. Jubileumsparken points to a situation where the primary question is not whether one is included in the public – the struggle is rather located between various publics – and the situation becomes a negotiation about the meaning of publicness itself (compare with Iveson 2003)¹²⁹. Although it is hard to imagine a space made for no one particular, and for no particular interests (as I see it, urban designers are always, more or less intentionally, making spaces for special people), Rosens röda matta and Jubileumsparken suggest that there is a need for spaces dedicated to particular struggles or concerns – spaces where particular attachments and loyalties may be formed away from more dominant interests.

SPACES OF COMMITMENT

The search for civic engagement runs like a thread through the making of Jubileumsparken. Numerous strategies have been implemented with the intention of making Jubileumsparken a space characterized by public engagement and a high degree of human presence. As Jubileumsparken’s project leader describes

129 / Criticising the conception of public space as status-neutral, a number of scholars have highlighted the need for subaltern counter-publics or pre-publics (see for instance Fraser 1992 and Iveson 2003).

it: “In Jubileumsparken, there need to be oases, but also pavilions and staffed places – places where someone receives you. Hearts and minds and hands that will meet you, that will break up the public space – making it more complex and full of potential” (20 November 2015). The aspiration to make Jubileumsparken a space of commitment comes through in her call for “hearts, minds and hands”; Jubileumsparken should be a space characterized by the presence of humans, of care and affect; a space “where someone receives you”. The public has been invited to participate in the making of the park in a number of public workshops, or open calls¹³⁰. In this section, I look more closely at those open calls and the model for maintenance of the park as two strategies that support Jubileumsparken as a space of commitment and care.

Developing the park through public workshops is part of an overall strategy that the city describes as “an event-based dialogue characterized by investigations through activities in which citizens can take part” (Göteborgs stad 2014, my translation). The open calls format has been used at Jubileumsparken since 2014. The open calls themselves have been different in terms of content, as well as in terms of who has been invited to participate – they have

130 / The ten following open calls have taken place at Jubileumsparken since 2014: Conversations and Swimming (*Samtal och bad*); Sauna-building (*Bastubyggnation*); Berget, water experiments (*Berget, vattenexperiment*), Planning of the Bath (*Badet, planering*); Swimming landscapes (*Badlandskap*) The Blue Park (*Blå parken*); The Temporary City (*Temporära staden*); Furniture (*Möbler*); Planting (*Plantering*) and Kvillepiren Outdoor Classroom (*Kvillepiren, uteklassrum*) (www.goteborg.2021.com, accessed 12 January 2019).

often been held in cooperation with architects, landscape architects and artists.

I visit the park on a September day when there are two open calls (19 September 2018). The first open call is investigating a future water playground. It is located at an empty parking lot where pride flags shine brightly against the dark sky. There is a large amount of sand, mud and water at the site, and there are children everywhere, all dressed in bright safety vests. Teachers, civil servants and consultancies are assisting the children in their constructions. Although a number of kindergartens in Gothenburg have been invited to the water-play workshop, a civil servant tells me there are more children than expected, and that they had to turn the water off at one point in order to prevent too much disorderly play. I later find out that more than 100 children participated in the open call that day.

There is a school bus from a suburb of Gothenburg parked at the site. While the children eat their packed lunches, their teacher tells me that one of the parents had heard about the open call and they decided to go for the day. She doesn’t think of it as a taking part in the making of a new park, however: “It’s just for fun – the children love the water and the mud, they make great things, but if we come here again I don’t think that the ideas of the children will be here, no, that’s not likely.” (Conversation 19 September 2018, my translation.) The group of 7- and 8-year-old children I talk to at the open call are not aware that they are officially participating in a public exploration of a future water feature in the park, but one child says that they are exploring new ways in which one can build and play with water and mud.



Figures 51 and 52: Building a pavilion, and landscaping around the sauna with raumlabor in an open call in 2014.



The other open call is supposed to be about experimental planting as a way to investigate the future park, but it is more difficult to find. I see bags of seeds on a bench, but no people. When I eventually find the landscape architects in charge of this open call¹³¹, they tell me that there have only been two participants in the open call so far that day. Three students participated the day before. One of the landscape architects in charge explains how difficult it is to make a call open that is really open to everyone: “When we address everyone, no one seems to answer” (Conversation 19 September 2018). She mentions another public planting session at Jubileumsparken in 2017 that she considered more successful. That session also explored how the future park could be planted, but unlike today’s open call, that one was specifically aimed at seniors and newly-arrived immigrants. The landscape architect cannot recall how many participants there were, but estimates that there were around twenty-five volunteers that helped them out.

In my conversation with one of the architects from raumlabor, during an earlier open call in September 2014, he pointed out two particularly memorable experiences from the work at Jubileumsparken: the indisputable decision to make the sauna accessible to people who cannot walk, and the conversations he overheard

¹³¹ / The landscape architects are from the Berlin based Le Balto and the local, Gothenburg-based office MARELD. Le Balto and MARELD form one of the teams that have been commissioned by the City of Gothenburg to work on the design of the park, which should be complete in 2021 (alvstaden.goteborg.se/category/jubileumsparken, accessed 12 January 2019).

during the open call about building the sauna. The conversations during the open call related to the park and what it should be in the future, and were “funny, imaginative and sometimes really crazy” (conversation 19 September 2014). He concludes by saying that in his experience, funny and strange conversations like those very rarely happen around a table in an office space, suggesting that the practical building made people think in other ways than they usually would.

The objectives to involve many actors in the making of the park is also evident in the maintenance model for the park. Since 2015, Jubileumsparken has been in a ‘Civil-Public-Partnership’ (IOP - *Idéburet Offentligt Partnerskap*) with the NGO Passalen, which is committed to creating meaningful recreation for all children and young people – including those with functional variations¹³². One of Jubileumsparken’s project leaders says that they have challenged many aspects of urban planning in making the park: “but the biggest challenge is perhaps the management plan. Can civil society manage, or assist in managing a park?” (Interview, 18 February 2015). She goes on to describe her first meeting with the director of Passalen: “Yes, oh yes! We want her and her organisation on board! That was exactly the kind of initiatives we were looking for at that time.” (Interview, 18 February 2015). As a result, a space was

¹³² / With the intention to avoid normalizing only particular kinds of bodies in design, people and bodies are not discussed as disabled, but ‘functionally varied’ in writings on Jubileumsparken. Respecting that intention, I will primarily use the term ‘functional variation’ when discussing Passalen and their work with different kinds of people and bodies. See Jos Boys’ (ed.) *Disability, Space, Architecture: A Reader* from 2017 for an expanded discussion on terminology used for bodies that are sometimes referred to as disabled.



Figures 53 and 54: Children at an open call to do investigations for a future water playground, in 2018 at Jubileumsparken.



created in direct response to Passalen's wish to host an inclusive sailing school (something that they had previously done in another, less central location in Gothenburg). Since 2015, Passalen has been commissioned to operate and manage facilities in the park such as the public sauna and the sailing in the name of Everybody Can: Sail, Swim and Sauna! (*Alla kan: segla, simma och basta*)¹³³. With the exception of emptying the garbage bins, they are also responsible for the maintenance of the whole park¹³⁴.

Each summer, Passalen employs 'park hosts', which form a central part of the maintenance plan. The park hosts are recruited norm-critically (*normkritiskt*). The manager of Passalen explains:

We employ young people from all over the city. We are not looking for the ones with the best CVs. Some will have functional variations, and some have no good grades to show. Being a park host is an education just as much as a job – this is important. For example, we are not looking for people who can sail or drive a motorboat

¹³³ / 11 000 children sailed at Jubileumsparken during 2016 and 2017 within the project 'sailing for all' (alvstaden.goteborg.se/category/jubileumsparken/ accessed 12 January 2019).

¹³⁴ / Thirty-three young people (aged 18-25) were employed as park hosts during the summer of 2017. By the end of the summer, all park hosts receive 'The Blue-Green Certificate' – a diploma stating various skills that they have acquired during the season. The park hosts are also encouraged to produce their own events in the park. Different activities such as yoga, basketball games, and flea markets have been announced under the title 'park hosts produce' on Jubileumsparken's Facebook page.



Figure 55: Mural at Jubileumsparken in 2018.

Figure 56: Signs at Jubileumsparken announcing the activities of the day: Roller derby games, sauna sessions and 'Sailing for all'.



when they come here, in that way we can employ youths from all neighbourhoods. (12 July 2018)

Amin (2012) advocates the need to curate 'zones of engagement', suggesting that feelings formed in intimate communities are different from those created outside of such zones. The suggestion resonates with the exploration of engagement at Jubileumsparken. In contrast to urban spaces that strive for the robust and durable,

Jubileumsparken seems to operate with fragile processes and materials that need continuous care and maintenance – the urban gardening at Jubileumsparken is one example of a collaborative practice characterized by fragility and a need for constant care. Jubileumsparken promotes relational attachment by presenting itself as a space in need of care and attention. Without care and maintenance, multiple features of the park could not be sustained – for instance, the urban garden, the pool and the sauna – furthermore, there would also be no activities such as sailing- biking- or swimming school.

The scheme of producing relational attachment through practical work is perhaps most apparent in the construction surrounding the park hosts. My empirical work suggests that a culture of care is not limited to professional roles, but is performed by frequent visitors (for instance Anna, whose friends presented her as an informal park host, conversation 19 May 2017), and in the urban gardening community where a culture of helping each other with watering etc. has developed (interview member of Jubileumsodlarna's board, 10 September 2017). I have discussed Jubileumsparken as a space of commitment, characterized by its highly curated process of human interactions. I have also attempted to show how relational attachment to the space is promoted through practical work, and through particular operative models such as the open calls and the park hosts.

In the next chapter, I will go deeper into the two notions of community that I discussed in Chapter Three: *Community of the Affected* and *The Inoperative Community*, and how they relate to Superkilen and Jubileumsparken.

6

MAKING SPACES FOR COMMUNITY WITHOUT UNITY

IN THE PRECEDING CHAPTERS, I have discussed how Superkilen and Jubileumsparken utilise different approaches to public engagement. While Superkilen is discussed in this thesis as a space reminiscent of a museum or an archive in its collection of objects from near and far, the discussions of Jubileumsparken have focused on the commitment to various forms of co-production and collective practises of care there. The difference between the two spaces can be correlated to the different processes within which they were made. Although there is a shared aspiration to design for and with specific groups in both projects, the attempt is rendered operational in different ways in the two spaces. Jubileumsparken has developed over time, and through a number of curated processes aiming at various forms of public engagement. Superkilen on the other hand was one complete design; although an extensive number of actors were engaged in the making of the space, it was complete when it opened to the public in 2012.

Drawing on the two notions of community that were introduced in Chapter Two: *Community of the Affected* and the condition of *Being-in-Common*, in this chapter I present two possible ways to think about community and public space, both of which challenge the idea that community must be built on similarity and unity. Whereas the first notion of community in public space, *Spaces of Collective Care*, builds on the idea that communities are produced continuously through shared concerns and collective practices of care, the second way to think about community without unity in public space – *Spaces of Being-in-Common* – points in almost the opposite direction by suggesting that community is a human condition that *already exists* in all inhabited spaces. Those two notions

of community are by no means exclusive; my intention here is rather to broaden the discussion by adding two more approaches to already recognized ways to think about community.

In the tension between the two contrasting notions of *Spaces of Collective Care* and *Spaces of Being-in-Common* a speculative space emerges in which community can be re-articulated in relation to diversity, urban design and public space.

SPACES OF COLLECTIVE CARE

I have begun to discuss the strategies deployed at Jubileumsparken for making people engage in the space. The three design strategies that I identified in Chapter Five – *Suggestive Prototyping*, *Exclude to Include* and *Spaces of Commitment* – all contribute to establish Jubileumsparken as a space characterized by engagement and care. Although some spaces at Jubileumsparken, e.g. the beach and the play structure ‘Berget’, are open to everyone at all times, other spaces and activities must be booked in advance: a spot can be booked in the sauna for instance, as can participation in the swimming and biking training that takes place regularly. Some spaces designed for specific groups or uses even require membership for full access. For example, one needs to be a member of Jubileumsodlarna to be allowed to plant in the area for urban gardening (or be a part of the Facebook group, incidentally). One also needs to be a member of a team to use the roller derby rink at certain times in the week. The facilities for the inclusive sailing school ‘sailing for all’ is another example of a space made in direct response to specific requirements from the group connected to that activity.

Let's remain by the roller derby rink for a moment. The arrangements surrounding the rink are a good example of the intentional support of particular groups at Jubileumsparken. As the only outdoor rink in Gothenburg, it has been used by professional teams since it opened in 2014¹³⁵. However, it has also become popular among children on kick bikes, as well as among bicyclists and skaters. The three members of a roller derby team that I talked to reported that there have been conflicts between 'derbies' and skaters due to the skaters' habit of leaving obstacles in the rink. To guarantee the roller derby team access to the rink, a sign was put up announcing times during which it was reserved for the roller team, but this proved insufficient. Although the director of Passalen says the conflict was solved through talks (conversation 12 July 2018), the derbies told me that they no longer use the rink for regular training (conversation 12 July 2018). They still enjoy the rink and use it for spontaneous training and for fun, but they say that the conflicts combined with a lack of maintenance made it impossible to use the rink for regular training. Although the effort was a failed one, putting up a sign and a schedule must be seen as an attempt to secure the interests of particular groups at Jubileumsparken – hence as a practical application of the design strategy Exclude to include that was discussed in Chapter Five.

If the roller derby rink was made in response to an existing group, the urban gardening association Jubileumsodlarna is an

135 / The three teams *Gothenburg Roller Derby*, *Dock City Rollers* and *Gothenburg Salty Seamen* participated in the opening of the rink in May 2014. The rink has also been used for tango dancing on special occasions.



Figures 57-59: Training at the roller derby rink at Jubileumsparken in 2018.

example of the intentional production of lasting relationships at Jubileumsparken. On Facebook, the members of Jubileumsodlarna share gardening advice, arrange watering when someone is away, and discuss potential threats such as produce thieves and the demand to move the garden area as the development of the park proceeds. In that sense, Jubileumsodlarna corresponds well to Ash Amin's description of the urban community garden as a space characterized by a high level of presence and informal acts of regulation, watchfulness and care (Amin 2008). Urban community gardens are often small-scale and local, but Amin suggests that similar conditions may emerge on a larger scale, where occupants of public space start to make informal arrangements between them (Amin, 2008, p. 15). Such a transfer in scale is already happening in some cities, where community gardens have become common enough to create an alternative park system¹³⁶.

The community of Jubileumsodlarna has been more or less self-organised since it was founded in November 2015, but instructions and rules have been laid down by the project administration of Jubileumsparken. One example of the continuous curation of the garden is the invitation that was sent out to newly-arrived refugees in 2016. Eva, who is on the board for Jubileumsodlarna, explains that the idea to invite newly arrived refugees to join Jubileumsodlarna was not initiated by the gardeners themselves, but by representatives of the Jubileumsparken's project organisation. The following text was

136 / *London Green Grid* is a British example of a strategy that connects community gardens in a citywide network of green spaces.

posted (in English) on Jubileumsparken's Facebook page 12 May 2016 (accessed 10 February 2018):

In Jubileumsparken in Frihamnen, Gothenburg, there is a number of cultivation boxes in which you, as an individual, can grow your own vegetables. We are looking for you who are more or less newly arrived or are seeking asylum in Sweden and would be interested in meeting people whilst caring for your box. There is no charge for newly arrived interested in the project in the park. You become a member of the Jubileumsodlarna a small community and you are responsible for watering and taking care of your box.

The initiative didn't produce the intended results; there are no newly arrived people among the gardeners today. The only migrants Eva can think of are a few Japanese and Chinese people who have been living and working in Gothenburg for many years (interview 10 September 2017). Eva explains that there has been a high member turnover, as many have grown tired of the produce theft. The attempt to include migrants in the urban gardening community is an example of how Jubileumsparken's project administration continuously tries to shape an existing community in terms of its level of openness and diversity. It is also an example of how difficult it is for publicly-driven urban design projects to leave habits of top-down management; there is sometimes a fine line between

enabling forms of curating and intimidating practices of controlling a situation¹³⁷.

Karami (2018) uses the metaphor of a table at which people are placed facing each other, with their backs turned to the outside, to discuss participatory constellations that are ‘taming,’ rather than enabling, participants by introducing what she describes as ‘safe activities’. She writes:

This table is the object of design in the hands of the architect who curates the gathering of people, plans the agenda and directs the group activities based on consensus or the vote of majority. It entertains a tamed collective by means of familiar and safe activities, such as cooking, eating, and gardening, to minimise the risk of the unexpected conflict that might interrupt the planned process of participation. These tamed communities evolve around a sort of sameness in the absence of the other. (Karami 2018 pp. 127)

In 2014, I had the opportunity to listen to a conversation between raumlabor and the project leaders of Jubileumsparken in their office space. They were planning a workshop with groups interested in participating in the making of the park. The discussion circled around engagement and resources: what would the different groupings bring to the project in terms of skills and in terms of

137 / See Torisson (2018) for an interesting discussion on the role of the curator in urban development projects. Torisson suggests that the curation of social life in such projects is often downplayed in order to make the process “appear natural rather than produced” (p. 89).

engagement¹³⁸? They discussed the challenge of bridging the gap between ideas related to the current situations of acting in a semi-industrial setting and the plans for a future city park surrounded with houses. In response to diverse expectations, a representative from raumlabor suggested that a ‘sense maker’ should be chosen in each group in the workshop. Furthermore, it was suggested that the sense maker should be someone who could draw and write confidently and was familiar with planning processes. The sense maker, it was argued, would remove pressure from the group. One of the architects from raumlabor explained: “So we can say ‘you can relax, these people can make sense of it all’. That creates a situation where the discussion can be more free, but the sense maker is also free to make his or her own sense of it all.” (19 September 2014)

The idea brings to mind Karami’s metaphorical table; the idea of assigning the task of constructing meaning to a ‘sense maker’ familiar with the norms of architectural practices risks taming a community by filtering a diverse number of voices down to one. It is, I suggest, a way to safeguard the objectives of the project by taking back the issue of expertise to a professional sphere, thus reducing the risks from amateurs who act from their own unpredictable positions. This example draws attention to the intricate relation between minor and major practices – and how the habits of major practices will reappear, also in attempts to act in a more minor key.

138 / Among the initiatives discussed were an interest group for building tiny houses, a number of friends who wanted to use the space for greenhouses, and one person’s dreams of opening a bar.

The organizing of a participatory group or process must not always be a bad thing, however. As I see it, it is sometimes beneficial to coordinate a group in order to be productive in a specific situation¹³⁹. I will return to this professional ambiguity in the next chapter.

Although Superkilen is used by established groups, such as the skaters and visiting school classes, many of the social interactions are brief encounters between strangers. People who don't know each other frequently share a bench or one of the large swings for a while, before walking away in different directions. Sometimes there are brief conversations, and on the odd occasion people bump into each other in a more literal sense, as seen by the boxing ring. Although there were initially many sports clubs involved in the process, established groups or clubs tend not to use the sports facilities of the final design. The boxing club that used the boxing ring at the opening of Superkilen no longer uses it, and the square-dancing club does not use the square-dancing pavilion, as they did during the opening. Mathilde (interview 8 May 2015) offered an explanation: since the spaces cannot be booked or reserved, one never knows whether a space is available at a certain time, and that is incompatible with a club with organized activities, she explains. Mathilde does not consider this a problem however; on the contrary, she is positive to the fact that you don't have to book the ring in advance. All spaces are open and accessible to all, and no

139 / Michel Callon advocates a similar stand, proposing what he calls 'hybrid forums' as regulating mechanisms of sorts in participatory processes where diverse opinions make it difficult reach consensus (see Al Khalidi 2018, p.139).

one has the right to ask someone else to leave due to formal regulations (as observed near the roller derby rink in Jubileumsparken). The confrontational quality of the space is therefore amplified by the fact that nothing can be booked or reserved in advance. I came across personal connections to certain objects in my observation studies – the girls who would meet by the square-dancing pavilion after school, the mother who took her children to play in the octopus regularly, and the teachers who would have a quick barbecue in their lunch hour on sunny days. Apart from such repetitive use of certain spaces or objects, the one group whose presence has increased during the years of my study is the skaters.

Superkilen was not planned for the skaters; they were not part of the extensive participatory process surrounding the making of the space. The maintenance worker Katrine tells me that the skaters were initially viewed as a hazard, but that they have been accepted by the park management over time. For instance, she no longer removes the objects that the skaters bring to the site (conversation 20 June 2017). In 2016, it was decided that the rubber floor at the Red Square would be replaced with tiles, and the skaters, who are deeply concerned about the change of flooring, have organized themselves in order to influence the renovation plans. Simon, who has been skating for 20 years, leads the group of engaged skaters. He collected signatures against the tiling, but had not yet managed to get invited to any formal meetings with the city administration when I interviewed him (6 June 2018). In 2012, Simon asked the local culture council if he could place three concrete blocks on the Red Square. The blocks had originally been located on the square, but they had been moved behind Nørrebrohallen when the design



Figure 60: Objects brought to Superkilen by the skaters are no longer removed by the maintenance workers.

of Superkilen was implemented, and they were less useful for skaters in their current position. With the local culture council's permission, Simon moved the blocks to the Red Square, but soon had to move them back behind Nørrebrohallen. Simon made a deal with the manager: he would be notified if the blocks were not to be used when the space behind Nørrebrohallen was redesigned. According to Simon, he was never notified, and the blocks were removed when he was abroad. The following year, he acquired three leftover granite blocks from another project and wanted to place them at Superkilen. Based on his bad experience of agreements with the local council about skateboarding, he chose not to ask for permission. Instead he borrowed some professional lifting equipment and with the help of five friends, he put the three blocks at Superkilen, between the Black Square and the swings. The blocks are still there for skating today (email conversation 06 June 2018).

If we look at Simon's struggle in light of the main design idea of Superkilen – to ask people to propose objects for the space – it may seem odd that his ideas were not acknowledged or picked up by the project administration. The process, as described by Simon, suggests that the skaters were not considered an actor with a valid claim to Superkilen; their engagement was not seen as a resource to be included in the making of the space, and their use of the space is not supported. It also indicates that Superkilen was made to be a complete and finished space, designed and built for the opening in 2012. No objects have officially been added since then – the 108 objects of the original design have remained. Drawing on Simon's story, I suggest that the skater's long-term engagement with Superkilen has emerged not because of, but despite the project administration. Following Marres (2012) in her suggestion that it is

not a group as such, but rather an issue that makes a public emerge, I argue that the struggle for recognition of certain material prerequisites has pushed the skaters at Superkilen towards a more stabilized form of community, leading to a situation where they address Superkilen as a space in need of their attention and care. This was expressed for instance in the collective work of moving the granite blocks to the Red Square. The design of Superkilen – its material and particular qualities – has played a central part in the emergence of the skater's long-term engagement with the space. They would not be there if the space itself didn't afford skating. One could say that the skaters' struggle was both a failure and a success. Simon was never granted permission to place the blocks at Superkilen. The fact that granite blocks were later placed on the Red Square – and remained there, was the result of an illegal action, but also of a pragmatic approach voiced by the maintenance worker. Although there is no formal decision supporting the action, at the writing of this thesis, the maintenance workers have not removed or initiated the removal of the granite blocks brought to Superkilen by the skaters.

Returning to Jubileumsparken, urban gardening is not the only way engagement is promoted and curated at the site. In August 2015, Jubileumsparken was subject to what appears to have been a political act of protest; pink paint was thrown into the water, and the public pool had to be closed for five days (14-18 August). On the same occasion, the words 'Stoppa gentrifieringen' (*Stop gentrification*) were spray-painted in black on a pavilion close to the pool. No one claimed the action, and the full intention behind the act has



Figures 61 and 62: One of the granite blocks at the Red Square and some of the tools that were used to transport the three granite blocks to Superkilen. Photos: Teit Andersen.

thus remained unknown. The project leader of Jubileumsparken explains what happened:

We had an incident this summer with paint in the pool and graffiti on a house. ‘Stop gentrification’ it said in black letters. We let the text remain throughout the whole season and had a dialogue about it, talked to our visitors about it – most of them did not know what it meant. It was all good in a way. The project was unenhanced. (Interview 20 November 2015, my translation)

The action itself – throwing paint in the pool and painting on the building – did not come from within the project administration, but from the moment it was discovered and onwards, the action was curated as a starting point for dialogue on the development of the park. The spray-painted message was used as a ‘conversation-piece’. Drawing on the pragmatist idea that issues spark publics, I see the curated dialogue around the message on the wall as an attempt by the project administration to bring the potential engagement triggered by the controversy into the project – thus increasing care for the space. However, the intervention in itself indicates that not everyone shares the same notion of what care is at Jubileumsparken: the writing on the wall suggests that some(one) fear(s) that the park is being used as a tool to gentrify parts of Gothenburg. The action may consequently be seen as their way to care for the park as an un-gentrified space.

What is the difference of a community of the affected as discussed by Marres (2012) and a space of collective care¹⁴⁰? Puig de la Bellacasa discusses the difference of being affected by something and caring about something in an interesting way. She writes (2017, p. 42):

We can think of the difference between affirming “I am concerned” and “I care”. The first denotes worry and thoughtfulness about an issue as well as, though not necessarily, the fact of belonging to the collective of those concerned, “affected” by it; the second adds a strong sense of attachment and commitment to something. Moreover the quality of “care” is to be more easily turned into a verb: to care. One can make oneself concerned, but to “care” contains a notion of *doing* that concern lacks.

As Puig de la Bellacasa points out, the word care captures the affectionate connection to the space on the one hand and the work/labour – i.e. the actual building of space and the care-taking of it – on the other hand. Drawing on Puig de la Bellacasa (2017), who spells out the strong link between those two aspects of care, I suggest that Jubileumsparken seeks to trigger the public to engage in both these senses in its care for the space. This request can be heard in

140 / For an interesting discussion on care as a feminist strategy, see Sara Brolund de Carvalho and Anja Linna (2014) *Underground Urban Caretaking, Unearthing social knowledge through image and sound*; and Kim Trogal (2017) *Caring: Making commons, making connections*, on the importance of including care in our understanding of architectural production.

the objective voiced by the project manager of Jubileumsparken to create a public space inhabited by “hearts and minds and hands” (interview 20 November 2015); that is, a space where the visitor will feel received and welcomed by other humans. The two aspects of care are by no means exclusive, but they will often overlap, as seen in the space of Jubileumsodlarna. These urban gardeners’ use of the space is characterized by an affectionate connection to the space itself and a labour-intensive practice of care-taking. In addition to the two dimensions that I address here – care as love/affection on the one hand, and labour/work on the other hand – Puig de la Bellacasa (2017) suggests that care has a third dimension of ethics/politics. She points to care as a situated practise; similar care-takings might be an experience of joy in one situation, but feel oppressive in another situation. Puig de la Bellacasa writes (2017, p.1):

To care can feel good; it can also feel awful. It can do good; it can oppress. Its essential character to humans and countless living beings makes it all the most susceptible to control. But what is care? Is it an affection? A moral obligation? Work? A burden? A joy?

To bring care into the understanding of the production of public space is to acknowledge the continuous creation that takes place through affective and practical efforts. Jubileumsparken displays a wide range of ways in which people connect with the spaces in this dual sense, emotionally and practically. I suggest that the ethical dimension of care (Puig de la Bellacasa 2017) is also performed on-site, expressed for instance by Anna, the self-appointed host who cares for the park as a space open to spontaneity, and who does not want to draw attention to the fact that people are sleeping

in a play structure at the site, since this might result in restrictions of the use of the park. She has, I suggest, taken on an ethical responsibility for the park as a space open to a number of uses, including those in which she does not take part. The encounter with Anna draws attention to practices of care-taking that focus more on social inclusion than on the making or maintenance of actual material spaces. The notion of Spaces of collective care draws on this expanded understanding of care-taking open to combinations of the three dimensions of care as discussed by Puig de la Bellacasa (2017).

If community is staged as collective work, be it through a workshop or an urban gardening session, who will join in, and who will not? As the failed attempt to expand the community of Jubileumsodlarna indicates, invitations to participate in processes of co-creation in and of public space will appeal to some people, but not to others; this is why care, understood as an active undertaking, cannot be communicated as the only or the preferred way to exist in a public space. The choice to position oneself outside of all initiatives aiming at co-creation and public participation is always an option, and should not, I suggest, rule out the sense of belonging to a space and its community. Here, Nancy’s (1991) idea of the inoperative community becomes an almost antagonistic complement to Jubileumsparken’s commitment to care as an operational force in the making of community.

SPACES OF BEING-IN-COMMON

As I have already suggested, Nancy and Blanchot both have a perplexing, even paradoxical notion of community; community must be attempted, but it is at the same time not something that can be achieved. Making actual spaces for Nancy's kind of communities is consequently a very difficult task to take on. In fact, even thinking about community is challenging when it cannot be based on any stable or continuous ground, but rather on difference. An immediate political application of Nancy's thought of community is difficult to imagine. Even Nancy himself refrains from speculating on the realization of his own take on community. He writes:

[H]ow can the community without essence (the community that is neither "people" nor "nation", neither "destiny" nor "generic humanity", etc.) be presented as such? That is, what might a politics be that does not stem from the will to realize an essence?

I shall not venture into the possible forms of such a politics, of this politics that one might call the politics of the political, if the political can be taken as the *moment*, the *point*, or the *event* of being-in-common. This would be beyond my competence.

(Nancy 1991, xxix – xl)

When attempting to provide the conditions for Nancy's community, whether through policies or design, it must be remembered that there is no common measure for the condition of being-in-common. Being-in-common should not have a measure – because that is where it fails. The impossibility of defining community in a final

sense is perhaps what thwarts the architect, the urban planner or the policy-maker who wish to implement Nancy's ideas. Recalling Nancy's demand for community to remain inoperative, we cannot work to institute his thought of community. What we can do however is to try to communicate community as open and changeable, able to hold the "moment, the point, or the event of being-in-common" of which Nancy speaks (1991, xxix – xl). Any attempt to favour such communication will, I believe, cast light on the limits of the institutional frameworks in which questions of community and space are usually addressed. To work with Nancy's notion of community as a moment or an event is to acknowledge the need to work outside of, or in the cracks of, conventional and established practices of planning and urban design – a call for minor ways of working.

Whereas Jubileumsparken is reviewed as a space made to support long-lasting attachments to the site, Superkilen is discussed in this thesis as fragmentary and scattered in its ways of exposing the visitor to a diverse collection of objects and associations. Superkilen is moreover discussed as a space aiming at confrontation: between different individuals, people and objects, and between objects. Objects and people are placed close to one another in such a way as to expose their peculiarities in relation to one another. Such an attempt to make the exposure of difference the shared experience resonates with Nancy's (1991) call to think of community not in terms of what we have in common, but that we are in common, i.e. community built on the condition of being-in-common, based on an all-encompassing 'we'. Nancy writes (2000, p. 42): "To want to say 'we' is not at all sentimental, not at all familial or 'communitar-

ian'. It is existence reclaiming its due or its condition: coexistence". Looking at Superkilen, the question of community remains open: to what extent can such a 'we' be perceived without other shared characteristics than co-existence itself? Can difference be the shared experience that holds us together? Karami (2018) discusses differences as a premise for active encounters: the encountering subjects must be different to each other to be changed or affected by the encounter. She writes:

Therefore, essential to any encounter are firstly the existing differences, and secondly the notion of unfinished subjects or subjects in transformation. Every encounter produces new subjectivities that are not fixed and that are particular to that very encounter. In this sense, a group of people held together momentarily through encounter produces an active collectivity, a changing togetherness that has not taken shape through consensus and mutual identity but through the differences. Encounter happens through the negation of fixed identities. (Karami (2018, p. 129)

Poststructural thinkers are sometimes accused of having deconstructed the subject without replacing it with anything, but for Nancy, the empty space – the lack – is meaningful in itself. Urban scholar Helen Runting (2018, pp. 155-157) discusses democracy's need for spaces that don't belong to anyone in particular. Drawing on art historian Rosalyn's idea that democracy derives from 'the image of an empty place', she suggests that rooms made for no

one in particular may belong to all of us¹⁴¹. This thesis builds on the idea that such rooms, neutral and made for no one, can never exist in any pure form; hierarchies will always be present, and to some extent built in, within physical rooms and spaces. Rather than trying to make neutral spaces, the design strategies applied at Superkilen and Jubileumsparken aim at actively interfering with social hierarchies by making spaces for many particular interests. Superkilen's abundance of objects, uses, and atmospheres renders it a site where spaces or objects cannot easily be safeguarded for any particular group. In its lack of one coherent narration, an archival space such as Superkilen does not belong to anyone in particular, and it cannot easily be taken over by one singular interest. Although far from empty, the repository structure thus makes Superkilen a space that in some ways resembles the empty space discussed by Runting (2018).

Robert Putnam (2000) suggests that the difference of communities based on shared interests or identities and more loose communities can be found in the distinction between the qualities of 'bonding' and 'bridging'. A community where people are connected by shared interests, identities, or life-situations is built on a high level of the social capital of bonding – but a community that bridges works

141 / On a similar note, Karen Barad (2015) discusses the vacuum as a site where transformation may happen, suggesting that 'nothingness' is "the scene of wild activities" (Barad 2015, p. 394). What this might mean in terms of lived experiences is discussed by Halberstam (2018, pp.23-24) who for instance considers the void as a possible site for queer and trans-life.

differently. A bridge is a reaching out – one person reaches out to another. Publicness is then a message that travels from one person to the other¹⁴². Considering publicness this way resonates with my understanding of the way in which community is created at Superkilen: a message is sent out (for instance, through the design strategy *Objects as Openers* discussed in Chapter Four), but no one knows how it will be received and perceived by the people using the site; the message might be decoded in unexpected ways¹⁴³.

Superkilen is a space that confronts a visitor with a number of concerns, but does not ask for any practical, hands-on engagement. At Superkilen there are no workshops to attend, no swimming lessons or sauna sessions to join, and no plants to water. In comparison to Jubileumsparken, Superkilen does not represent itself as a site of care, and the visitor is not requested – or invited – to bond with the space

142 / Brighenti (2010) places the creation of such bridges at the heart of public life. He argues that the public is never a specific group of people, nor is it a formal institution or state. We can therefore never be the public; we can only be in public – making bridges to others (Brighenti 2010, p. 116). I would like to add a reminder here that communication is always mediated by the material, which is why the public is also material when imagined as a message that travels.

143 / It has been argued that publicness is not, as suggested by Brighenti, constituted by the message itself, but rather by the *communication* of the message (Fraser 1992, Warner 2002). This idea – that the promise of publicness lies in the communication itself – is implemented where something is introduced, whether by the planner or the commissioned architect or artist, as a ‘conversation piece’, i.e. as something to gather around and talk about. An example of this approach can be seen in the curation of the ‘anti-gentrification action’ in Jubileumsparken.



Figure 63: Känner du dig ensam? (Are you feeling lonely?). Writing on a façade in the H+ area in 2011.

through any practical work or long-term engagement. Superkilen is thus bridging rather than bonding, to use Putnam’s (2000) distinction. Objects and events are ‘thrown out’ with the intention that they will create connections between people; the design becomes an invitation for community, if only experienced as a brief moment of being-in-common. Similar design strategies were used in the H+ project in Helsingborg, introduced at the beginning of this thesis, where artists were invited to create specific atmosphere. On one occasion, questions were painted on buildings within the development, such as: Do you care? Are you feeling lonely? What have you lost? The questions were personal – using the

second-person singular ‘you’ (*du* in Swedish) rather than a more general third-person – and exposed the visitor to shared basics sentiments of human life such as loss, loneliness and affection¹⁴⁴. The strategy of creating community by enlisting highly personal yet universal conditions relates to Nancy’s (2000) suggestion that we are always singular, but always related and longing for connection, hence also plural. As humans, we are always reaching out to each other, always attempting to connect and always failing at it. The potential of community is thus located in the enactment of what Ben Anderson (2017, p.593) calls “momentary, exceptional acts of coming together”. The human condition of being singular, yet plural is captured strikingly in the writing of Julie Otsuka (2011). In her story/stories of Japanese women traveling to San Francisco to marry, Otsuka does not reduce the many voices to one; each destiny is kept separate, but related to a strong and suggestive community

144 / Affection can be illustrated using the story of Adam and the apple. The way the apple was constituted (poisonous) changed the way Adam was constituted (from innocent to sinful). The story tells us that there is more to affect than emotions; affect transforms the individual. Examples of such transformative conditions are traumatic when something affects someone in a way that changes her for a long time, if not for the rest of her life. For an extended discussion on Adam and the apple, see Deleuze’s *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy* (1988, p. 22 ff.).

which comes into being through the stories told using the pronoun ‘we’¹⁴⁵.

I argue that the ‘we’ at Superkilen is constructed similarly. By placing a number of different experiences side by side, a minimal/maximal we is formed – minimal in the sense that it does not build on any shared identities, interests or concerns, and maximal in the sense that it is incalculable in its inclusion of all subjects related to the site¹⁴⁶. I suggest that Superkilen may be experienced precisely in this double binding of singular beings desiring connection across differences. If experienced in that way, the space becomes an invitation to connect – with personal stories of longing, loss and exile, but also with sentiments of joy, playfulness and beauty. Superkilen is made to be a space in which a visitor is affected by some of the subjects she encounters (objects and people), but where she can also feel the limits of her imagination, hence the impossibility of leaving her position as a singular being. This ambiguous feeling of being connected, yet alone, is perhaps the closest I have come to

145 / As an example of that gesture, she describes the experience of giving birth in the following way: “We gave birth under oak trees, in summer, in 113-degree heat. We gave birth beside woodstoves in one-room shacks on the coldest nights of the year. We gave birth on windy islands in the Delta, six months after we arrived, and the babies were tiny, translucent, and after three days they died. We gave birth nine months after we arrived to perfect babies with full heads of black hair. We gave birth in dusty vineyards in Elk Grove and Florin” (Julie Otsuka, *The Buddha in the Attic*, 2011, p.77).

146 / For an extended discussion of community as incalculable see Pettersson 2015.

experiencing and understanding Nancy's (2000) notion of being *Singular-Plural*.

In relation to the previous discussion, let us return to a design strategy discussed in Chapter Four: *Aesthetic Disruption*. It has been suggested that practices with a high presence of aesthetic disruption have the capacity to unlock new social imagination by exposing other, more inclusive ways to organize urban life (Amin 2008, p.15)¹⁴⁷. Drawing on my empirical work, I suggest that this is at least partially true in relation to Superkilen. Superkilen displays an experimental take on public space and at times a high presence of affirmative qualities. This is not to say that the atmospheres produced at the site are always pleasant and enjoyable; one situation that has stayed with me was the encounter with the exchange students having a picnic on the hill where soil from Palestine is placed, which was one of the more uncomfortable moments during my study. When the students became aware that there was Palestinian soil there, they reacted with discomfort, regret and shame, almost as if they had been caught desecrating someone's grave. The change of atmosphere was immediate and dramatic as the students began moving their picnic to get away from the Palestinian soil. Some critics have accused the postmodern condition of hindering the development of common ethics by

147 / Amin (2008, pp.15-16) is not very specific about what aesthetic disruption might be in terms of actual aesthetic practice, but links it to spaces characterized by a temporality, celebration, and a mixture of art, pleasure and disobedience.

turning the individual subject into the primary site of responsibility (Ellin 1999)¹⁴⁸.

Can Nancy's (1991, 2000, 2003) understanding of community, based on a condition where we recognise ourselves as singular beings but stay radically open to one another, be investigated as a site of ethical responsibility? To refer to the situation on the hill at Superkilen as a gesture of care extended from Copenhagen to Palestine is perhaps to take it too far, but I suggest that the students' reactions, when their picnic was disrupted by the sudden discovery of soil from Palestine, showed not only discomfort, but also a degree of connection. I argue that the moment or the event of being-in-common that Nancy discusses (1991, xxix – xl) may be experienced in precisely such brief flashes of interpersonal and transversal connections. Being-in-common may be experienced as a condition in which we “learn to be affected” (Anderson 2009, p. 77) by vague or distant atmospheres and by situations and people far away from us. This, I suggest, is the ethical potential of Spaces of being-in-common. This way to think about connection and care – as qualities that may be expanded beyond the particular site – reduces the distance between the notion of Spaces of being-in-common and the notion of Spaces of collective care. A space characterized by the

148 / David Harvey has expressed a similar concern: “The experience of time and space has changed, the confidence in the association between scientific and moral judgments has collapsed, aesthetics has triumphed over ethics as a prime focus of social and intellectual concern [...and] ephemerality and fragmentation take precedence over eternal truths and unified politics” (Harvey, p. 328 in Popke 2010, p. 248).

condition of being-in-common is also, to some extent, characterized by care.

Although transversal in its ability to trigger new connections between people, objects, and places distant from each other, Superkilen also draws attention to the situatedness of being-in-common. As I see it, the pure version of being-in-common – if understood as a condition where one stays open to connect with everyone or everything different from oneself – does not exist in the actual world. As there are no neutral spaces, every space will point towards a particular version of being-in-common – different spaces will be foregrounded and different connections rendered visible. The being-in-common that I experience at Superkilen is different from the being-in-common that I might experience at a busy airport – and that is in turn different from the being-in-common that may emerge in the face of a natural catastrophe¹⁴⁹. Therefore I suggest that being-in-common must be understood as a condition enacted and negotiated at each particular site. However, this does not make the condition of being-in-common predictable in relation to the particular site – unexpected relations will always emerge. Moreover, the references and experiences I bring to a site are

149 / Amin (2008, pp.15-16) is not very specific about what aesthetic disruption might be in terms of actual aesthetic practice, but links it to spaces characterized by a temporality, celebration, and a mixture of art, pleasure and disobedience.

central to the connections I make there, and thus to my particular experience of being-in-common.

THE ANATOMY OF COMMUNITY

In the previous sections, I have attempted to show how Nancy's and Marres' different theoretical traditions come through in their understandings of community. Although they don't always harmonise well, combining these two approaches has been particularly valuable when discussing Superkilen and Jubileumsparken; the tension between them expands the space for thinking about community. Marres' suggestion that community is created around diverse issues helps me see that a fragmentary structure is also relational, whilst Nancy's ontology enhances Marres' relational materiality, reminding me that networks are not always coherent, but may also be incomplete and disconnected¹⁵⁰. The friction between those two understandings of community has also helped me see the situatedness of my theoretical framework, and to remember that discursive formations are unique, just like spatial formations.

To deepen the discussion on the difference between Spaces of collective care and Spaces of being-in-common, I would like to make a

150 / Considering John Law's (1999) critique of ANT and his suggestion that actor network theory should be discussed in relation to "displacement, movement, dissolution, and fractionality" (p.3), the ontological conflict between Marres and Nancy is perhaps not so great after all.

small detour to New Orleans in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. While the tragedy and despair that the hurricane brought to the city is irrefutable, it has been suggested that the storm not only brought devastation to New Orleans, but also a renewed potential for community¹⁵¹. In relation to the aftermath of Katrina, communications scholar Helen Morgan Parmett (2012) draws out the tensions between Antonio Negri's (2003) understandings of community as a potential activated through the collective struggle of rebuilding the physical and social infrastructures of the city, and Nancy's (1991, 2000) understanding of community as a condition already there, but intensified as an experience by the exposure to the finiteness of a human life in the face of disaster¹⁵². Although their projects are different more broadly speaking, Negri comes close to Marres in her thoughts on the shaping of community. Whereas Marres is attentive to the actual issues' capabilities to spark a public, Negri discusses potentiality in a broader sense. For Negri as for Marres, community is always becoming.

It seems reasonable to think that in New Orleans after the hurricane, feelings of being-in-common were intensified by the disaster,

151/ The aftermath of Katrina has also been discussed in more negative terms, as a moment when the city authorities' inabilities triggered processes of neo-liberalization, gentrification and racism. Stengers goes as far as to suggest that the aftermath of Katrina is an example of an emerging state of global apartheid (Stengers 2015, p. 22).

152 / Although Nancy and Negri both reject the idea of community as something that can erase difference by fusing people into unity, their critique of such unifying notions of community is profoundly different.

and at the same time, other aspects of community were activated by a city in profound need of care. Along a similar line of thought, Rebecca Solnit (2009), who is also interested in the potentiality for community, opens up a discussion where practical solidarity emerges side by side with the exposure to the suffering of others. Solnit suggests that in times of disaster, generosity between strangers derives from a longing for connection and attachment that stays unrealized in ordinary life¹⁵³. The example of New Orleans draws attention to the possibility for contrasting ideas of community to exist in parallel. Different urban spaces have different atmospheres, however, and may therefore encourage different ways of connecting to one another. As my cases show, a public space can therefore be made and designed to strengthen one approach to community and not the other.

In order to discuss Superkilen and Jubileumsparken in relation to these two notions of community, let us return to Scandinavia and the analysis of pictures of the two spaces that were posted on Instagram. As mentioned early in this thesis, 987 posts were categorized from each space and arranged into 15 categories for each space¹⁵⁴. The categorization is subjective and based on my understanding of the

153 / Solnit writes (2009, p.305): "The history of disaster demonstrates that most of us are social animals, hungry for connection, as well as for purpose and meaning. It also suggests that if this is who we are, then everyday life in most places is a disaster that disruptions sometimes give us a chance to change."

154 / The categories overlap, but as they are specific to each space, they are not the same for Jubileumsparken and Superkilen.

two spaces. The images posted are by no means a true representation of what happens at the spaces; one can think of goings-on at public spaces that would rarely, if ever, be documented and shared on social media. Still, the posts are interesting as they provide an opportunity to map a large number of situations at the space that someone considered worth recording, and they offer a collectively produced record of our attentions (Manfredini, Jenner and Litterick 2015).

When looking at the categories in relation to the shaping of community, I am primarily interested in activities that take place at the site, and less in pictures of landscapes and architecture devoid of people. Based on that focus, I have excluded all categories that do not explicitly depict human use and activities from this analysis¹⁵⁵. I have constructed an axis stretching between the two notions discussed in this chapter: Spaces of collective care – Spaces of being-in-common. Instagram posts relating to shared concerns or collective work will be placed closer to Spaces of collective care,

155 / The following categories of Instagram posts from the two spaces are excluded from this particular analysis and thus not represented in the figures: SUPERKILEN: Areal photos/the park without people (182 posts); Objects without people (133 posts); Art and graffiti (49 posts); Advertisements (40 posts); Surroundings/ photos taken elsewhere; (31 posts); Details/materials (20 posts), and Signs/information on site (8 posts). JUBILEUMSPARKEN: Areal photos/the park without people (184 posts); Details/materials/sauna interior (85 posts); Art and graffiti (42 posts); Signs/information on site (16 posts); Media/articles and TV-features (8 posts), and advertisements (7 posts).

and posts depicting situations characterized by exposure or brief encounters will be placed closer to Spaces of being-in-common.

When positioning the Instagram posts from each space on the Spaces of collective care – Spaces of being-in-common axis, certain differences revealed themselves, as seen in Figures 64 and 65. Whereas the primary cluster of instagram posts from Superkilen is closer to Spaces of being-in-common (see Figure 64), the posts from Jubileumsparken are more distributed over the entire axis (see Figure 65). At Superkilen, a large percentage of the posts show people ‘hanging out’ in the space or posing for friends and taking selfies (often with objects). Just like Superkilen, Jubileumsparken has a cluster of posts at the far end of Spaces of being-in-common, but there are a large number of posts closer to Spaces of collective care depict activities that require some kind of group affiliation, e.g. urban gardening, roller derby, swimming-, biking- and sailing-for all. Superkilen has a large number of posts of in which people are posing for the camera, but there are more posts showing food, parties and events at Jubileumsparken.

SUPERKILEN

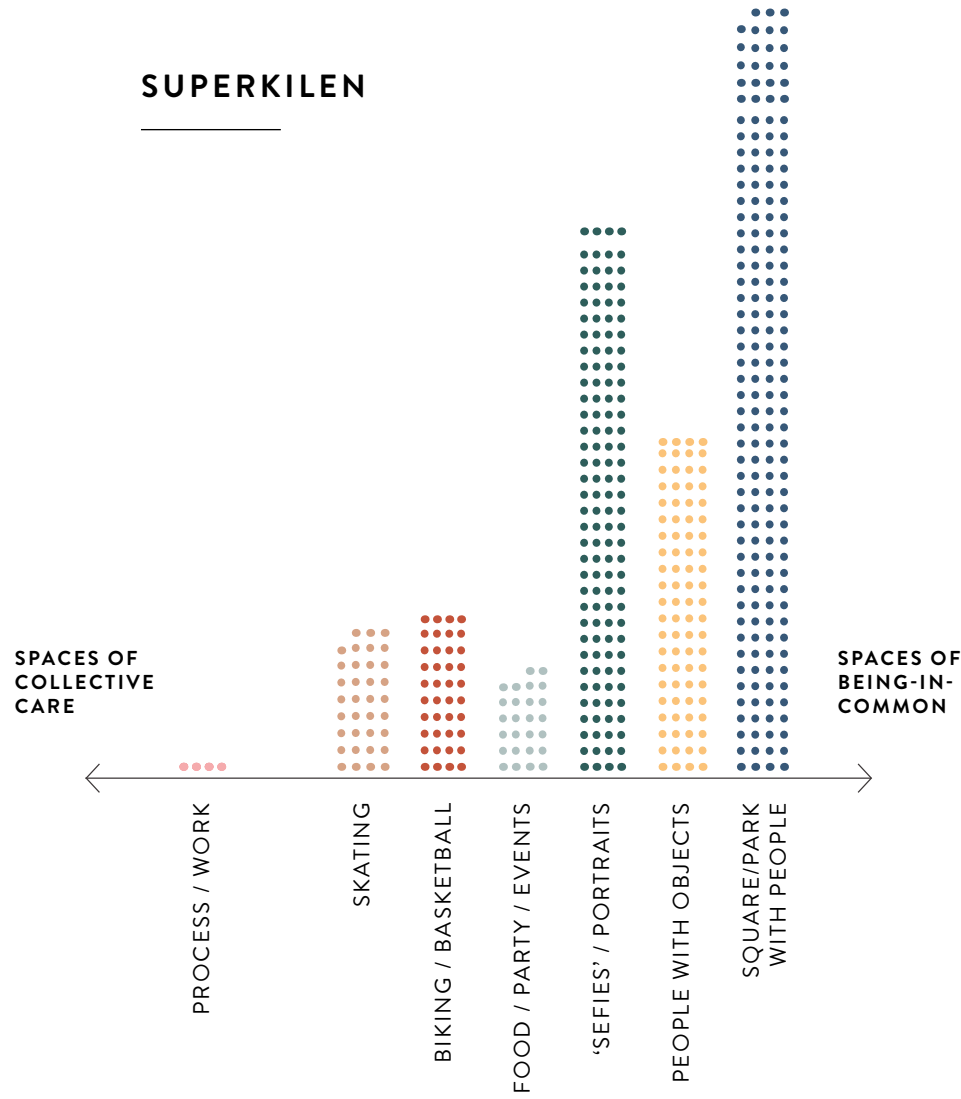


Figure 64, Instagram posts from Superkilen categorized on a scale from Spaces of collective care to Spaces of being-in-common. Each dot represents one Instagram posts.

JUBILEUMSPARKEN

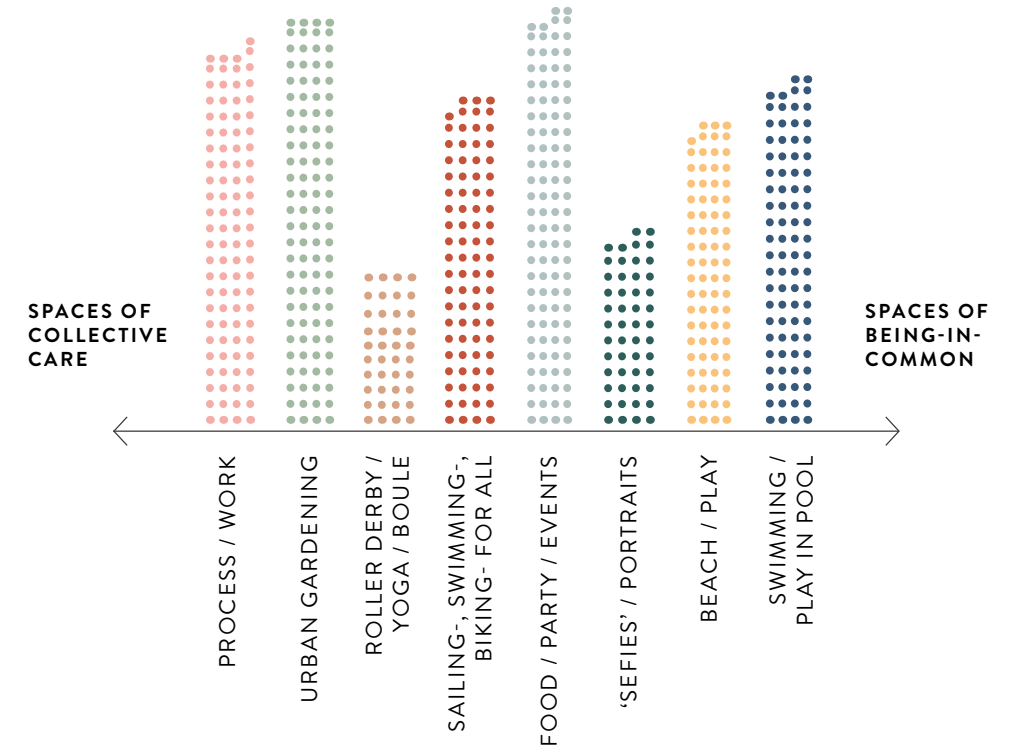


Figure 65: Instagram posts from Jubileumsparken categorized on a scale from Spaces of collective care to Spaces of being-in-common. Each dot represents one Instagram posts.

The Instagram analysis corresponds to the observations I made at the two spaces. A few activities at Superkilen, such as skating, seem to require affiliation with a certain group, but most activities stay open to temporary assemblies of people. Observations and conversations at the site confirm that even spaces that were designed for a particular use are mainly used by loose and temporary constellations of people. One example mentioned earlier is the Thai-boxing ring, which is not used by any boxing club, but by people playing around in it, or sitting on its sides while having coffee or lunch. Community at Superkilen derives more from exposure, atmospheres and brief encounters than from social formations centred around specific activities and projects. Drawing on these observations, I suggest that Superkilen is made as a space where community is characterized more by the condition of being-in-common and less by processes of collective care. Community at Superkilen may therefore be hard to catch sight of, if we think of community as constellations of people who come together around shared interests or concerns, such as in the case of Jubileumsparken.

Jubileumsparken is built on more lasting relations, and as discussed earlier in this thesis, it has directed attention to a number of group-specific struggles in its design, addressing for instance the struggle to establish a central space where people with functional variations can sail, the roller derby club's need of a rink, spaces by the waterfront made in response to particular and diverse needs such as spaces for making food and storing strollers, and gender-neutral changing rooms. While certain spaces, such as the roller derby rink, shift between restricted membership use and a more public use, other parts of the park, such as Jubileumsodlarna's garden, are cared

for by a closed membership group. Jubileumsparken thus resembles the idea of community as collective work.

As discussed earlier, the gradual making of Jubileumsparken is guided by an expectation to create lasting attachments to the space, and to initiate processes where certain groups or constellations are stabilized or 'locked' into longer interdependencies. One example of that strategy mentioned earlier is the contract between the NGO Passalen and the project administration, the objective of which is to keep the park and its facilities running and in good condition, but which also relates to the objective of creating a space characterized by care. Here, what could have been a more typical, seasonal maintenance job becomes something that more closely resembles a summer camp. This, I suggest, is a key to meeting the objective of inhabiting the space with "heart and minds and hands", i.e. to make the visitor experience that they have arrived at a space of collective care. Whereas the maintenance workers at Superkilen wear Copenhagen municipality's standard work uniform, Jubileumsparken's park hosts wear special t-shirts bearing the Jubileumsparken logo. The presence of the park hosts in their recognisable t-shirts also helps establish Jubileumsparken as a space of constant work, a space constantly under maintenance and construction. The public is also invited to work at the site; in some of the open calls, the public has been asked to participate in the actual labour of making the space by planting trees or building a sauna. The idea seems to be that the level of engagement and care for the space will increase proportionally with the time and work invested in it.

This particular difference between the two spaces is apparent in the number of Instagram posts relating to the actual making of

Jubileumsparken compared to Superkilen. While only four of the categorized posts from Superkilen portray the making or maintenance of the park, there are 97 posts that relate to the making of Jubileumsparken (categorized as Process/Work). This number includes posts relating to the planning processes, the actual building and planting of the park, and construction of buildings such as the sauna and a small library pavilion. This suggests to me that Jubileumsparken is experienced through the actual work of making and maintaining the park to a higher degree than Superkilen.

Public space is also addressed, in the context of this thesis, in relation to the tension between the aspiration to make spaces open to all, and the ambition to make spaces for particular uses or groups; this dilemma was addressed in Chapter Five as part of the discussion relating to the design strategy *Exclude to Include*. As described earlier, Superkilen and Jubileumsparken make particular interests influential in their design processes: both contain spaces that address specific interests, such as the roller derby rink in Jubileumsparken and the boxing ring in Superkilen. One of the architects behind Superkilen articulates the design of the space as a critique of the Scandinavian planning tradition that seeks to create 'spaces for all':

We can never develop a different way of being together if we always have to make spaces for everyone. Everyone is not there anyway; that's reality, so why not relate to reality? Everyone has interests and preferences. I have places I like to go because I like that kind of complexity, someone else likes another kind of complexity, and some people like a more simple diversity. We have to make spaces

for personal interests, for interest groups, or we'll end up with the super boring Scandinavian model. (Interview 12 May 2015)

With regard to the cases investigated in this thesis, are we moving towards an understanding of public space where particular interests are increasingly foregrounded and exposed? It has been argued that confidence in the public's ability to make spaces for everyone has been damaged by liberal modernity's failed promise "to construct a neutral space in which we could meet each other as individuals with certain universal rights" (Sohn, Kousoulas, and Bruyns 2015, p.4). Is it in the light of that broken promise that we can understand the eagerness to design for specific interests at Superkilen, Jubileumsparken and Rosens röda matta¹⁵⁶?

The objective to promote heterogeneity by making particular interests influential draws attention to questions of power and design. Which groups and uses should be encouraged – why some and not the others? Mukhtar-Landgren (2012, p. 148) points to a fundamental dilemma that may appear as if the idea of making space for all is dismissed as a main principle: how can planning and urban design embrace diversity and differences in the city without losing their responsibility to represent a general public? As I see it, the design strategy of making spaces for specific interests or uses is not

¹⁵⁶ / During my interviews, I came to notice that the benefit of making spaces for particular interests has been articulated in quite similar ways by the makers of Superkilen (12 May 2015), Jubileumsparken (19 September 2014) and Rosens röda matta (12 January 2015).

necessarily in conflict with urban planning's commission to serve general interests. On the contrary, if used wisely, with sensitivity to the hierarchies of the particular site – its interstices and overlaps – it can contribute to the making of public spaces that are relevant for many. Design strategies aiming at including particular groups and excluding others also call for awareness of a particular site's location in a larger geographical area. Which spaces relate to what groups and uses on a city scale? What sites are designed to become Spaces of collective care, and in what spaces are the qualities of Spaces of being-in-common reinforced?

Qualitative questions concerning community and public space such as these call attention to the need for analytical tools. Planners and urban designers have long since had access to analytical figures for discussing and working with different kinds of recreational qualities in green spaces¹⁵⁷. Drawing on my cases, it seems as if questions concerning community formations in public spaces, and socio-material inclusions and exclusions – and their relation to particular design strategies – are often handled more intuitively by planners and urban designers. More defined and calibrated tools for discussions would probably make these questions less marginal in planning processes. Drawing on this suggestion, I offer on the following pages an analytical figure, with the intention of enabling a more nuanced and developed discussion on public space and community.

¹⁵⁷ / For models on how to work with recreational qualities in green spaces, see for instance Grahn (2005).

The figure addresses the making of community in public space in relation to the two primary tensions that have been discussed in this thesis: 1) the tension between Spaces of collective care and Spaces of being-in-common, and 2) the tension between Spaces for few groups/series (thus for particular interests and uses) and Spaces for many groups/series (thus for general interests and uses).

The axis of the figure can be understood thus: A space that is accessible to or dominated by one single group (for instance a separatist space designed exclusively for one specific group) is placed closer to Spaces for few groups/series, whereas a space accessible to many (designed from an idea of a general public), is placed on the opposite side, closer to Spaces for many groups/series.

Along the other axis are the two notions related to the two understandings of community Spaces of collective care and Spaces of being-in-common. As above, a space characterized by shared concerns or collective work will be placed towards Spaces of collective care – and a space characterized by exposure and brief encounters will be placed towards Spaces of being-in-common.

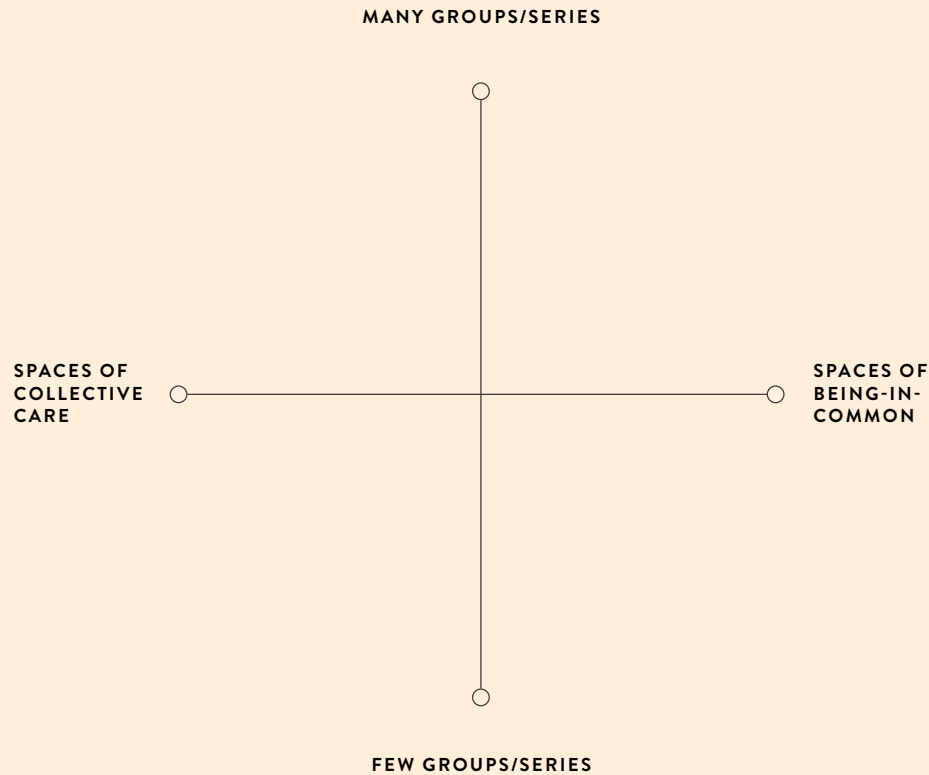


Figure 66. An analytical figure for discussing particular spaces/situations as located between two tensions: Spaces of collective care – Spaces of being-in-common, and Spaces for many groups/series – Spaces for few groups/series.

Urban spaces are not stable, however. Most spaces will move within the figure over time, as the following two examples will show. The first example returns to the project Rosens röda matta in Malmö mentioned earlier in this thesis. This public space was built to address a specific group – young women – and was designed around their shared concerns. The young women also invested time and engagement in the making of the physical space; to a large extent, it was made by their practical care for the space. In its initial form, it would certainly be placed in the corner of Few groups/series – Spaces of collective care, but, as can be seen in the figure, it did not remain there. Despite the municipality's objectives, the presence of young women lessened with time. Instead, other groups started to use the space (interview, project leader Rosens röda matta, 12 January 2015), gradually turning it into a more conventional public space. Returning to the figure, Rosens röda matta has moved from the corner Few groups/series – Spaces of collective care in the direction of Many groups/series – Spaces of being-in-common. The other example, Västhamnsfisket, has travelled in the almost opposite direction. As argued in this thesis, it started out closer to Spaces of being-in-common, but has travelled towards the Spaces of collective care as it established itself firmly as a membership community (see Figure 67).

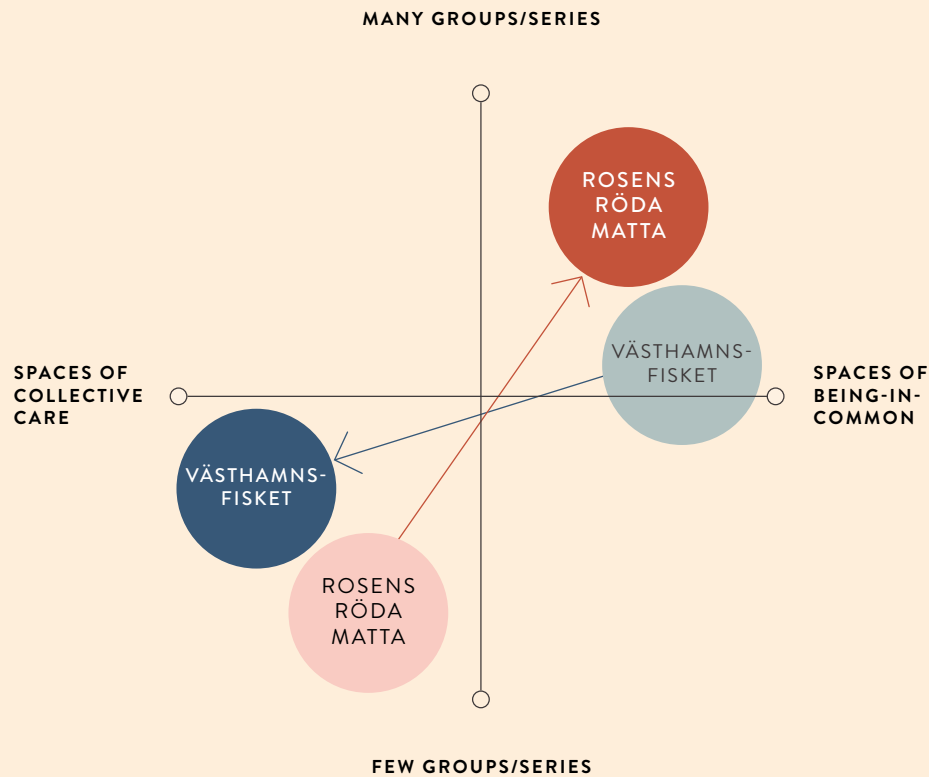


Figure 67, Västhamnsfisket and Rosens röda matta are examples of spaces that have moved in relation to the categories of the analytical figure.

This figure is not intended as a true representation of any particular spaces, but rather as an analytical tool for discussing the complex and dissimilar ways community can be thought, made, and ultimately lived. As demonstrated by the attempt to position Rosens Röda matta and Västhamnsfisket on the chart, actual spaces cannot be described by one fixed position but will move between different levels of openness and accessibility, and between different atmospheres and community forms. Although I attempt to include movement in my study, the analysis of Superkilen and Jubileumsparken remain snapshots of sorts. They are constantly changing in terms of community formations and atmospheres, and they will most likely move in directions that cannot be foreseen at the time of writing. If I allow myself to speculate, however, one possible development would be for Jubileumsparken to move towards the condition of being-in-common if the space were no longer curated as diligently as it is today. Having said that, it is also possible to imagine a future scenario where Jubileumsparken is established as a space of collective care – or perhaps as a number of connected spaces cared for by different groups.

Drawing on my empirical work, I suggest that Superkilen appears as a space shaped primarily by the condition of being-in-common, whereas Jubileumsparken is made to be a space characterized more by collective care. This does not mean that the two spaces lack the other quality; Jubileumsparken is also a space of brief encounters and an intensified presence of others different to ourselves – and Superkilen is also a space of maintenance and care where groups will sometimes come together around shared concerns – the skaters' struggle to transport granite blocks to the site is one example. It is

possible to think of spaces that have a high level of both kinds of communities, but there might be a competition between them – if a space is dominated by spaces made for defined groups, there might be less space available for activities that encourage brief encounters between strangers. In the curation of Spaces of collective care, I see great potential for the emergence of meaningful connections between people, and between people and spaces. Temporary and fluctuating formations allow for community to be thought outside of unity: it is possible to care for (or about) a multitude of diverse subjects and spaces. The possibility to be part of several diverse community formations at the same time avoids an essentialist approach to community, and it might also be a way to accommodate meetings between groups that rarely see each other; such meetings may potentially be produced in the interstices between more defined Spaces of collective care.

Returning to the figure, I have identified four particular spaces/situations in which different kinds of community may be experienced at Superkilen and Jubileumsparken – together, they display the richness of atmospheres found in these two spaces alone.

The first situation, positioned between Spaces of collective care and Spaces for many groups/series, is not one space, but two: the barbeque-areas at Superkilen and Jubileumsparken. They are examples of a kind of space where people may come together, and where temporary and collective projects of care and creativity may be experienced – e.g. in an open workshop, at an open urban garden, or around a shared barbeque. Those situations are especially

supported by the strategy that was discussed as *Spaces of commitment* in Chapter Five.

The second situation, located between Spaces of being-in-common and Spaces for many groups/series – is the Red Square at Superkilen. It is an example of a space of fascination with difference, rich in atmospheres and confrontations. It is a space where brief encounters with strangers – people or objects – may be enjoyed (or endured). As a space, it is supported primarily by two of the six design strategies discussed in Chapters Four and Five: *Objects as openers* and *Aesthetic disruption*.

The third situation, placed in the corner of Spaces of being-in-common – Spaces for few groups/series, is the Gendered Sauna session in which I took part at Jubileumsparken. It is an example of a separatist or safe space, offering time away from more dominant groups. It is a space with no shared obligations of maintenance or care. It is primarily supported by the design strategy: *Exclude to include*.

The fourth and last situation, located in the corner of Spaces of collective care and Spaces for few groups/series, is the space of Jubileumsodlarna. It makes a strong example of spaces designed for growing lasting relations and is a space of care and creativity, shaped by processes of collective work. Such spaces may, as seen at Jubileumsparken, require membership. Again, *Spaces of commitment* is the design strategy that enables such spaces.

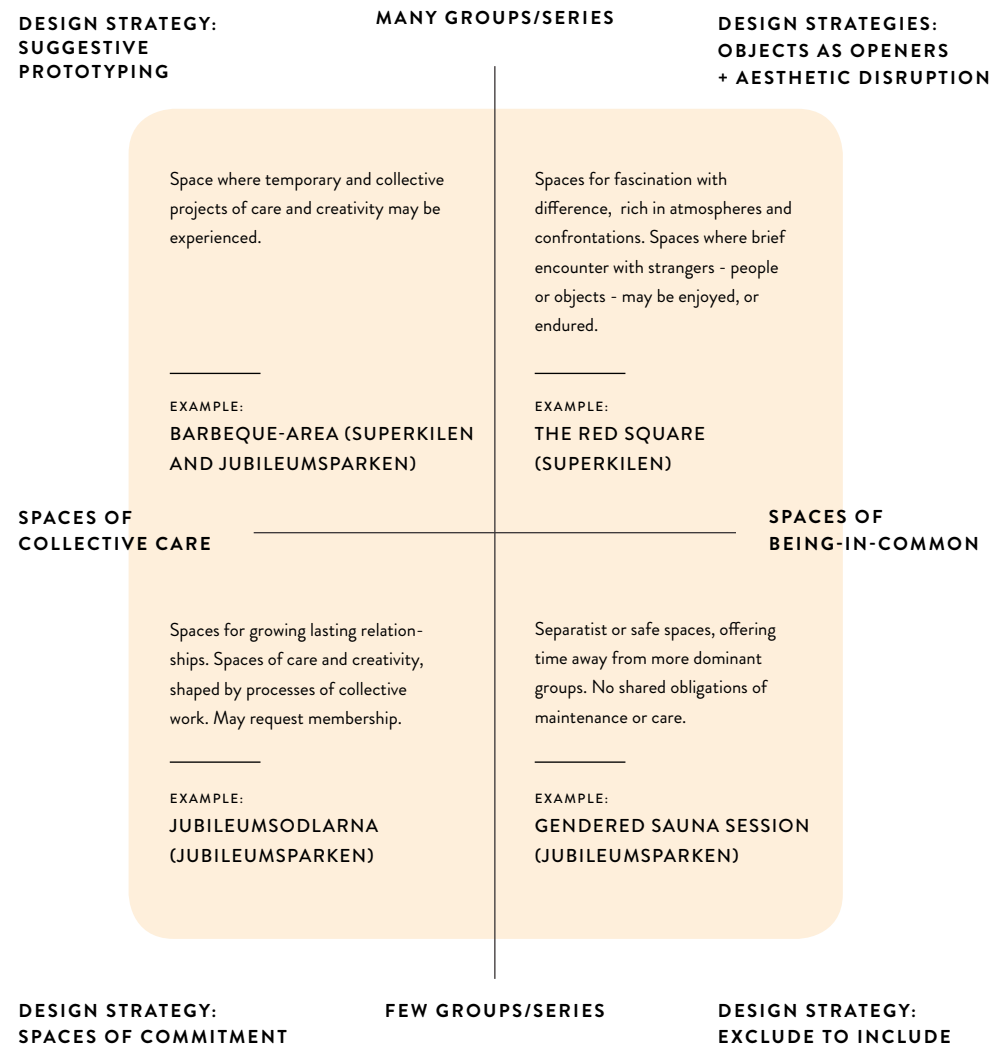


Figure 68. Four particular situations in which different kinds of community may be experienced at Superkilen and Jubileumsparken are placed in the analytical figure – together, they display a richness of atmospheres.

Two design strategies – *Suggestive Prototyping* and *Archival Space* – enable different kinds of atmospheres and situations to exist within the same public space. While Suggestive prototyping opens up for temporary experiments with different kinds of community spaces, Archival space allows for them to remain well defined and not enter into negotiations with other nearby spaces and situations.

Superkilen and Jubileumsparken give rise to questions about the curation of community in public space. What spatial exclusions and inclusions need to be managed and maintained, by what means, and by whom? Should communities be continuously supported by city administrations, or upheld by the design of the space itself? Finding ways to approach these questions with the right sensibility, and with responsiveness to the diversities of that particular site is essential to the endeavour of making inclusive space. The four situations depicted here are intended as an invitation to discuss the diversity of situations in which community may be experienced in public space. Together, they draw attention to the need for an expanded professional awareness on how atmospheres of community – of connections, disconnections, inclusions and exclusion – are related to particular design strategies, its artefacts and materialities¹⁵⁸.

¹⁵⁸ / See Lehtovuori (2012) for an expanded discussion on how difficult it is to “operationalize atmosphere” in the making of urban spaces. He writes: “While we can design saunas, corporate meeting rooms, community centres and scientific libraries with some control of their atmosphere, in the dynamic urban context the control is lost.” (Lehtovuori 2012, p.81)

Although different in their imaginings of community, both notions discussed in this chapter – Spaces of collective care and Spaces of being-in-common – propose ways to make public spaces that address people as they belong in the space¹⁵⁹. The analytical figures presented in this chapter suggest how this can be done in different ways, and by distinctive design strategies, operating on the scale from the curated Spaces of collective care to the more open and confrontational Spaces of being-in-common.

159 / Stengers (2005) discusses the difference between ‘being part of’ and ‘belonging’, suggesting that belonging is what cause people “to feel and think, to be able or to become able” (2005, p.191). She draws attention to belonging as a subjective experience by reminding us that “you do not belong without knowing that you belong” (p.190).

7

MINOR URBANISM: AIMING FOR EXPERIMENTAL TOGETHERNESS

IN CHAPTERS FOUR AND FIVE, I identified six particular design strategies at play at Superkilen and Jubileumsparken: *Objects as Openers*, *Archival Space*, *Aesthetic Disruption*, *Suggestive Prototyping*, *Exclude to Include* and *Spaces of Commitment*. Together, these strategies display a commitment to experimental and playful moods of working with urban design and public space, engaging with great societal concerns such as segregation and social fragmentation in unexpected ways – altering established practises of urban design from within the planning institutions. Proceeding from Deleuze and Guattari's work on a minor literature (1986), I have addressed such suggestive practises as *a minor urbanism*. In this chapter, I will go deeper into the notion of minor urbanism by placing Deleuze and Guattari's three categorizations of a minor literature in dialogue with Superkilen and Jubileumsparken.

The first discussion, *Deterritorialization: Transforming Professional Roles*, is an exploration of destabilized professional roles related to urban planning. The second discussion, *Politicization: The Double Movement of the Minor*, addresses minor urbanism's aspiration to move the major by acting as a force able to dissent as well as create. The third and final discussion, *Collective Enunciation: Expanding the Actors that Matter*, suggests that the numbers of actors taken into account in the making of public spaces such as Superkilen and Jubileumsparken may be expanded through minor design strategies. I am particularly interested in practices located outside of established practices of urbanism, but inside the institutions of urban planning – practices performing a criticality from within (Doucet 2015). This

outside-inside position is the location of a minor urbanism, as introduced in Chapter Two.

DETERRITORIALIZATION: TRANSFORMING PROFESSIONAL ROLES

Even in established forms of urban planning and design, it is often hard to foresee the over-arching consequences of a particular policy or design strategy; what seems reasonable and good to do in one place may be excessive or even destructive elsewhere, if the circumstances are changed. What is good cannot always be judged from the outside. The same could be said about architecture and urban design; strategies respond to contemporary challenges such as segregation, social fragmentation and climate change, cannot be developed from the outside, but must to a certain degree be unfolded in the practice itself. Although this suggestion calls for an experimental approach to urban design and planning, it does not mean that the experiment always is an appropriate approach in practices of urban design. There are good reasons to believe that urban design and planning could not exist as a defined practice without a certain degree of fixed and stable answers to particular questions and situations. To decide when to aim for more experimental approaches demands, I suggest, a certain sensitivity from practitioners of urban design. A minor urbanism will never arrive at its finalized form; it must be understood as a set of practices that cannot be stabilized, as it would otherwise cease to be minor. The practices, outcomes and characters of a minor urbanism must thus always be defined in a specific situation.

Aiming at the minor is a radical experiment – individual steps outside of dominant professional positions might be small, however. Stengers (2015) suggests that perspective may also be changed by small gestures; the radical potential lies in the gradual unlearning of one's own disciplinary habits, which is why it can be enough to present a situation a little differently than normal. A small disruption of the expected may cause what Stengers calls 'a short freezing of time'. Although the conversation may continue as if nothing had happened, "some people will later make it known that they were touched" (Stengers 2015, p.15). Although experimentation is challenging, considering the fact that the outcome cannot be foreseen or guaranteed, it need not be a lonely endeavour. Collective insights can be gained if experiences are shared. I follow Stengers (2005a) in her hopeful suggestion that an 'experimental togetherness' can be developed among practices. She writes:

The problem for each practice is how to foster its own force, make present what causes practitioners to think and feel and act. But it is a problem which may also produce an experimental togetherness among practices, a dynamics of pragmatic learning of what works and how. This is the kind of active, fostering 'milieu' that practices need in order to be able to answer challenges and experiment changes, that is, to unfold their own force. (Stengers 2005a p. 195)

How can the notion of minor urbanism contribute to such pragmatic learning? A number of experimental practices – different from each other, but with some shared characteristics – are addressed as a collective effort, in the hope that an 'experimental togetherness' may develop among practitioners who recognize

their efforts as part of a minor urbanism. Guattari (2003) is interested in the creative potential of an institution. He is particularly attentive to the groups that emerge within institutional framework and the ways in which their creativity might be activated, writing: "is there a possibility that a transfer of responsibility may be brought about and that an institutional creativity might take the place of bureaucracy?" (Guattari 2003, p.39). The main idea here is that creativity might be triggered by a transfer of responsibility from and between professional roles¹⁶⁰. The suggestion that groups differ in their abilities (and aptitude) to bring out desires that already exist within an institution is particularly interesting in relation to minor urbanism's potential to deterritorialize professional roles. It indicates that minor urbanism need not always make its contribution by opposing major practices, but that it can also become a transformative force by bringing out desires that *already exist* within the institution. This suggestion calls to mind the way in which one of the project

160 / This idea was investigated at La Borde, the psychiatric clinic where Guattari worked. Guattari identifies two kinds of groups, the subject group (that organizes themselves) and the subjected group (that is organized from above or outside by a greater power or force). Guattari stresses that the formation of both of these groups are processes that can never reach complete resolution, but must be understood as continuous maintenance work on the group formation itself. The clinic's way of organizing work was a critique of traditional psychoanalytic methods; here, the patients actively participated in the running of the clinic. This was a practice that not only destabilized professional roles at the clinic (i.e. doctors, nurses, cooks and cleaners), but also the expected division of responsibility and work between professionals and amateurs (or in this case doctors and patients), and between "reason and madness" (Goffey 2015, p. 127).

leaders of Jubileumsparken expressed a personal desire to break out of the “almost militant hierarchy” (interview 20 November 2015) of conventional urban planning by actively seeking collaborations with existing civil groups. She positioned her work as a civil servant in the following way:

I don't get inspired often. Often there is design that is nice, but getting it to sit in the planning is nothing that I see very often. The slaughterhouse area in Brussels has some fine qualities, but they are working from the outside with little opportunity to influence. The city is not on board there. I can see more of a kinship with associations and organizations. (Interview 20 November 2015)

Rather than being in affiliation with other publicly driven urban design projects, she sees a kinship with projects and organizations “working from the outside”. She ends on an almost apologetic note stating to compare what she does as a civil servant with the work of NGO's and others working on voluntary basis “would be to overlook the greatness of their non-profit work” (interview 20 November 2015).

Guattari introduces the notion of transversality to describe the relations and mutual dependencies that may emerge in experimentations with hierarchies within and beyond institutional borders¹⁶¹. At a conference I attended in 2017¹⁶², a representative

161 / Art scholar Kim Trogal (2017, p. 170) describes transversality as the means “to overcome the structures and routines that have become sediment in practise and make new kinds of connections and subjectivities.”

162 / ISU Kunskapsseminarium, 01 December 2017, in Malmö.

from a non-profit organisation called ‘Tjejer i förening’ (*Associated Girls*), referred to a civil servant from the municipality with whom she had co-operated as a ‘guerrilla civil servant’. The person in question responded by saying how honoured he was by her choice of words, adding that it was not the first time that he had been referred to as a guerrilla civil servant. How can the seemingly self-contradictory term guerrilla civil servant be understood? Guerrilla indicates that someone is fighting against larger regular forces, whilst civil servant positions this someone within the institution. The transversal location of the guerrilla civil servant challenges the established understanding of professional roles and their validity. Considering the fact that civil servants are governed by political representatives elected by the public, what happens to the democratic legitimacy of municipal urban planning if civil servants deviate from political decisions?

I stand fully behind the idea that politicians should have the last say in decisions regarding urban design and development in a democracy. However, I have come to the conclusion that political propositions need to be challenged by civil servants who are not afraid to speak up¹⁶³. Here, I back Grange in her call for planners to “give voice to their professional judgment and shoulder the role as a counterforce to politics” when needed (2017, p. 278). Considering the nature of urban planning and its entanglement

163 / See Grange 2017 for an expanded discussion on the ways in which the Swedish political system has produced a strong ideal of independent civil servants, and how this ideal has recently been challenged by new political demands.

with politics, bureaucracy and legal frameworks, the question is not whether Superkilen and Jubileumsparken can be considered minor projects, but how minor practices and atmospheres can operate from a position within a major practice, and to what extent they are able to affect the major from the inside. Seeing the tension and potential dilemmas, I venture nevertheless to suggest that minor urbanism does not compete with representative democracy in terms of political work; a minor urbanism is not a call for practices that are political in the same way that politics is political. Minor urbanism, just like minor literature, will involve itself with large political concerns through the suggestive and playful. It will deploy itself in experimental moods of connecting individual and collective aspects of urban life, i.e. in the transversal production of new causalities and connections in public space.

Superkilen and Jubileumsparken utilise an experimental approach to public engagement, but also to other distinct professional roles. For instance, the influence of artists, involved at various stages, can be seen in the physical appearance of both Jubileumsparken and Superkilen. At Superkilen, this is traceable to the beginning of the project. The artist from SUPERFLEX with whom I spoke, who has been in the art scene in Denmark since the 1990s, says he was shocked when the municipality of Copenhagen said yes to what they proposed for Nørrebro with Superkilen. He says SUPERFLEX themselves considered their proposal too radical to be commissioned, but that the nature of the project had turned out to be very timely. The artist explains what happened in the following way: “we gave some amusing answers to problems that are always discussed so seriously, Nørrebro you know... and they

[the municipality of Copenhagen and Realdania] had to love that” (interview 12 May 2015).

Metzger (2010 pp. 222-223) compares the artist’s role in contemporary planning to the function of the medieval court jester, who was employed to entertain at the courts of European monarchs. The position came with a certain ‘fool’s license’ that allowed the jester to tease his audience with silly and seemingly stupid questions that would make them reconsider things, or even shift perspective altogether. Metzger (2010) argues that since professional planners are generally expected to behave in a sensible and orderly fashion, the contemporary artist possesses an exclusive mandate to ‘make strange’ in politically-charged processes within urban planning – and could in that sense be compared to the jester in his right to disrupt the sensible¹⁶⁴. I agree with Metzger that disruptive practices may be used in order to open up planning processes that run the risk of closing off prematurely – but I question the artist’s exclusive mandate to engage in such practices.

The notion of a minor urbanism challenges the clear division of roles – also between artists and urban planners. I suggest that the planner or urban designer working in a minor key may well equip herself with something equivalent to a ‘fool’s licence’. Perhaps it is also a matter of authority, credibility, and rhetoric

¹⁶⁴ / Runting (2018, pp. 257-259) suggests that artistic practices acting in the field of urban planning borrow their democratic legitimacy from the formal planning arena without necessarily maintaining the same accountability. Planners, on the other hand, gain something that they lack and desire: a sense of autonomy through alliances with artists.

skill – a rhetorically-driven urban designer could possibly usher through some rather unusual things. Prudence and measured behaviours can also, I suggest, be used subversively.

Deleuze uses a different figure to address the potential of behaving in strange or unexpected ways. *The Idiot* is a conceptual character that Deleuze borrowed from Dostoyevsky, describing someone who resists the consensual way in which a situation is presented and action is mobilized. The Idiot cannot discuss the situation, but he senses that “there is something more important” (Stengers 2005b, p. 994). He thus becomes a producer of interstice in his inability to contribute to a solution. The jester and the idiot are related, yet different. Whereas the Jester turns things upside down, the idiot slows things down¹⁶⁴. They both point to minor approaches that may also be deployed as design strategies. To give an example of a design strategy acting as the Jester and the Idiot, I would like to return to a project that I worked on with the architectural collective raumlabor in 2004.

The project, entitled ‘Fassadenrepublik’, was a protest against the planned demolition of Palast der Republik (*People’s Palace*), the GDR’s former parliament building¹⁶⁵. The main intervention of the project was the flooding of the interior of the large-scale building,

¹⁶⁴ / For an interesting discussion on the value of slowing down in the construction of what we believe to know in science, see Stengers 2018, pp. 48-82.

¹⁶⁵ / The project Fassadenrepublik was part of an intermediate-use project for Palast der Republik, made in collaboration with Peanutz Architekten. The project ran for three weeks in the summer of 2004.

which was rendered an archipelago of water and islands between which visitors could move in small rubber boats. Fassadenrepublik was disruptive, silly and strange, and in that sense the perfect jester, but also idiotic in that it ignored all official frames for dialogue and explanation. It pointed to uses beyond the reasonable, but refused to take part in any formalised discussion on the future of the abandoned parliament building in which it took place. The playful, cheeky approach – to turn a former parliament building into an archipelago – calls to mind Stoner’s description of minor architecture’s ability to imagine objects of architecture “as a field of play” (Stoner 2012, p. 69). ‘Play’ can be understood in two senses here; play as in playfulness, but also play in the system, as in a system that is not too rigid to allow at least a little wiggle room.

If Fassadenrepublik is idiotic in the designers’ unwillingness to present a constructive solution to the problem, the same can be said about Superkilen. The designed space of Superkilen is ‘idiotic’, in Stengers use of the word, insofar as it refuses to engage in any practical work towards the making of a coherent society. By addressing social fragmentation with more fragmentation, it disrupts the sensible and the expected. Deleuze and Guattari (1986) discuss two paths of deterritorialization: one is to “take on the poverty of a language and take it further” (Bloomer 1992b, pp.179-180), and the other, which seems to relate most closely to Superkilen, is to artificially make a language ‘swell up’. The primary design strategy of Superkilen can be seen as an attempt to make fragmentation swell up until it reaches an exaggerated state, where it can be experienced as humorous and playful. By refusing to address urban diversity neither as an asset, nor as a challenge, Superkilen

makes us slow down in what we believe to know about community, connection and social integration in public space.

As shown in this section, the notion of a minor urbanism is to a great extent a conceptualization of practices that already exists among practitioners of urban planning and design. Drawing on my cases, one must not forget that professionals are individuals; if planners, urban designers and civil servants were to declare their inner wishes, or political stances, the total picture might appear surprisingly diversified. Giving name to minor urbanism is thus an attempted move towards the experimental togetherness discussed above by addressing a rather variegated bouquet of critical and suggestive practices as a collective enterprise. The notion of a minor urbanism is thus an attempt to bring out desires that already exist within institutions of urban planning.

POLITICIZATION: THE DOUBLE MOVEMENT OF THE MINOR

What is the political potential of a minor urbanism? To recall, for Deleuze and Guattari (1986), the political is understood as the inevitable link between individual concerns and larger socio-political themes. Katz (2017) describes how the minor gave her a term with which she could talk and think about the what she had already experienced: that the political is everywhere, “especially

in what feels most personal” (Katz 2017, p. 597)¹⁶⁷. Superkilen and Jubileumsparken are political, but not primarily in the sense that they connect to political parties or organizations. The political dimensions of those spaces are rather to be found in their ability to stay open to difference by embracing the personal, playful and conflictual. I have pointed to situations at both sites where disagreement and conflict are framed as a means to produce social interaction – for instance in the curation of the intervention at Jubileumsparken when paint had been thrown in the water. At Superkilen, the unwillingness to produce harmonious space is evident in the ways in which the project is communicated, for instance in the book *Superkilen*, which was made by the artists and architects behind the space. The artist from SUPERFLEX describe their approach: “we didn’t want to do a nice book about how beautiful the project was – we could have done that, but we wanted to focus on all the conflicts – because there are, as you can imagine, thousands of conflicts” (Interview 12 May 2015). This way of looking at publicness differs radically from notions of public space as a forum for consensus-seeking forms of communication¹⁶⁸. Superkilen and Jubileumsparken also challenge

¹⁶⁷ / The suggestion that personal and political concerns are inseparable situates the minor close to feminist theory. Individual concerns are always hooked into a broader political context, this is perhaps best known from the great feminist statement: *the personal is political*.

¹⁶⁸ / Among the more known advocates for this approach is Jürgen Habermas who suggests that the public sphere as a forum where general issues can be articulated and where shared concerns can be addressed and discussed through consensus-seeking forms of communication.

the division of public and private space by their means of elaborating with various forms of co-production, co-management and shared authoring.

The minor is not primarily located in content, but also in the destabilization of expectations and in the way in which things are presented. Let us return a final time to the presentation in Helsingborg. Looking back, I now understand the beginning of the presentation that I gave as an act of minor urbanism. The decision to start the presentation with a picture of people cutting open a fence was a small, but intentional disruption of the sensible in that particular situation. Although modest in its scope, it returned to fundamental questions of relevance: who and what was made to matter in the project I represented?

What role did the hole in the fence play in the emerging imaginings of the harbour as a site for public life? Turning to Jubileumsparken, the sauna resembles the hole in the fence in Helsingborg in its rejection of the harbour as a strictly industrial site. Thinking back on the session in which I took part, it appears as if Deleuze and Guattari's metaphoric description of cramped space "that forces each individual intrigue to connect immediately to politics" (1986, p. 35) became somewhat literal in the sauna. The hot interior space of the sauna became a boundary object of changing atmospheres and intensities, connecting personal and intimate memories with greater political concerns.

When looking at the cutting of the fence in Helsingborg alongside with the sauna session in Gothenburg, there is yet another insight to be made on the nature of the minor. In different ways, these two situations are both doing two things at once: they are

rejecting the current situation, and at the same time suggesting alternative realities. To act in a minor key is thus to engage in two movements at once: one of dissent, and one of speculative thought. O'Sullivan discusses this double movement in relation to art in the following way (2005, n.p.): "To refuse, or somehow negate the existing language (and thus the existing major forms) is important, but a minor art must do more than this. It must also involve invention and creation. /.../ Put simply, a minor art is involved in the production of new subjectivities as well as in turning away from those already in place." O'Sullivan captures something important when articulating these two dimensions of minor practices: the potentiality to *dissent* and *create*, hence to orient towards the future by resisting the present. It has been suggested that the essence of planning is the relationship between "what we have today and what we want tomorrow" (Mukhtar-Landgren 2012, p.194) – but practices of minor urbanism draw attention to how things *might be* – hence expanding the space for articulating what can be wanted and imagined for tomorrow by dismissing the goal of merely describing things as they are.

I suggest that the political potential of a minor urbanism is embedded in this capability to describe potentialities, but also in its ability to produce unexpected responses to known challenges. This can be seen for instance in the way the design of Superkilen responds to the ethnic diversity of Nørrebro. It can also be seen in the use of prototypes at Jubileumsparken. The use of prototypes was an untested way of working with participation in Gothenburg – at the same time it was answering to a situation where the lack of politically-adopted planning documents made it difficult, if not impossible, to get permanent building permissions.

Can minor practices have an impact on long-term planning, or must they remain small and exceptional, such as the trial or the prototype? Although the minor cannot be tied to any particular scale, it is sometimes understood as an appeal to the small, the local, or the insignificant. This slippage between minor and marginal is not quite right¹⁶⁹. Although the interventions of the minor may be small, the variations introduced can make a difference if accumulated and spread. What starts out as a criticism of the current state may well become part of a new dogma. In the last ten or fifteen years, as relational practices of architecture have become more established and sought after, an increasing number of architectural practices have oriented their work towards the intersection of urban design, participatory processes and art. Katz (2017, p. 598) reminds us that the minor may exceed the major, “but does not leave it behind”.

In the years during which I have written this thesis, I have witnessed a growing interest in urban design’s possibility to produce communities in public spaces through shared projects such as urban or communal gardens or participatory projects inviting the public to become involved in the making of particular spaces. This is an on-going development that will perhaps in time render Jubileumsparken’s understanding of community as shared work – discussed here as Spaces of collective care – more typical than unique. As a particular practice becomes accepted it will in time be challenged by new minor practices: this constant de-stabilization

169 / It should be remembered here that the names used by Deleuze and Guattari to exemplify a minor literature (1986) – Kafka and Beckett – were far from insignificant writers.

of mainstreamed or major practices is the promise of the minor. For instance, in a space such as Jubileumsparken, where emphasis is placed on the production of meaningful relationships, the notion of being-in-common is minor in its advocacy of community as inoperative. The notion of being-in-common becomes a disruption of the way in which action is mobilized at Jubileumsparken.

COLLECTIVE ENUNCIATION: EXPANDING THE ACTORS THAT MATTER

Deleuze and Guattari (1986) remind us that the political potential of the minor is not pronounced in a single political speech, but through a collective enunciation of personal, yet political concerns. Although Deleuze and Guattari rarely talk of community per se, I understand *collective enunciation*, their third characteristic of minor literatures (1986, p.13), as a way toward thinking community without unity.

As the universal user is no longer a valid guiding figure when designing public spaces, urban design practices aiming to create inclusive space are often based on the idea that spaces should be made for groups that tend to be excluded from typical public spaces¹⁷⁰.

170 / This strategy is discussed in Chapter Five in relation to Jubileumsparken and Rosens röda matta in Malmö (Rosengård). Since Rosens röda matta opened in 2013, similar spaces designed for young women dancing have been created in several Swedish cities, for instance Jönköping (Råslätt.), Södertälje, Stockholm (Vårby Gård), and Gothenburg (Slottsskogsvallens).

Although built on good intentions, my cases point to the risk that attempts such as these, that start with pre-defined groups, overlook less recognized or visible groups. There is also a chance that such projects find out what they already know – and thereby risk unintentionally re-establishing major or dominant worldviews. Therefore, drawing on my cases, I argue that the design of public space must not lean too heavily on predefined or general ideas of marginalised groups, but instead stay attentive to the social and spatial hierarchies and their overlaps and interstices on the specific site. Moreover, I suggest that the number of actors that are made to count in processes of urban design must be expanded in order to see social formations as they appear on the ground.

Superkilen and Jubileumsparken are both, in different ways, patchworks of different activities, spaces and objects. Superkilen's ambiguous relation to the fragmentary has already been discussed in this thesis: it elevates fragmentation as a design principle, yet all objects are systematized and indexed in a way that gives the visitor a full overview of the site. This is why the condition of fragmentation

is turned into an exhibition that appears to be an entity¹⁷¹. Turning to Jubileumsparken, the project has assembled its patchwork over time, allowing for structures and functions to be added from year to year. In alignment with the project's aim to expand the number of people who feel included in the making of the space, the city administration has commissioned a number of consultancy groups with different takes on public space to work for a period of time, resulting in a space that is rather diverse in terms of aesthetics and design approaches. Although the shift away from singular modes of representation seen in both spaces can be seen as an attempt to

171 / Drawing on Nancy (1997, 2007), such a position is always a risk, as it may mistakenly lead us to see a site as already complete and whole – a place that makes sense as one. To understand this criticism, it must be acknowledged that the world has not always been perceived as fragmentary. When it was generally believed that an omniscient God watched over the world, the world was naturally perceived as one through his gaze. Later, when God was exchanged for rational man, the world continued to be perceived as an external object, a totality that could be mapped and represented (Meurs et al. 2009). For Nancy, this ended with globalization, once there is nothing left to 'explore' in the world it can no longer be perceived through representation. Drawing on Nancy (1997, 2007), the indexing of Superkilen can be seen as an attempt to reintroduce an exterior gaze, with the risk of once again losing sight of the world as lived and continuously created.

move towards more collective enunciations¹⁷², there is a tendency to focus solemnly on human diversity.

Space is often seen as a relatively stable entity in urban design, a container that remains relatively unchanged over time. For instance, when society is described as fragmented, what is often being referred to is the social fabric of different subject groups. In other words, fragmentation is often understood as something produced by the different subject groups independently of material frameworks. I have attempted to challenge that assumption by showing how Superkilen and Jubileumsparken are shaped by a number of entities, both human and non-human, that one would not always think of as influential in urban design process. Kindergarteners, skaters, political graffiti, soil from Palestine, artists, tourists, play structures and a public sauna, just to mention a few, have all actively contributed to the making of the two spaces and their particular atmospheres and communities. The richness in uses at the two spaces is produced because of the different subjects encountered; people with different backgrounds and preferences produce different attachments to the space, and the materialities of the spaces speak differently to different people. The colourful flooring of Superkilen for instance affords different uses to different people. While some

172 / One example of such an attempt is the map proposed by raumlabor for the development of Jubileumsparken. raumlabor presented the map as a tool to locate the diverse desires of different individuals, groups and institutions in relation to the new park. The map should be continuously updated “in order to include the growing number of voices and show how the imagination of the future changes in such an open planning process” (raumlabor.net, accessed 30 November 2015).

use the smooth rubbery surface to skate on, others use it for yoga, and still others use the vibrantly-coloured ground as a backdrop for fashion photo shoots. The numbers of temporal modalities that emerge are produced precisely because of this dual relationship between active subjects and active materialities. I suggest that design practices aiming at space made through collective enunciations will be helped by acknowledging this “two-way relation between people and their environment, where both the social and the material aspect are equally constitutive” (Lehtovuori 2012, p. 82)¹⁷³.

To what extent is this mutual relation between people and matter – hence the rich plethora of attachments between people and things and the ways in which they co-produce spaces and particular atmospheres – taken into account in the making of Superkilen and Jubileumsparken? While great effort has gone into making spaces for particular groups and/or interests, less attention has been paid to the richness of materiality itself. Consequently, the richness of materialities at Superkilen and Jubileumsparken has been derived to a high degree from different subject groups. The making of a roller derby arena and a space for a particular kind of sailing are two examples of spaces created from the specific demands of particular groups at Jubileumsparken. The process behind a number

173 / Puig de la Bellacasa (2017, p.145) uses the example of gardening to discuss the inclusion of non-humans in makings of space. A garden collective such as Jubileumsodlarna not only includes human subjects, but also the plants that are grown and resources such as water and air. Drawing on Puig de la Bellacasa (2017), this is a setting in which also individual actions such as making compost or connecting emotionally with what is growing can be affirmed as collective.

of the objects at Superkilen (e.g. the loudspeakers and the dance pavilion) is another example of this way of working – making spaces and objects to fit the diversity of human subjects. Although inclusive to a number of groups, this way of working becomes problematic when thinking of human subjects that are not yet present at the space. How can spaces be made for those who cannot speak up as subjects, since they are not even there yet?

An interesting example of the interplay between people and matter can be found in the previously mentioned investigation at Jubileumsparken conducted by the art- and architecture collective MYCKET. Before any discussions on the future public bath could start, the architects needed to ensure that there was space for a number of strollers and a possibility to heat up food for babies. Later in the process, they needed to buy burkinis in order to proceed with the collaborative exploration of what bathing culture could be at that particular site. They also investigated how people used differently shaped spaces, starting with the space and not with the people. Their investigations point to the impossibility of dividing issues into material and political concerns: they are clearly both. The material is always political, and vice versa. Is using a swing at Superkilen because it is from Iraq a personal act of affect, or part of a broader set of questions relating to migration and displacement? Is the struggle of an adult women learning to swim in Jubileumsparken an individual concern, or an issue of segregation in Gothenburg? The investigation points to the impossibility of dividing issues into categories such as personal and public, or near and far – clearly, scale is not the structuring parameter here.

Making public spaces through collective enunciation is not easy. The study of Superkilen and Jubileumsparken shows that even in processes aiming at experimentation, openness and public participation, action is often guided by a desire for closure and stability. In both spaces, I have come across tensions between minor practices interested in experimentation, and persistent attempts at closure, stability and predictability. An example mentioned earlier is the decision to insert a ‘sense maker’ in each workshop group at Jubileumsparken. Another example is in the selection of objects at Superkilen, and the fact that a number of objects that had already been selected were printed in the flyer asking people to propose objects for the park¹⁷⁴. Here, the objects had been determined before the participatory process through which they should be chosen – this, if anything, must be regarded as an excessively fast closure.

Here, it must be recalled that Superkilen and Jubileumsparken are projects set in the institutional frame of governmental planning, hence answering to economic and political expectations, as well as an extensive set of regulations. Consequently, they need to be reasonably predictable and in control of the design schemes they implement, which might seem contradictory to objectives of co-creation and collective ownership. I suggest that the ambiguous relationship to collective enunciation, as seen in both spaces, should be located in the tension between these two standpoints: on the one hand, the aspiration to stay open to changes triggered

174 / As described in Chapter Four, the local representative Stine pointed this out to me (Interview 8 May 2015).

by unforeseen and diverse uses or aspirations, and on the other hand, the expectation that they will behave as stable and reliable city parks. In this delicate balancing act, the interference of minor practices – its rejection of stagnated realities and its suggestive thinking – plays a role in keeping processes open and unstable. Although not easily implemented in practices of urban design, the notion of a minor urbanism calls for professional awareness of the persistent attempts for closure and stability by pointing to other possibilities.



Figure 69: Benches, people and tree at the black part of Superkilen.



Figure 70:
“Otro Mundo Es
Posible”, writings,
signs and fences at
Jubileumsparken.

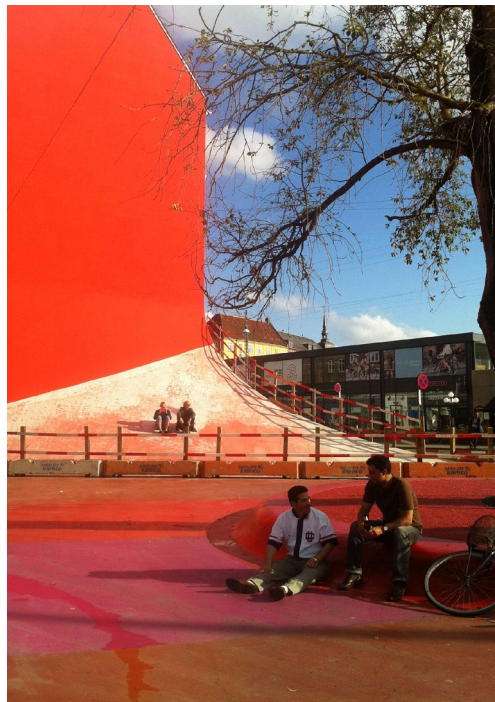


Figure 71: Late afternoon
at the Red Square at
Superkilen - colours and
conversation.

TOWARDS A MINOR URBANISM: THINKING COMMUNITY WITHOUT UNITY IN RECENT MAKINGS OF PUBLIC SPACE

THE STATED AIM OF THIS THESIS is to contribute to the professional planning and urban design discourse on how inclusive public spaces – spaces for community open to diversity – can be thought and built. With respect to the shifting realities of urban planning, this thesis does not seek definitive answers on how to make inclusive space. New situations will emerge, and with them new opportunities for community. Instead, it offers a number of analytical concepts that will enable a developed and more nuanced discussion of the ways in which community open to diversity may emerge, and how it may be supported in public spaces.

My work has been guided by an interest in public space as sites where different modes of being together in the city are played out, and where we might catch sight of emerging conceptualizations of community. With regard to my two main cases, I have attempted to investigate how urban design supports community formations that are not based on similarity, but encompass difference. Venturing away from similarity and unity as the main characteristics of community is a journey into less recognized understandings of community. Looking back, I see how my understanding of community has been challenged and expanded through my readings, but also to a great extent, by situated and embodied experiences of how community can feel and what it can do. In terms of the two spaces I investigated – Superkilen and Jubileumsparken – community has emerged as many things during the years of this study: suggestive atmospheres (e.g. the sauna session at Jubileumsparken); long-term commitments (e.g. the urban garden at Jubileumsparken); acts of consolidation (e.g. Jubileumsodlarna on Facebook); acts of generosity (e.g. the invitations to share food with strangers at both

spaces), and disruptive moments (e.g. the picnic on Palestinian soil at Superkilen) – just to mention a few of the situations that have already been discussed in this thesis. The notion of community has also been explored through a broad field of readings, including the pragmatist discourse on communities established through shared concerns, and the poststructuralist idea of community as inoperative. By placing the empirical findings from my two cases in dialogue with writings on community, two different and contrasting understandings of what community can be in public space have been articulated. I have called them *Spaces of Collective Care*, with reference to Noortje Marres and Maria Puig de la Bellacasa, and *Spaces of Being-in-Common*, with reference to Jean-Luc Nancy.

The notion of Spaces of collective care suggests that community is an emergent collective potential, realized through processes of practical work, care and shared concerns. The potential connections that emerge as people come together around shared projects or concern are supported and curated at Jubileumsparken. The emotional attachment to the park is also endorsed by the park hosts who populate the park, and care for it in the double sense that was discussed in Chapter Six. The notion of Spaces of being-in-common takes an almost opposite stance, suggesting that community does not entail any shared interests, work or concerns – anyone who emerges with a place is already an integrated part of the community of that place. Political science scholar Jonna Pettersson (2015) writes: “Place unfolds prior to representation; by gathering place, a being is already part of the staging of the site of community” (p 189).

At the heart of the matter is whether we understand community as something to collectively strive for, or as a condition that is already

there – a prerequisite for human life that we cannot, and should not, try to reach via any shared projects. Drawing on Nancy, a certain kind of togetherness is created when we give up on unity and acknowledge that the “being of fundamental difference” is the primary condition that all beings share (1991, pp. 27–28).

Although they differ on an ontological level, I argue in this thesis that both notions – Spaces of collective care and Spaces of being-in-common – point to possibilities to think community without unity. Spaces of collective care advocates a non-essentialist take on community by allowing for many temporary, overlapping community formations at the same site – allowing individuals to move in between them and be part of several at the same time. The notion of Spaces of being-in-common makes it possible to think community without unity by seeing community as a condition already in existence at every site – a condition that is transversal in its capacity to trigger connections between people, objects and distant places, yet situated in its particular setting. I have argued that the condition of being-in-common cannot exist in its pure form if understood as a condition where one stays open to everyone and everything different to oneself. Actual physical spaces will always render some relations more visible, present and significant than others. The state of being-in-common is thus understood as a particular condition created in relation to particular spaces. The same idea applies for Spaces of collective care; they are also, I suggest, specific and unique socio-material compositions mediated at each particular site.

Superkilen and Jubileumsparken are also discussed in this thesis as examples of makings of public space where particular groups and interests have been made influential. Superkilen is designed around a set of chosen personal memories and narrations, while Jubileumsparken advocates the right for specific needs and desires to be expressed and given space to develop. This ties into a discussion on the dilemma of wanting to make spaces open to everyone on the one hand, and aspirations to make spaces in response to particular groups or interests on the other. Two notions – *Spaces for many groups/series* and *Spaces for few groups/series* – are used to trace how this tension relates to actual spaces. Drawing on the empirical work, it is suggested that general and particular interests are not in opposition, but may instead overlap in the use of space as seen in Superkilen and Jubileumsparken. Both spaces draw attention to the possibility to design atmospheres, spaces and situations where the personal and intimate may be experienced alongside the deeply collective.

Aiming to enable more developed and nuanced discussions on the making of inclusive public space, the two notions of community (Spaces of collective care and Spaces of being-in-common) are linked to the discussion on public spaces designed for general or specific interests (Spaces for many groups/series and Spaces for few groups/series) in an analytical figure, discussed in Chapter Six. Four particular situations are positioned in the analytical figure: the shared barbeque areas at Superkilen and Jubileumsparken; the confrontational Red Square at Superkilen; the gendered sauna session at Jubileumsparken, and the member-oriented urban garden of Jubileumsodlarna at Jubileumsparken. They have been

chosen to display the wide range of possibilities to support and create communities in public space through design.

The analytical figure draws attention to the difficulty of foregrounding one approach to community as the most beneficial to the objective of making inclusive public spaces. Each approach to community, discussed in this thesis, has its pros and cons when used to guide the design of public spaces. The qualities of the Spaces of collective care will open certain possibilities for meaningful attachments, as observed primarily in Jubileumsparken, but can also give rise to formations that are too closed and exclusive, or even oppressive. The notion of Spaces of being-in-common draws on an understanding of community as inoperative, which makes it difficult to fully implement it as an urban-design strategy – although Superkilen is an interesting attempt at this. The impossibility of institutionalizing this understanding of community is also its greatest potential: if community is imagined as open and heterogeneous, it cannot turn oppressive by demanding unity. Considering the complexity of the question and the qualities gained from each conceptualization of community, it is suggested in this thesis that inclusive public space cannot be built on one sole understanding of community. In order to stay close to the complex landscape of connection and disconnection –belonging and not belonging in public space – the tension between different understandings of community must be ensured and re-enacted. This is a suggestion that calls for a certain degree of openness and experimentation in future making of public space.

Critical urban scholars have argued in recent decades, that planning is increasingly being used as an instrument for an on-going

neo-liberalisation of society (see for instance Allmendinger 2011, Smith 2002, Brenner, Marcuse & Mayer 2012). In response to that suggestion, attention has been drawn to the need for urban planning to become ethically accountable (Metzger 2011) and to recognize its own ability to generate “disruptive politics” in the city (Nicholls and Uitermark 2016, p. 513). In Sweden, it has been suggested that the planning profession has lost confidence in its own ability to contribute to the anticipated societal developments – a situation that risks leaving the urban planner silenced (Grange 2017)¹⁷⁵. However, with regard to my cases, the lack of confidence among urban planners and designers seems to relate more to conventional ways of working, and less to professional roles as such. Thus, I venture to suggest that the lack of confidence in conventional ways of working – hence the destabilization of planning professions – also has a certain potential, as it opens the door to more explorative ways of working with urban planning and design. Such explorations need not overthrow major planning practices, but may instead, as seen in my cases, reform them from within.

What professional practices of planning, and what kind of urban design, have the potential to support the emergence of communities

¹⁷⁵ / Grange (2017) points at a number of reasons for this, for example: a lack of professional organisation (hence an absence of ethical guidelines); a period of self-criticism amongst planners; and a national rhetoric demanding “transparency and democratic legitimacy, on one hand, and increasing demands for informality and efficiency, on the other” (Grange 2017, p. 284). Mäntysalo et al. (2011) point to similar situations in other Nordic countries.

that are not defined by homogeneity, but able to encompass diversity? In Chapters Four and Five, I identified six particular design strategies at play at Superkilen and Jubileumsparken: *Objects as Openers*, *Archival Space*, *Aesthetic Disruption*, *Suggestive Prototyping*, *Exclude to Include* and *Spaces of Commitment*. Together, they display a commitment to experimental forms of urbanism, in which urban design is used as a tool for creating particular atmospheres of connection and confrontation. They engage with pressing concerns such as segregation and social fragmentation using a playful and tentative approach to the making of public space. Proceeding from Deleuze and Guattari's work on a minor literature (1986), I addressed these practices as part of a *minor urbanism*. Although they are diverse in their practical applications, I have chosen to address them as a collective attempt, with a shared name, with the hope of breeding what Stengers (2005a) has referred to as an 'experimental togetherness' among practitioners interested in transformative practices of urban design. The articulation of a minor urbanism is also an attempt to counter the tendency of separating urban design into practices of bleak bureaucratic policy-making and socially-engaged practices interested in public participation¹⁷⁶. An outcome of this thesis, embedded in the concluding discussion in Chapter Seven and related to the concept of a minor urbanism, is thus a conceptualization of formal urban planning as a multifaceted

176 / The impossibility of making any clear-cut divisions – between dispassionate bureaucratic 'paperwork' and socially engaged practises – becomes apparent in a figure such as the 'guerrilla civil servant', discussed in Chapter Seven – a bureaucrat deeply engaged in social dimensions of city administration.

configuration established through co-dependent minor and major practices forming alliances across institutional borders. In an earlier version of this text, the mainstream-planning practice, i.e. the institution in which power is presumed to reside, was described as 'the big machinery of municipal planning'. During the journey of writing this thesis, I have come to the conclusion that municipal planning must be understood in a different way. Speaking of urban planning as a monolithic body would thus fail to recognize its nuances and multiplicities. It would also disregard the interdependencies of the major and the minor, and the fact that the minor emerges in tension with the forces and constraints of the major. Together, the processes of Superkilen and Jubileumsparken show that an institution is a complex configuration where allies are made across municipality, civic sector, artistic and activist configurations.

The link between communities without unity and a minor urbanism as a mode of effectuating change is situated in the particular spaces and situations that I have studied. My cases show that explorative practices, discussed here as part of a minor urbanism, have played a role in supporting community formations that stay open to

difference. But the argument can be turned around: discussions on urban diversity as problematic have also opened the door for minor practises of urban design¹⁷⁷. The notion of minor urbanism should be regarded as an outcome of this thesis and as an independent concept to be used and developed further in other contexts. The same can be said about the analytical figure and the concepts offered in relation to community: they may also be put in action in relation to other practices engaged in the production of urban spaces than those that can be labelled minor. Questions of inclusive public space could for instance be investigated through grassroots or activist practices. Architecture's ability to think communities without unity could also be addressed through a study of legal regulations with a bearing on the making and use of public spaces. This focus would not necessarily render questions of a minor urbanism dispensable however – a minor urbanism might of course affect major practices of urban design, including its legal framework.

177 / The framing of Nørrebro as an area different from the rest of Copenhagen – a 'ghetto' and a problematic exception in the city – is an example of a situation where the discussion seems to have produced distrust in established practices' ability to solve 'the problem'. This, I suggest, may be part of the explanation of why an untried design proposal – considered too radical by the artists themselves (interview 12 May 2015) was accepted for Copenhagen's new city park. The conception of Nørrebro as different from other areas in Copenhagen was repeated several times in the speeches at the opening of Superkilen in 2012, as was the objective to make a space different to all other public spaces in the city.



Figure 72: Early evening at Jubileumsparken. A park host is tidying the pool area, preparing for a new day in the park. The play sculpture, the public sauna and the accessible sailing boats can be seen in the background.

EPILOGUE

IN MARCH 2019, DURING THE FINAL days of writing this thesis, Jubileumsparken received another award – Sienapriset, the most significant award for Swedish landscape architecture. The drift of a professional praxis from minor to major cannot be tied to one particular event, but if we were to try nevertheless to pinpoint the movement from minor to major as one moment in time, this is probably a good moment to pick. Jubileumsparken was chosen as the winner of the award with the following motivation from the jury:

When a municipality builds a park, civic participation and the local conditions of that particular site are a natural starting point. The project shows the importance of allowing more voices to be heard as the city grows, and of supporting the emergence of local neighborhoods. When the industrial harbour becomes a park, landscape architecture becomes a motor for change that contributes to social inclusion and the emergence of local economies. The winner is an inspiring model for citizen-driven urban development, and explores the concept of sustainability in an innovative way.
(<https://arkitekt.se/vinnare-sienapriset-2018>, my translation)

It is worth noting that when Jubileumsparken is appointed a model for urban development, it is the the collectively enunciated space that is foregrounded, and this, I suggest, is a somewhat hopeful attempted alternation of the major ways of making public spaces. If we allow ourselves, here at the end of this book, to imagine a future in which the call for citizen-driven urban development has become truly major, how then will community in public space be articulated by voices that are many, rather than few?

SWEDISH SUMMARY

I DEN DIVERSIFIERADE STADEN, hur kan vi planera och bygga platser för gemenskap som inte är beroende av social och kulturell likhet?

I en tid då offentliga samtal förs kring segregation och utanförskapsområden, aktualiseras frågor kring den fysiska miljöns betydelse för människors lika livsvillkor. I avsaknad av mer genomgripande lösningar kring boendesegregation har de offentliga rummen hamnat i fokus för diskussioner kring planering för mer socialt hållbara samhällen. Genom studier av två nya stadsparker/torg, Superkilen i Köpenhamn och Jubileumsparken i Göteborg – båda med en uttalad målsättning att arbeta med mångfald – utvecklas begrepp som belyser förhållandet mellan platser, gestaltning och de gemenskaper som kan uppstå på dessa platser. Genom att begreppslicgöra dessa samband kan kvalitativa frågor kring social- och rumslig inkludering få mer tyngd – också i planeringens senare skeden.

Avhandlingen kopplar till frågor kring sociala dimensioner i praktisk stadsbyggnad och utgår från nödvändigheten att vidga begreppet gemenskap (*community*) till att också innefatta olikheter. Inom planeringen finns idag en tanke att de offentliga rum vi skapar ska spegla stadens mångfald vad gäller livsstil, social och kulturell bakgrund.

Samtidigt finns en längtan efter platser som skapar starka gemenskaper, där meningsfulla och varaktiga relationer kan byggas – till andra människor, men också till platsen i sig. Med stöd av begrepp utvecklade av vetenskapsteoretikern Noortje Marres samt filosofen Jean-Luc Nancy upprättas en dialog mellan två kontrasterande idéer kring vad gemenskap är och kan vara på offentliga platser. Det första begreppet, 'platser för gemensamt engagemang' (*Spaces of Collective Care*) utgår från tanken på gemenskap som något som uppstår kring gemensamma projekt eller kollektivt arbete, t.ex. i omsorgen om en stadsträdgård. Det andra begreppet 'platser för gemensam existens' (*Spaces of Being-in-Common*) ser gemenskap som ett allmänmänskligt tillstånd som alltid redan finns på en plats. Inga gemensamma ansträngningar krävs, och heller inga särskilda intressen eller specifika identiteter. Gemenskap, sedd på det här sättet, handlar inte om vad vi har gemensamt, utan om det faktum att vi är gemensamma på en plats. Avhandlingen behandlar också den intressekonflikt som ibland uppstår mellan viljan att skapa offentliga rum, öppna för alla, och planeringens strävan efter att ge plats åt särskilda grupper eller intressen som upplevs som undanträngda i det offentliga rummet.

I spänningsfältet mellan dessa perspektiv diskuteras ett antal specifika platser och situationer från Superkilen och Jubileumsparken, vilka erbjuder olika typer av gemenskaper, och har etablerats genom särskilda designstrategier, som identifierats i avhandlingen. Tillsammans pekar dessa situationer på betydelsen av att förstå hur platser utformning – och processen kring deras

tillblivelse – stödjer vissa typer av gemenskaper, och hur det ibland sker på bekostnad av andra grupper och intressen.

Frågor kring hur stadens gemensamma rum ska byggas kan aldrig hitta sin slutgiltiga lösning, nya situationer kommer att fordra nya lösningar. Det är därför viktigt för planeringen att skapa och bibehålla en lyhördhet för förändring. Utifrån Deleuze och Guattaris filosofiska beskrivning av en så kallad 'mindre litteratur' (*a minor literature*) diskuteras i avhandlingen möjligheten att förändra planeringens institutioner och professioner genom ett kritiskt inifrånperspektiv som en 'mindre urbanism' (*a minor urbanism*). Kännetecknande för en mindre urbanism är dess experimentella och lekfulla sätt att ta sig an stora samhällsfrågor genom det personliga och privata. De platser som studerats visar på situationer där den typen av experimentella arbetssätt bidragit till att skapa inkluderande offentliga rum och platser.

Avhandlingen etablerar en begreppsapparat i syfte att bidra till en utvecklad och mer nyanserad diskussion kring arkitekturens möjlighet att skapa och stödja inkluderande platser. I förlängningen kan sådan kunskap användas till att strukturera arbetet med social hållbarhet i diversifierade stadsmiljöer. I relation till visioner och målsättningar för hållbar samhällsplanering kan detta på sikt leda till en bättre utväxling på de satsningar som görs på stadens allmänna rum och platser.

ABSTRACT

HOW CAN WE PLAN AND DESIGN FOR community in diverse urban situations?

In response to segregation and social fragmentation, public space is increasingly being conceived of as a vehicle for fostering openness towards differences, both in planning practice and theory. Drawing on two recent public space projects – Superkilen in Copenhagen, Denmark, and Jubileumsparken in Gothenburg, Sweden – this thesis explores what this hopeful idea may mean in terms of the actual making of public space. By enabling a dialogue between theoretical conceptualizations of community and empirical findings in this thesis, two contrasting approaches to community in public space emerge: *Spaces of Collective Care* and *Spaces of Being-in-Common*. The notion of *Spaces of Collective Care* suggests that community is an emergent collective potential that may be realized through shared processes of care, while the notion of *Spaces of Being-in-Common* captures almost the opposite position: that community is a condition that is *already there*, and anyone who emerges with a place is an integrated part of the community of that place. Although the two notions are ontologically different, possibilities to design public spaces for communities that are open to difference arise in the tension between them.

The friction between the objective of planning to make public spaces for everyone and the aspirations to serve particular groups

or interests is also addressed as part of this discussion. Drawing on particular situations at Superkilen and Jubileumsparken in which the personal and intimate may be experienced along with the deeply collective, it is suggested that general and particular interests need not be mutually exclusive in the making of public space.

Answers to questions of how to think about community that is open to difference in public space cannot be definitive. New situations will emerge, and with them, new opportunities for community. Departing from Deleuze and Guattari's work on a minor literature (1986), and observing how transformative critique may originate from within the planning institutions, the notion of a minor urbanism is developed. My cases draw attention to the ways in which practises of a *minor urbanism*, characterized by an experimental approach to urban design, may influence how community is theorized – and built – in relation to urban diversity and public space.

Leaving behind similarity and unity as the main characteristics of community is to venture into less recognized understandings of community. To render such understandings tangible, the study at hand discusses a range of situations in which community open to diversity may be experienced in public space. With the overall aim to contribute to a more developed understanding of inclusive space, it offers a number of analytical concepts that will enable an evolved and nuanced discussion of how architecture and urban design may support communities open to diversity in urban public spaces.

KEY WORDS:

Public Space, Spaces of Being-in-Common, Spaces of Collective Care, Minor Urbanism, Community without Unity.

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INTERVIEWS, CONVERSATIONS AND GUIDED TOURS

SUPERKILEN

SPONTANEOUS CONVERSATIONS

- Sarah, a young girl of Iraqi background, 8 May 2015, Copenhagen
- Ernesto, an elderly man originally from Cuba, 8 May 2015, Copenhagen
- Lukas, German visitor, 8 May 2015, Copenhagen
- Mathilde, a 24-year-old student who lives near Superkilen, 8 May 2015, Copenhagen
- Amina, mother with two children, Superkilen, 12 May 2015, Copenhagen
- A Brazilian PhD-student, 12 May 2015, Copenhagen
- Two girls from the local school, 12 May 2015, Copenhagen
- A woman with a small child, living in another part of Copenhagen, 12 May, Copenhagen
- Three girls who just graduated from the local school, 12 May, Copenhagen
- Alisa and Larine, fashion designer and photographer, 20 June 2017, Copenhagen
- Dorte, caretaker at a home for the elderly, 20 June 2017, Copenhagen
- A photographer, 20 June 2017, Copenhagen
- A student of fashion design, 20 June 2017, Copenhagen
- Agnar, a teacher at a nearby school, 20 June 2017, Copenhagen
- An elementary school teacher from another town in Denmark, 20 June 2017, Copenhagen
- Karsten and Katrine, maintenance workers, 20 June 2017, Copenhagen
- Marta, a student from Spain, 20 June 2017, Copenhagen
- A man living in Mjølnerparken, 20 June 2017, Copenhagen
- An employee at Nørrebrohallen, 20 June 2017, Copenhagen
- A woman making a pre-festival film, 20 June 2017, Copenhagen
- Karla, woman with a child and a Christiania bike, 20 June 2017, Copenhagen

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

- Stine, a local representative involved in Superkilen, 8 May 2015, Copenhagen
- Artist and founding member of SUPERFLEX, 12 May 2015, Copenhagen
- Simon, a representative for the community of skaters at Superkilen, written interview, 6 June 2018

GUIDED TOURS

- Architect from BIG - Bjarke Ingels Group, 22 June 2012, Copenhagen
- Stine, a local representative involved in Superkilen, 8 May 2015, Copenhagen

JUBILEUMSPARKEN

SPONTANEOUS CONVERSATIONS

- Two students participating in the open call, 19 September 2014, Gothenburg
- Two friends by the waterfront with dogs, 19 September 2014, Gothenburg
- Architect from raumlabor, 19 September 2014, Gothenburg
- Two co-workers at the project office, 19 September 2014, Gothenburg
- Project leader of Jubileumsparken employed by Gothenburg Municipality, 19 September 2014, Gothenburg
- 12 female sauna participants, 18 February 2015
- Emelie, young gardener, 19 May 2017, Gothenburg
- Inger and Susanne, gardeners (mother and daughter), 19 May 2017, Gothenburg
- Father with son, 19 May 2017, Gothenburg
- Essi, a woman and mother living in the area, 19 May 2017, Gothenburg
- Andreas, practitioner of parkour, 19 May 2017, Gothenburg
- Anna (the voluntary 'park host') and Vanja, 19 May 2017
- A summer employee at Passalen, 19 May 2017, Gothenburg
- Three members of a roller derby team, 12 July 2018, Gothenburg

- The director of Passalen, 12 July Gothenburg
- Preschool teacher, 19 September 2018, Gothenburg
- Year-round employee of Passalen, 19 September 2018, Gothenburg
- A man commissioned to carry out a water experiment, 19 September 2018, Gothenburg
- Two landscape architects from Marled and LeBalto, 19 September 2018, Gothenburg
- A group of three children, 7 and 8 years old, 19 September 2018, Gothenburg

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

- Project leaders of Jubileumsparken employed by Gothenburg Municipality and by Älvstaden Utveckling AB, 18 February 2015, Gothenburg
- Project leader of Jubileumsparken employed by Älvstaden Utveckling AB, 20 November 2015, written interview
- Eva, a member of the board for Jubileumsodlarna, 10 Sep 2017, written interview
- Architect and founding member of MYCKET, 15 September 2017, Stockholm

GUIDED TOURS

- Director of Passalen, 12 July 2018, Gothenburg

ROSENS RÖDA MATTA

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW

- Project leader of Rosens Röda Matta, employed by Malmö Municipality, 12 January 2015, Malmö

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HOW CAN WE PLAN AND DESIGN FOR COMMUNITY IN DIVERSE URBAN SITUATIONS?

In response to segregation and social fragmentation, public space is increasingly conceptualized as a means for reducing social fragmentation and fostering openness towards diversity. How are aspirations to create spaces for community open to difference implemented today? Drawing on two recent makings of public space – Superkilen in Copenhagen, Denmark, and Jubileumsparken in Gothenburg, Sweden – this thesis investigates a number of design strategies through which communities open to diversity may arise. The two studied spaces both display a professional commitment to experimental forms of urbanism, changing the established practice of urban design from within the planning institutions – inserting a *minor urbanism*. This thesis offers a number of analytical tools to enable an expanded discussion of how communities open to diversity may be enacted and supported by architecture and urban design in public space.

This book is a doctoral thesis in architecture with a particular interest in architectural and urban theory. It also aims to make a contribution to the broad and increasingly imperative task of creating inclusive public spaces in contemporary cities.

ISBN 978-91-7740-118-6



LUND UNIVERSITY