

Solid Flows

“There is nothing to do in this boring suburb, there is nothing here for us. Nah sorry, I am exaggerating a little bit, we can always do drugs, drink and get into a fight. This is the way it has always been out here, no one cares about us. You should be like a zombie, satisfied with your lot, never asking for anything.”

Ebba Grön, “We are only in it for the drugs no. 1”, 1979

In the context of this essay, the concepts of “solid” and “flow” and the difference between them suggest an almost binary dichotomy and, at the same time, a constant transitory motion where the one transforms into the other. Here, we are here obviously hinting at the well-known Marx quote that “all that is solid melts into air”, that thus no stability is ever so stable that it won’t eventually change into something else, as it does, again following Marx, when the quantitative change turns into a qualitative one: as when iron rusts or when an ideological superstructure no longer keeps up with change in the base. Continuing along this line, it is the very solidity of that which is solid that becomes its downfall. Still, flexibility and “going with the flow” of change cannot completely disconnect from the material world.

Addressing events that took place within the time frame of the late 1960’s to early 1980’s in Sweden, the main concerns of this essay are the particular reasons for this change that both Swedish building policy and the ideology behind it went through during this time. It is easy to think of that which changed, the Swedish Middle Way (the political agenda that placed Sweden somewhere between state socialism and free market capitalism), as the Solid and the factors that brought it down as the Flow. In a similar manner, the unprecedented building boom that created the suburbs of Stockholm – first under the banner of an architecture for the Democratic Man,¹ and later, the more

pragmatic but still ideologically motivated construction of “one million homes during ten years” – can be conceptualized as the Solid (or an instance of it), and the life that went on in them as the Flow.

Framework

Although such notions of solid and flow may be useful for pointing to some of the time’s most relevant factors, they are insufficient for describing the rationale we are aiming for here. First because the construction of the Swedish Middle Way depended on Sweden being an industrial nation where the workers organized in unions that in its turn were close to the Social Democratic Party (until 1990, when you became part of the union you automatically became a member of the Social Democrats). This regulated version of capitalism stands in sharp contrast to “no-rules” variant known as neo-liberalism. In fact, it might only be possible in an era of large industries with close binds to the nation state; “what is good for Volvo is good for Sweden”, as famously stated by Gunnar Sträng, the Minister of Finance, in 1968. Perhaps is this a parenthesis in the history of capitalism which, no doubt, depended on that the Social Democrats abandoned the idea of democracy as a path to socialism. Only then could the Social Democrat led government form an amalgam with capitalism, which otherwise seem to strive after a free flow, or put with the words of Marx and Engels: “The need of a constantly expanding market for its products chases the bourgeoisie over the entire surface of the globe. It must nestle everywhere, settle everywhere, establish connections everywhere.”² Or, as Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari argued when looking at the state of things in 1972: capitalism is not solid at all, it is rather the strongest deterritorializing force known to mankind: “By substituting money for the very notion of a code, it has created an axiomatic of abstract quantities that keeps moving further

and further in the direction of the deterritorialization of the socius.”²³ Thus, we need not only to differentiate between at least two versions of both socialism and capitalism; we also need to acknowledge different kinds of flows. For example, we must consider that abstract power of capitalism and the flow of human bodies, lives and ambitions that inhabit the solid environments constructed by the (seemingly) solid blend of capital and state in post-war Sweden. That is to say, notions of Swedish middle way “solids” and “flows” need to be disconnected from particular political, ideological agendas and seen as what Michel Foucault called mechanisms, apparatus, *dispositifs*: that which is used to exercise and to maintain power. This is to say that the *dispositif* does not belong to any particular agenda, it can be used in the service of anything.

In this text we will discuss how the Swedish welfare state, with its strong emphasis on progressive and often experimental planning for a more democratic and classless society (perhaps more so in the beginning, i.e. before the Second World War), came to be accused of creating environments that turned citizens into mindless, passive drones incapable of controlling their own destinies, helpless victims under a society of discipline. This narrative, found in many films, articles and books at the time, described how the construction of a modern world under social democracy was translated into dystopian horror: an image that still forms a popular backdrop to discussions on planning and architecture in Sweden. In such descriptions, there is hardly any “flow” in the lived lives of the inhabitants, only predestinated actions conducted in a preconceived pattern. But we will also see how initiatives from local actors to establish or change existing institutions were consequently discouraged, dismantled and counteracted. This nurtured a self-image found in many cultural expressions from the suburbs of being outside of and/or forgotten by society. As stated in the punk lyrics above: there is nothing here for us. These two narratives coincided in time and have much in common,

but they are also quite different, not least since the latter derives from local sources that opted for a change *through* a “flow” of life.

We suggest that the shift from a regulated, state-controlled building sector to one that is deregulated and market-controlled has to be understood from two very different positions. On the one hand we have the rightwing think tanks and attacks on the welfare state such as promoted in Friedrich Hayek’s *The Road to Serfdom* (1944) or Robert Nozick’s *Anarchy State and Utopia* (1974), leading to neo-liberalism’s battle cry: “There Is No Alternative”, which saw its strongest advocate in Margret Thatcher. On the other hand, we see the advent of new, radical movements operating outside the traditional political movements. Interestingly, these two movements were simultaneously attacking the stability and solidity of the welfare state. On May 1, 1979, three days before Thatcher was appointed Prime Minister of the UK, one-hundred punks joined the Syndicalist march in central Stockholm, but broke off and gathered at Sergels Torg under the banner “*Ner med hela skiten*” (“Down with Everything”). As a call for deregulation it rivals that of Thatcher’s.

Figure 1. Ebba Grön, review in the fanzine *Who’s a Punk*, 1979. Photograph by the authors.

Solids

In telling the story how the Swedish welfare society materialized in the construction of new suburbs, and how these consequently came to be perceived, two totally opposed perspectives come into view. In Stockholm, these distinct neighborhoods units, primarily built on farmland along the new metro lines stretching out towards the south and west of the city, constituted of modern homes grouped around a center with public and commercial services. Planners, architects and politicians

describe the assets of these suburbs in terms of the high technical standard of the homes, the quality of the outdoor environments for children and families, the closeness to both nature and services. Influenced by the British planning tradition, Lewis Mumford, and the American community center movement, the goal is the creation of the Democratic Man. In the programmatic text *Inför framtidens demokrati (Towards a Future Democracy)*, published in 1944, it is stated clearly: "The problem of democracy is first and foremost creating democratic citizens. Without them the democratic society has no carriers. Are the members of the current democracies democratic citizens? If not, how can they be changed?"³ The book developed from a series of conversations between a small group of architects, academics and politicians between 1939-43. Already key figures in planning and architecture at the time, they would all in different capacities be instrumental for how Swedish cities were planned and constructed under social democracy after the Second World War. ⁵ It circles around how architecture and planning can be organized to produce the democratic citizen. According to the authors, and echoing Le Corbusier's "Architecture or Revolution", the unregulated growth of the cities in the wake of industrialization uprooted people, the rise of mass media distorts their minds, and without a clear identity people are easily attracted to totalitarian ideologies. Against the mass humans of fascism and towards the new Democratic Man stands modern architecture and planning. By reorganizing the home, the workplace and education into new so called group societies it would be possible to give people a new identity and become engaged and democratic citizens. In the final chapter, Jöran Curman and Helge Zimdahl summarize the critique of the existing city: "The current endless sameness of our communities has its starting point in the endless addition of community residents into a soulless mass. Efficient growth requires cell division and not simply a swelling of the original core"⁶, and they outline how to plan and build the new

group society. Each unit contains a variety of housing types, one family houses, row houses, and apartment blocks organized around a center with community facilities such as parks, playgrounds, assembly halls, pre-schools, health care, central kitchens, laundry, shops, etc. Each unit is planned for one thousand citizens, organized in clusters around public transport and a commercial center. Each neighborhood is run as a co-op, which guarantees that each group society over time and according to the different interest of its residents would develop into unique neighborhoods with clearly distinct identities. The co-operative movement to a large extent influenced the Swedish so-called Swedish Middle Way.⁷

The most radical element in this proposal – the co-operative management of local services by the residents of the community itself – was never realized, however. Instead the management of community services was centralized and managed by city hall. This shift would later return ghost-like to become a core critique against modernist planning. Even though the co-operative ideas of participation, direct democracy and a more active ownership by the residents themselves never came to be, most of the planning principles for how to organize these new community center neighborhoods were adopted and dictated how Stockholm grew after the Second World War. This is clearly visible from the first such neighborhoods such as Gubbängen (1948) and Årsta (1953) via Vällingby (1955) to most of the Million Homes Program neighborhoods such as Husby (1977).

The other perspective, offered in articles and publications by intellectuals, critics and journalists from the end of the 1960's, focus on lifeless, inhuman, numbing environments that affects the people trying to survive the architecture. A recurring theme in this criticism describes how the properties of the environment somehow rub off on the people living there. The right-wing tabloid *Expressen* published vast numbers of articles on how the built environment of the sixties and seventies affected its

inhabitants. In emotionally cold type of human with impaired social abilities. Children become malformed and “many have become like the concrete that surrounds them – hard and suspicious.”⁸

In 1978, the journalists Margareta Schwartz and Suzanne Sjöqvist spent a couple of months in the newly built neighborhood of Norsborg to write the book *Kvinnoliv Förrortsliv* (Women Life Suburb Life). Describing how architecture and planning affects the people living there and leads them to follow a predetermined formula, they write:

Norsborg used to be like this before. Low and pleasant, fields and forests. Norsborg today is the exact opposite. Right angles and sharp corners. The Father of the new Norsborg is a computer. It calculated how it should be without leaving anything to chance. It became a broiler, one long technical record. The city of Halmstad, with the same size, took 500 years to build. Norsborg was finished in five, because the computer was efficient and realistic and not at all random, unlike the people that built Halmstad.⁹

What these statements have in common is that they regarded the new neighborhoods as isolated eco- systems disconnected from the rest of the city, with residents stranded in an environment without hope. Typically, the stories are observations by journalists, filmmakers, artists and researchers made from an outside perspective. Combining different fragments of information, juxtapositions of text and image, there is the emergence of a new narrative where the inhabitants merge with the urban environment, architecture and humans becoming one single inseparable object. *Förorten*, the suburb, this new alien entity, is simultaneously a thing and a machine for the production of a new human; instead of producing a new democratic man, it is seen as a system that produces distorted, twisted, violent and antisocial victims. As put by journalist Gits

Olsson: "The only creatures with human features we meet on the evening in April are the mannequins in the shop windows. Petrified as in the tale of Sleeping Beauty they stare at us with their moronic plastic eyes. It feels like war times and the airstrike alarm has just gone off."¹⁰

While conceived of as a ground for democracy, modernist architecture and city planning had thus been under attack from radical artists and intellectuals since the early 1960's.

One of the main reasons was that architecture was conceived of as an imposed rationality, a tool in the hands of the society of discipline. In his last, only recently published, lecture series, Michel Foucault describes how architecture has been used as a disciplinary tool for maintaining the separation of discrete units and facilitating surveillance since at least the 17th century, when city planners returned to the axis organization of Roman military camps. "Discipline normalizes," says Foucault. "Discipline, of course, analyzes and breaks down; it breaks down individuals, places, time, movements, actions, and operations. It breaks them down into components such that they can be seen, on the one hand, and modified on the other."¹¹

It is quite easy to see why Foucault stated that "solid" architecture belongs to the realm of discipline, and to accept the idea of architecture as a disciplinary tool, but the *value* of this discipline was understood differently before and after the construction of the suburbs. What was intended as a tool for facilitating the advent of the Democratic Man turned into, for instance, a housewife trap. Looking back to this time, architect Lennart Holm – who in 1955 wrote the dissertation *Familj och bostad* (Family and dwelling), and who in 1969 became the director of *Statens Planverk* (National Board of Physical Planning and Building) – muses: "It was the nuclear family with the mother in the kitchen whose life would become less strenuous and she would have more time for the

children”.¹² On the other hand, one can also conclude that the particular kind of criticism described in the previous paragraphs also depends on the idea of discipline as it is presented through established channels for criticism: newspaper coverage, journalistic books, motion pictures, and the universities. It is, if one likes the society of discipline criticizing itself from within, or perhaps, different powers that combat each other with the same kind of *dispotifs*. It is a battle of normality. While it isn't surprising to find that so many feature films, articles and reports about and from the suburbs dealt with how life was more or less impossible in this rational machine, they also fall short for what French theorist Michel de Certeau described as “remaining within the field of a discourse... by inverting its content (speaking of catastrophe and no longer of progress).”¹³ That is, much of the critique that derives from the more established channels has a nostalgic touch, longing the days before big scale planning and the amalgam of capitalism and social democracy.

Looking at the key players of the building sector from this period, we find how some of them here gained a power that they would maintain into the present. For instance, much of Skanska's (then called Skånska Cement) current success began while the company was contracted by the Swedish government for building both infrastructure and housing stock during late modernism.¹⁴ Indeed, one can conclude that the building company came out stronger than its political counterpart from those days, the Social Democrats. While for a long period of time the Social Democrats could rule the country on the strength of their own majority in the parliament,¹⁵ the party was defeated in a general election in 1976 for the first time since 1932. This basically meant the end of the Swedish Middle Way and has left the Social Democrats as a party that can hope for only a third of the voters. In the general election of 2014, they got 31% of the vote.¹⁶ Skanska, on the other hand, is today one of the largest building companies in the world

with 48,500 employees.¹⁷

This shift, from the political to the corporation, becomes obvious when looking at ownership. When much of the other tenancy rights turned into public housing during 1965-1985, a period that due to the rapid economic growth has become known as the Record Years, the total balance between rental apartments and tenant ownership remained more or less the same, with a small increase to the former (17% in 1965, 21 in 1985). Looking at the same figures in 2013, one can conclude that tenant ownership had increased to 56%, leaving the number of rental apartments cut down to almost half (from 79% in 1985 to 44% in 2013). In other words, while the ownership of the individual buildings has changed between private and municipal landlords over the years, we can now see that both municipal and private landlords decrease in favor for tenant ownership. Construction is still in the hands of the same companies as during the record years, but ownership is left to the individual citizens, which means that one preliminary builds apartment buildings in areas where one knows they are easily sold.

Flows

In the years before his death, Michel Foucault began to suspect there was something incomplete about his analysis of modernity and modern society in terms of discipline as outlined in, for instance, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, which described modern society as constructed in discrete, easily monitored units such as the factory, the school etc.¹⁸ In the recently published lectures at Collège de France from the late 1970's,¹⁹ he started to balance the mechanisms of discipline with the apparatus of security. In the first of these volumes, *Security, Territory, Population*,

Foucault offers two images of the city: one that is surrounded by city walls with well-guarded gates, the other that depends on flows and is connected to some kind of network. The discrete difference of an outside and an inside allows for a disciplinary society, where everything is easily organized. However, there are also things that are less easy to predict, such as crop failures. Thus to minimize the risk of starvation, there needs to be more ports in the city wall, easing a flux of imported goods.²⁰ Needless to say, these two tendencies will come into conflict, but it doesn't mean that one is a better provider for "freedom" than the other. Foucault is describing the birth of modern society, but one can also argue that the two *dispositifs* match two rather different modes of capitalism: that of large manufacturing industries on the one hand and the one of the free-flow of neo-liberalism on the other. Possibly this can be seen to overlap with two different forms of socialism: that of unions and large-scale party politics on the one hand and the one of the free-flow of the "lived space" on the other. This does not mean that neo-liberalism and the radical movements of the late 60's and 70's are two sides of the same coin. It merely states that they at times battled the same enemy with similar methods.

We find another way of describing the relationship between solid architecture and flowing lives in Henri Lefebvre, who discussed the "abstract" effect capitalism had on our notion of space. Where life previously was governed by two interrelated levels – "*the social relations of reproduction*" (family) and "*the relations of production*" (work) – capitalism, and "more particularly 'modern' neo-capitalism," adds the "*reproduction of social relations of production*".²¹ Thus, continues Lefebvre, space may be said to embrace a multitude of intersections, each with its assigned location. This reasoning eventually leads him to the well-known discussion of space through three different concepts: 1. The perceived space, which under neo- capitalism could be described,

according to Lefebvre, as “the daily life of a tenant in a government- subsidized high-rise housing project” – that is, where daily routines meet urban reality, networks link places for private life, work and leisure. 2. The conceived space, the space of social engineers, urbanists and planners, as well as scientists. 3. Lived space, the space of the inhabitants and users, the “dominated – and hence passively experienced – space which the imagination seeks to change and appropriate. It overlays physical space, making symbolic use of its objects.”²² While the lived space is where the spectacle of consumerism is most visible, it is also here that Lefebvre finds hope for an unregulated force, where the body would also represent a last line of defense, the position from which to create resistance towards the negativity of abstract space, which threatens its totality. Lefebvre therefore opts for an analysis of the spatio-temporal rhythms of the body, what he in the final chapter of *The Production of Space* would call “rhythm analysis”.²³ This line of reasoning would become important for forming the alternative movements in Stockholm.

A variation of this theme, where the life of the inhabitants forms a kind of resistance towards the solid forms of architecture, can be found in Michel de Certeau. He stressed the importance of following another path than the one directed by disciplinary architecture, namely the “...swarming activity of these procedures that, far from being regulated or eliminated by panoptic administration, have reinforced themselves in a proliferating illegitimacy...”.²⁴ Life does not end in modernist architecture, de Certeau seems to suggest, but this is not thanks to architecture, but rather to the resistance towards it. In this way, he also subtly criticizes the idea of an almost paralyzing effect of the panopticon that Michel Foucault became famous for. An idea, as we saw, that even Foucault found too simple.

Many cultural movements and alternative practices during the seventies and eighties

seemed to be answering Michel de Certeau's call for "swarming activity", not as means for opposing the construction of modernist architecture and city planning, but as strategies to survive within, thereby generating change. Stemming as much from the *prog* movement and early environmentalism as from political radical associations like the Situationists, groups started to organize in what would be described as "anti-disciplinary" structures, where combat was fought with guerrilla strategies rather than in terms of fronts.

In 1967 a teenage fair took place in Gothenburg. The event was highly criticized for being too commercial by many radical movements, and when it was time for setting up a similar fair in Stockholm the year after, the response was very negative. As the fair was going to take place in the late fall, several anti-fair movements were set up and widespread protests managed to close the fair prematurely. Encouraged by the success of these actions, activists quickly planned new actions, this time against the commercialization of Christmas. In several parts of the city activists organized themselves under the banner of "Alternative Christmas", participating in celebrations that included the outcasts of society. These events attracted thousands of individuals and received a lot of coverage in the mainstream media.

Right after the holidays organizers continued under the names *Alternativt samhälle* ("Alternative Society"), *Aktion samtal* ("Action Conversation"), *Aktion kvarterslokaler* ("Action Neighborhood Assembly") and Archive Conversation. Out of these movements, *Alternativ stad* ("Alternative City") was formed in a meeting on February 15, 1969.

The core activists in *Alternativ stad*, which became the longest lasting movement from

these times, came from those engaged in the protests as well as students from the KTH School of Architecture.²⁵ As a part of the progressive movement (in Sweden known as “*Proggen*”), many of those most engaged also came from radical artist groups such as *Folkets Ateljé* and *Puss*, and included artists such as Channa Bankier, Carl Johan de Geer, and Marie-Louise de Geer-Bergenstråle. *Alternativ stad* consisted of artists and architects and was widely engaged in opposing the modernization and demolition of the historic Stockholm city center, both through occupying buildings such as Mullvaden, but also by creating an alternative press, such as the *Klara Papper* (a pun in Swedish which both means “clear papers” i.e. here inside resides the truth, and *Klara Papper* as a magazine coming from Klara, one the neighborhoods that suffered most heavily from redevelopment during the 1950’s and 1960’s).

Occupying houses was one of the “guerrilla” strategies employed by activists in Stockholm from the 1970’s and onwards. The targets were usually houses that were marked for demolition or reconstruction in the name of modernization. Here one finds roots in the Situationist movement, in the occupation of Kreuzberg, West-Berlin, as well as Christiania in Copenhagen. Cheap housing was one of the most common battle cries: no luxury renovation or new, unaffordable houses. The modernization of the old city center (and other parts of Stockholm) was thus commonly inscribed in a discourse of anti-segregation. The rhetoric followed traditional radical patterns in which “capitalism” is understood as the enemy that must be kept at bay at all costs. The answer seems to be cheap housing inside the city -- both for the sake of allowing for a more diverse mixture of inhabitants but also for not letting capitalism and commercialism take over. Here, the left is united, but when it comes to strategies, *Alternativ stad* and other such movements lean more to the informal. Their aesthetics utilize the DIY collage, often produced in workshops by the grassroots themselves

suggesting an affinity with other groups working from the outside. *Alternativ stad*, inspired by concepts such as participatory democracy, direct democracy, as well as student organizations such as the American group Students for a Democratic Society and the Dutch counterculture movement Provo,²⁶ worked clearly outside of established politics.

Their actions mostly existed in the “lived space”, echoing Lefebvre's idea of rhythm analysis, with protestors using their own bodies in sit-ins, chaining themselves to trees, obstructing traffic, or demanding meetings with politicians to handover signed petitions. They used opacity as a strategy, which might be one reason to why there was never a real “front man” and why it is difficult to say precisely how many or who the members of the organizations were.

Figure 2. The Summer is Ours, Klara Papper, 1979. Photograph by the authors.

The movement *Alternativ stad* was in contrast to other environmental and green movements in that they favored the city, and especially the metropolis, but their city was dominated by a more humane and democratic city planning process. Through protests, poster campaigns and spectacular actions, they took an active part in questioning plans for new motorways, criticizing the lack of democratic processes and the increasing commercialization of the city. As many movements based in actions and protests, it is difficult to trace what the alternative city really was, but an article “One Possible Stockholm” from *Klara Papper* (#5, 1976) gives a possible answer:

The environment around the houses is everyone's concern and here you find collective allotment gardens, fruit trees and berry bushes. The children have been responsible for program and design of the outdoor spaces. In one of the houses a

retired construction worker has put up a workshop where she fixes things for the entire neighborhood. The children go there to learn wood crafting and they tell her stories in return. In the central laundry there is a coffee bar where people socialize between the laundry programs. In the neighborhood courtyard there is a sewing studio and a wood workshop where residents meet to discuss local problems. The local pub made the evening beer more meaningful. On trampled paths in-between the houses people meet and exchange a few words. The courtyard parties bloom in tandem with the orchard trees. Previously isolated and marginalized people become entangled in the sprightly social life that grows around them. Elderly people have the central role their experience naturally entitles them to.²⁷

Apart from the language, this snapshot of an ideal society is very similar to the vision of the group society as articulated by The Swedish Co-operative Union in 1944. Residents being engaged in everyday activities, sharing knowledge and working together in small, closely knit groups. But where this pro-active and visionary description is typical for the more policy oriented academics behind *Inför framtidens demokrati*, the text from *Klara Papper* is an exception, at odds with the hands-on and re-active methods of disobedience used by *Alternativ stad*. Where the academics in the 1940's tried to outline a new identity for the Democratic Man, the activists in the 1970's tried to embody these ideas through spectacular actions and as a strategy to achieve change through media attention.

Figure 3. Article from *Klara Papper* no 14, 1978. Photograph by the authors.

At the end of the seventies, the Punk movement hit Stockholm. In the suburb Rågsved, south of the city, the cultural association Oasen took over part of the town's civic center (*Folkets hus*) and turned it into one of the first punk scenes in Stockholm. It didn't last long and after a short occupation the punk scene moved across the small square into Rågsvedsgården (the youth center). In an article about Oasen in *Klara papper* one could read: "What is Oasen really? It started as collaboration between music groups from

Rågsved and Högdalen in order to arrange concerts and music festivals together.

Fundamentally it was - and still is - about doing something yourself, as a protest towards the stranglehold of uniformity that one experiences from the school years onwards... To do something together, create together. To be an alternative to elite culture and thinking in categories."²⁸

The early punk movement is indeed an instance of the “swarming activity” Michel de Certeau asked for. But in the lyrics, the milieu that surrounds the movement is painted in rather dark colors. Alienation from society is blended with alienation from the environment. The suburb is “lived” in a kind of “*Trotzdem*”, against all odds, because out there, there is nothing to do, nothing is going on, with the exception of fighting and drugs.

Why was the suburb conceived of like this? What had happened between the rather radical optimism of the 1940's and the 1970s, between the suburbs constructed during the early phase of the Welfare state and those that materialized as part of the Million House Program? There are at least three themes that made the situation of 1979 in Rågsved radically different from how it was envisioned by architects and politicians. Themes regularly pointed out in the statements and lyrics from the punk movement of the time. First, many of the facilities that were planned for were never actually constructed or had been abandoned. (“Det finns inget att göra i den här trista förorten...” ”There is nothing to do in this boring suburb...”) Second, the suburbs' organization in *granngemenskap* followed a very traditional idea of the nuclear family and the housewife,²⁹ which made them into instrument for preserving the status quo, albeit catering for better living conditions for the workers. (“*Staten och kapitalet sitter I*

samma båt.- The State and the Capital are in the same boat”) Third, perhaps as a result of disinvestment in public space and the preservation of status quo, the traditional channels for protest and engagement operated within the same logic as the disciplinary mechanism that was to be opposed. (“*Ned med hela skiten.*” Down with everything)

Figure 4. Interview with Mögel from the fanzine *Who’s a Punk*, 1978. Photograph by the authors.

Against the dominant stories about the outer city, found in the articles and films from the established channels, are a constant stream of local narratives, of struggles to tell other stories, to build institutions and new organizations. Here, there is a strange familiarity with the initial ideas of the “group societies” envisioned in the early forties -- the funding concepts based on forms of collective ownership, of cooperative management and rule that for each neighborhood over time would develop into independent internal structures based on the interests of the residents. Instead, the surplus on rents are used, not for reinvestments or put aside in repair funds, but as an income for municipalities to cover deficits in other areas or invested in prestige projects. So rather than an increased democratization and an increased influence, municipal housing companies, private owners and politicians have historically counteracted local initiatives: from local youths being denied access to empty and underused spaces, local community centers have been sold off to private interests — which have often led to a decline in both public and commercial services — to local groups being ignored and heavily discouraged by the political establishment for opposing the sell-out of public housing.

When the progressive and punk movement reacted to “capital” they were still thinking

in terms of the traditional capitalism of industrial production, which indeed was what once created the city in which they lived. But the capital that would take over during deregulation was, as we know, of another breed. It cherished flow and diversity, as it makes the market larger. It could thus be argued that not only did neo-liberalism and the punk movement battle the same enemies: industrial capitalism *and* the social democratic society of discipline. In fact, one could say that “the precariat”, the working class under modern neo-liberal capitalism, organizes very much like the alternative movements, opting for swift, short term, de-regulated change.

Thus, the progressive movement’s focus on salvaging the city and the punk movement’s bleak reports from the suburb both supported an idea that real life must take place in the city. The critique of the suburbs (and the situation that caused the critique) boosted the idea of the inner city as the place of action, creating a desire and a longing for being close to the city core, the site of “unexpected” meetings. However, this was to become the ideal of deregulation as well, with the great and important difference that punk and prog wanted to arrive there “together”, in a multitude. However, as the new individuality arose, all this melted into air.

Postscript

In the short, well-known essay “Postscript to the Society of Control”, Gilles Deleuze picked up on the change in the thinking of Michel Foucault that we have touched upon in this text.³⁰ Deleuze introduces the concept of “control”, but contrary to Foucault, he conceives of it as something that is not co-existing with, but “replacing” discipline. Writing in 1990, what Deleuze saw happen was the neoliberal takeover. In

the economy of free flow and deregulation, the corporation has replaced the factory. With a series of striking observations, Deleuze, pinpoints many of the changes that continue to form our society. He could be said to have noted the above described tendency towards the increased tenant ownership of buildings, as he writes: “Man is no longer man enclosed, but man in debt.”³¹ It is an economy of “product” instead of “production”, where the inhabitants are controlled by their individual desires, rather than being regulated in bulk: “Individuals have become ‘_dividuals’_ and masses, samples, data, markets or ‘_banks’_”.³² As the economy no longer depends on industrialism, the logic that had motivated the organization of the suburbs is no longer there. Desire replaced politics. The image for the new city dweller after modernism would not be the returning suburbanite, living shoulder to shoulder in a new multitude, but the glamorous and slick avatars of the “new romantics” that followed upon the punk movement.

In the new economy the walkable, attractive inner-city streets have become the new factory floor. The world-wide competition between cities to become the most liveable goes hand in hand with increasing privatization, segregation and the hopes of attracting the investments of global capital. Flow is fetishized and lived space colonized. The making and the use of public space is being transformed and reinvented in order to pump up and maximize the value of real estate. The city is no longer primarily perceived as something we use, but something we consume. The city becomes a product of what Thomas H. Davenport and John C. Beck has called the attention economy which must nestle everywhere, settle everywhere, and establish connections everywhere.³³ Subversive street art turns into authentic signs of the urban. “Swarming activities” become a unique selling point for exclusive living quarters in the city. With pop-up stores, streets reclaimed by coffee shops, and a public sphere that is populated

with a constant flow of festivals and street vendors, lived space has proven to be a far more efficient tool for maintaining power than the disciplinary mechanisms of the Swedish Middle Way during the Record Years. All that flows solidifies.

¹ Torgny Segerstedt, ed., The notion of the Democratic man is here taken from the book *Inför framtidens demokrati* (Stockholm: Kooperativa förbundets bokförlag, 1944)

² Karl Marx & Friedrich Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party, Selected Works, Vol. One*, (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1969), 9.

³ Gilles Deleuze & Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis University of Minnesota Press, 1983), 33.

⁴ Torgny Segerstedt ed., *Inför framtidens demokrati*, (Stockholm: Kooperativa förbundets bokförlag, 1944), p. 8

⁵ Torgny Segerstedt would later become Sweden's first sociology professor, Gregor Paulsson was professor in Art History and one of the initiators of Stockholmsutställningen 1930, Brita Åkerman would later initiate Hemmets Forskningsinstitut (The Home Research Institute), Harald Elldin was director of education at the Swedish Co-operative Union, Jöran Curman architect and Helge Zimdahl architect and later professor at KTH and Chalmers, Eskil Sundahl architect and professor Head of the Swedish Co-operative Union Architecture Office, Uno Åhren architect, city planner of Gothenburg, later head of Riksbyggen and Sweden's first professor in city planning, Alf Johansson economist, politician and later the first general director of the Swedish Housing Committee (Bostadsstyrelsen)

⁶ Jöran Curman and Helge Zimdahl, "Gruppsamhällen," *Inför framtidens demokrati*, (Stockholm: Kooperativa förbundets bokförlag, 1944), 139.

⁷ How architecture, consumption and planning were seen as strategies to shape society and how through publications, exhibitions and design, attempts were made to educate the rational, modern and Democratic Man, has been thoroughly examined in Helena Mattsson and Sven-Olof Wallenstein, eds., *Swedish Modernism: Architecture, Consumption and the Welfare State*. (London: Black Dog Publishing, 2010)

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- ⁸ Per Wirtén, *Där jag kommer från: Kriget mot förorten*, (Stockholm: Albert Bonniers förlag, 2012), 33.
- ⁹ Margareta Schwartz and Susanne Sjöqvist, *Kvinnoliv Förortsliv*, (Stockholm: Gidlunds förlag, 1978), 31.
- ¹⁰ Gits Olsson, "Skärholmen Centre does not close - it dies," *Magazine Se* 18 (1971)
- ¹¹ Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1977–78* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 56.
- ¹² "det var kärnfamiljen med mor i köket som skulle få det mindre slitsamt med mer tid för barnen..." Lennart Holm "Polyfon upptakt" *Femtiotalet*, (Stockholm: Arkitektur museets årsbok, 1995), 11.
- ¹³ Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, cop. 1984), 96.
- ¹⁴ <http://www.skanska.se/sv/Om-Skanska/Historia/> (accessed 2016-10-07)
- ¹⁵ Between 1932 and 1988, the party had somewhere between 42-52% of the voters.
- ¹⁶ <http://www.val.se/val/val2014/slutresultat/R/rike/> (accessed 2016-10-07)
- ¹⁷ <http://www.skanska.se/sv/Om-Skanska/Skanska-i-siffror/> (accessed 2016-10-07)
- ¹⁸ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1995)
- ¹⁹ Published in French first by Éditions du Seuil/Gallimard 2004 and in English translation 2007.
- ²⁰ See lecture 18th January in Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population*, 29-54
- ²¹ Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991) 32. (italics in original).
- ²² Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 39-40.
- ²³ Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 405-410. See also Henri Lefebvre, *Rhythmanalysis* (London: Continuum, 2004)
- ²⁴ Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, cop. 1984), 96.
- ²⁵ Ulf Stahre, *Den Alternativa Staden*, (Stockholm: Stockholmia Förlag, 1999), 73.

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- ²⁶ Anon, "Alternativ stad- history, organization and ideological inspiration"
<http://www.folkrorelser.org/texter/alts-1.html>, Website of the Folk Movement Study Group
(accessed 2016-12-18)
- ²⁷ Ulf Stahre, *Den Alternativa Staden*, 219-220
- ²⁸ Anon, "En oasis i stenöken", *Klara Papper* 14, (1978)
- ²⁹ Dick Urban Vestbro "Kollektivhus för kvinnofrigörelse" *Kvinnovetenskaplig tidskrift* 1
(1982), 16-28.
- ³⁰ Probably without any knowledge about the last lectures at Collège de France, as these were
published after Deleuze's death.
- ³¹ Gilles Deleuze "Postscript on the Societies of Control" *October* 59. (1992), 5.
- ³² Gilles Deleuze "Postscript on the Societies of Control", 5.
- ³³ Thomas H. Davenport and John C. Beck: *The Attention Economy : Understanding the New
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