A Living Story of Parks

Urban History Research of Stockholmskolan

JIAYI WANG / PENGFEI WANG
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JIAYI WANG & PENGFEI WANG

KTH Royal Institute of Technology
Master of Urbanism Studies
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Supervisor: Ryan Locke
Preface and Acknowledgements

Our thesis started with a continuous discovery of theory and observation. As a group work of landscape architect and architect, during the study of our Urbanism program, we were both curious about the urbanism theories within Europe. Among them, partly in terms of the landscape background, we were particularly interested in the theory of landscape urbanism and its practices in Europe. Spontaneously, this became our original thesis topic.

However, after reading and collecting, we realized landscape urbanism theory was never as a main agenda in European academic world as in U.S. On the contrary, the role of landscape in urbanization is unignorable and has been examined for decades in Europe, which is one thing what landscape urbanists try to achieve. Moreover, during our reading of Swedish landscape and planning history, we noticed a series of significant parks which were built between 1930s-1950s, belong to a hardly forgotten design style named Stockholm School (Stockholmskolan). This particular style and period of time is a fundamental part of Swedish landscape and planning history, deeply influenced the following park design as well as city planning in Stockholm. Almost all the parks of Stockholmskolan nowadays become attractive spots for citizens gathering together, relaxing, and doing outdoor activities. Some of the parks are our personal favorite places in the city. Nevertheless, we choose this study not only to appreciate the significant parks but also to try to introduce them to other readers who might not be familiar with, especially to those who live outside of Europe with a different natural and cultural context.

Our brief study could be the start of further research, and the tool of photography plays a key role in different stages of our thesis. As K.W. Gullers introduced Swedish lifestyle to the world through a photo about
life in park seventy years ago, it would also be our honor if our booklet could interest readers to appreciate and rediscover the contemporary Swedish public space and urban life.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Ryan Locke as our supervisor, who helped us along the way. And Tigran Haas as the director of the Urbanism Studies through the whole year of studying. Also we are very grateful to Peter Elmlund and the Axel och Margaret Ax:son Johnsons Foundation for financing our studies.

Tack så mycket!

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Pengfei Wang & Jiayi Wang
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Identifying the Research Problem

Parks are probably the most visited places in Sweden during summer, people hanging out, doing activities or simply enjoying a sun bath. As two young students who live in China for almost all our lives, we find this culture so unique and charming. When taking a closer look at the parks, one can easily notice that several similarities arise among the parks. "Were they built at the same time?" We can't help asking ourselves. After carefully reading and researching, we found this particular style and movement during a period of time - Stockholmsskolan. Even though Stockholmsskolan plays a significant role in Swedish landscape and planning history, seldom do people know about this special period of time and movement, it seems to be forgotten even within Sweden. The reason for this might lead to the main problem of this research: lack of introduction and information materials. One can't find it in the introductions which stand in every park and are put out by Stockholm municipality; nor can one learn it from Stockholm technical history of park. What's more, most of the materials are in Swedish, which somehow creates a invisible barrier between foreign students and researchers. Thus, our research is aimed to rediscover, introduce and understand.

REDISCOVER
- Rediscover the urban history of Stockholmsskolan and its influence to contemporary development

INTRODUCE
- Introduce the most representative parks
- Summarize the key elements of Stockholmsskolan
- Contemporary use of the mentioned parks

UNDERSTAND
- Study the reasons of success behind Stockholmsskolan and find relevance for current park and public space design
Research Methodology

While this is an urban history research, the main methodological approach is description and explanation.

The objective of the descriptive approach is to find what Stockholmsskolan exactly is. The objective of the explanatory approach is to find the causes of Stockholmsskolan. In order to describe this movement and design style, both historical and contemporary perspectives are valued. Thus besides referenced literature research, photography and case study are two main methods used in this research.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Data collection, interpretation and presentation are general elements for formulating photographic research method. Photographs could enhance the study of any kind of design with significant spatial or visual components of material form or social interaction (Patton, 2000). "There are a thousand hamlets in a thousand people’s eyes", we use photography as guidelines to encourage an open-ended response from the readers.

CASE STUDY

Stockholmsskolan is a fruitful period of time. When choosing the representative parks as our research cases, we interpreted the parks through classification and characteristic. The character of each park is important to identify and describe how each park can be protected and developed. According to Stockholm Parkprogram 2006 from municipality, district parks (Stadsdelsparker) are major parks in the city, which are often multifunctional and usually range from 5-50ha. Thanks to the classification that the program already has, we could fit our study cases into this framework and understand the characteristics of these parks. The most common classifications is listed below:
- *Naturområde och naturpark* (Nature area and nature park)
- *Landskapspark, dalstråkspark och gärde* (Landscape park, valleys park and field)
- *Bergspark* (Mountain park)
- *Stadspark och aktivitetspark* (City parks and activity park)
- *Strandpark* (Beach park)

(Stockhoms Stad, 2006)
Fredhällsparken
designed by Osvald Almqvist in 1937
I. REDISCOVER
Stockholmsskolan

Stockholm School (*Stockholmsskolan*) also known as Stockholm Style (*Stockholmsstilen*) is an urban park style that was practiced in the design of parks in Stockholm realized during the 1930s -1950s. It is also a park policy that counted in its time as the most progressive among the world.

At that time, Stockholmsskolan shared several firsts that made it famous to landscape architects around the world. “Rarely before had park designers worked in such an informal manner, creating actual country landscape in the middle of the city. Seldom before had landscape architects so consciously decided to take nature’s own expressions as their artistic point of departure (Andersson, 1993)” . It is also the first time a cohesive park program of both broad policy and specific designs were formulated in Stockholm. Here, a brief summary of related historical perspective would help us to understand the background and timeline of Stockholmsskolan.
Historical Perspective*

1900s -1920s
Garden City and Classicism

At the 1900s Stockholm began to grow outside duties. Several estates were built in order to catch up with the rapid increasing of housing. During this time, several garden cities were built, such as Enskede and Äppelviken with the urban planning by Per Hallman. A distinctive common feature of these neighborhoods are tree planted streets and a uniform plant material in the form of fruit trees and berry bushes.

About the same time "koloniträdgårdsrörelse", an allotment garden movement began to emerge which was initiated by Anna Åbergsson (Friman, 2008). The idea was that the less well-off, especially families, would have access to places where they could grow fruit and vegetables for home consumption and where the kids could play in the fresh air. The first allotment garden was established in the areas of Djurgården and Barnängen in Södermalm.

During the 1920s, in the district of Bromma urban planner Mauritz Hammarberg started to plan for a new park. The idea was that there would be an artistic promenade park, like what had been built in the city since the mid-1800s. Botany Professor Rutger Sernander opposed this and suggested that the park instead should be created on the basis of the Mälaren region's own natural conditions (Sernander, 1926). This resulted in Ålstensparken, built from 1927 to 1935 in full accordance with Sernander’s ideas. Shortly thereafter, also in the district of Bromma, the nature area Judarkogen was created after similar principles. With Ålstensparken, Stockholm’s park planning was taken to a new direction which would reach its peak in the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s.
1930s - 1950s
Functionalism and Bloom’s Park Program (Stockholmsskolan)

“In Sweden, the 1940s were a happy and optimistic time, a period of economic expansion and society’s belief in the promise of the future... the Social Democratic Party had enjoyed a strong majority...the functionalist movement in Scandinavian architecture - and landscape architecture – stood at the peak of its popularity (Andersson, 1993)

Driven by a strong political ideology, functionalism in Sweden was more than an architectural style, but a gospel and a scheme for building a society. Not like the functionalist park movement in 1930s Sweden that proposed “all gardens are nature”, the designers of the Stockholmsskolan recreated features of the regional landscape within the city parks. However, this will not happen without the strong political connections for influencing decision makers to allocate the necessary funding. Oswald Almqvist, the former director of parks, was the first to formulate a cohesive park program of both broad policy and specific designs, and his ideas remained as guidelines for the activities of the Stockholm Park Department for many years after. Holger Blom, the director of Stockholm parks after, refined Almqvist’s ideas and eventually instigated Stockholmsskolan.

The park program of Blom intended to increase the impact of urban parks on the lives of Stockholm’s citizens. He condensed the complexities of the entire park program into one coherent picture that was provocative and easily communicated (Blom, 1946). It consists of four principles which defined the different functions and benefits of parks, also used as guideline for following park planning and design.
1960s - 1970s
Million Program and Large Scale Construction

The housing shortage was increasingly troublesome in the early 60’s and within a few years the baby boom after the war made it even harder to solve the housing problem. The demands to build higher and denser neighborhoods grew, and the million programme (*Miljonprogrammet*) was developed. The town was formed functionally as a machine with a rational industrial construction (Friman, 2008). The construction site was arranged so that an efficient assembly work of prefabricated building elements became possible.

This meant a total conversion of land to create space for building foundations, construction and crane tracks. Numbers of the buildings adapted to the landscape built in 1940s and 1950s were changed to an adaptation of the terrain to the construction site. The 1946 park program from Blom was still used in Stockholm but more as a function diagram with the standards and norms of areas and distances, and inserted as such in Plan 65.

The hard-packed rubble terraces, however, were poor soil for the newly planted vegetation that was torn down by playing kids. This gave a poor local environment in million program buildings. In addition, resources were placed at the larger park in the street, such as Skärholmen and Bredäng, and large green areas, like Järvfältets green area and Sätraskogen, which was designed in connection with the districts.
Holger Blom's park program as condensed in one picture
Holger Blom's Park Program

The picture he proposed was an artwork in itself, made to appeal to the public as well as to the politicians. The branches of a horse chestnut form the background for simple mottoes, written in elegant letters. The mottoes translate thus:

1) The park breaks up the unrelenting flow of urban construction. Taken as a group, parks can form a network in the urban fabric that provides citizens with necessary air and light. They can create borders between different parts of the city and provide each district with an individual character and identity.

2) The park offers to citizens of all ages space for recreation, for promenades and rest, for sport and play.

3) The park is a place in which to gather: for concerts, demonstrations, parties, dance, and even religious services.

4) The park preserves both nature and culture: existing nature and newly created; old traces of culture as well as modern additions.

(Andersson, 1993)

In this section, we carefully select a group of pictures where we shoot when visiting the Stockhomsskolan parks, then arrange them according to the four mottos as Blom proposed in his park program. It is not only a photo collection but also a starting point to present the varieties of functions and activities in Stockholmskolan parks. This is followed by a list of these parks with a location map.
Location Map

1. Vasaparken
2. Observatorielunden
3. Tegnérlunden
4. Norra Bantorget
5. Fredhällsparken
6. Rålambskovsparken
7. Norr Mälarstrand
8. Björnsträdgård
9. Tengdahlsparken
10. Grynkvansparken
"The park breaks up the unrelenting flow of urban construction. Taken as a group, parks can form a network in the urban fabric that provides citizens with necessary air and light. They can create borders between different parts of the city and provide each district with an individual character and identity."
Fredhällsparken

Park as a buffer between urban infrastructure and also forms the green network
*Grynkvarnsparken*

Green space connects the dwellings with local style landscape, provide fresh air
Tegnérlunden
Small green space between high density neighborhoods, creates necessary place for relax
Norr Mälarstrand
Wooden deck above Lake Mälaren, brings the water landscape into park
Rålambshovsparken
Together with Norr Mälarstrand, a series of green spaces contributes to the urban fabric of Kungsholmen
"The park offers to citizens of all ages space for recreation, for promenades and rest, for sport and play."
Rålambshovsparken

Beach volleyball becomes a popular sport during summer
Observatorielunden
The park could offer a place for rest during lunch break
Vasaparken

Park is a good spot for reading as well
Norr Mälarstrand

Running is one of the most popular activities in the park
Tegnérlunden
A super popular paddling pool for kids from neighborhoods
"The park is a place in which to *gather*: for concerts, demonstrations, parties, dance, and even religious services."
Parkteatern
People laying on the grass hill watching the opera
Vasaparken
Friends gathering together for Boules game
Vasaparken
Also for having fun
Rålambshovsparken
A park could be a stage for festival: temporary market on national day
Rålambshovsparken

Even organize an aerobic class
"The park preserves both nature and culture: existing nature and newly created; old traces of culture as well as modern additions."
Björns trädgård
Center location of Södermalm, Stockholm Mosque as background
Tegnérlunden

Stream and rocks with local plants create a typical style which represent the local nature
Vasaparken

The concrete square preserves the unique plants
Grynkvarnsparken
Old model of equipment in playground
Norr Mälarstrand
The waterfront shows the typical Swedish waterscape
Fredhällsparken

designed by Osvald Almqvist in 1937
II. INTRODUCE
In this section, we choose the most representative parks as our research cases, each one represents a single category. As a basic but necessary method it is helpful to identify and describe how each park was implemented and developed later on.
Case Study

Norr Mälarstrand

Tegnérlunden

Norra Bantorget

Stockholm
Fredhällsparken & Rålambshovsparken

Norr Mälarstrand
Designed by Erik Glemme in 1941-1943
5ha + 9ha
Landscape Park / Activity Park

The lakeshore promenade along Norr Mälarstrand is probably the most significant of all the Stockholmsskolan projects. Less a single space than a sequence of parks, it forms one long green finger that stretches from wooded countryside to the heart of Stockholm, a green corridor that begins in Fredhällsparken on the western outskirts of the city and ends in the neoclassical garden terrace of City Hall (Andersson, 1993).

Fredhällsparken was designed by ideas of the then new park manager Osvald Almqvist. The beautiful old oak trees and other large deciduous trees were preserved to be part of an open space with large coherent grassy areas. The park contains much of the original landscape left with large oak trees and other vegetation that separates an elongated low bowl-shaped grassed area. The park features a large paddling pool, and a smaller ball field. In the park’s western part down towards the healthy valley was designed with a stream bed. (Stockholms Stad, 2008)

On the eastern side, Rålambshovsparken represents the extension of sequence which Erik Glemme developed. The park began to be organized in 1936 when the Västerbron was built and had since been complemented gradually (Stockholms Stad, 2008). Vegetation and other landscape elements are pushed toward the perimeter of the space, creating an open center that joins the vast sheet of water that is Lake Mälaren’s surface. Västerbroleden enables a continuous contact to the park environment (Andersson, 1993). In 1953 the classic amphitheatre was opened when Stockholm celebrated its 700 years’ anniversary (Stockholms Stad, 2008). In materials and arrangement, the amphitheatre reflects the elements of the archipelago landscape outside Stockholm.
Along north street from City Hall up to Rålambshovsparken runs a narrow park street, first in the form of a paved quay then as a lush promenade (Stockholms Stad, 2008). Norr Mälarstrand was built in the early 1940s, this slender segment of the park includes a softly curving footpath, seats of various kinds, bridges, ponds, a little café and playgrounds (Andersson, 1993). In addition to its great architectural value, it has even larger ecological and social values. In Norr Mälarstrand, not only its very idea but every single straw and herbs is of native origin.
Paddling pool (*Plaskdammm*) on the west part of *Fredhällsparken*, decorate with nature rocks
Wooden bench facing Lake Mälaren, provide a nice view of Södermalm
Slender bridge across a small bay alongside the coast, allowing the stroller to experience the full presence of the water
Pavilion used as café and restaurant
Tegnérlunden
Remodeled by Erik Glemme in 1941
1.2 ha
Mountain Park

Tegnérlunden is one of Stockholm's characteristic mountain parks. It lies embedded in tight urban development, located in rough terrain deemed impossible to use for building purposes. It was originally designed in 1890's aesthetic perception with winding walkways, large trees and flower plantations (Stockholms stad, 2015). In the 1940s the park was reformed according to Erik Glemme's drawings. A renovation of the park landscape was seen as the answer to contemporary demands that the park should serve primarily as a social spot, providing opportunities for play and recreation (Andersson, 1993).

The footpath system was simplified in favour of larger, more easily maintained lawn areas. In the northern part of the park is a blossom garden with pergola, seating and perennial flower beds, which was an invention of the Stockholm School. August Strindberg's statue designed by Carl Eldh, is located in the eastern part surrounded by a larger gravel with seating along the edges. High up and in the centre of the park stands a pavilion (Brunnspaviljongen), with an artificial spring source which water flows through a beautiful stream bed of natural stone lined by lush perennial plants and on to a wading pool. A small stone bridge leads over the stream bed. Next to the pond is a playground for smaller children. (Stockholms Stad, 2015)

Tegnérlunden was designed to meet the requirements of recreation for children as well as adults. It has very large visitors' pressure and becomes extremely popular among neighborhoods during summer time, especially for children and young people.
Drawing of stream bed and paddling pool
by Erik Glemme, 1942
Water from the spring spills into a lively brook that bounces down the hillside, surrounded by water-loving perennials
Playground for kids, also a spot for parents to meet and communicate
View from the top of the small hill through the pavilion
East part of the park, with flat lawn and a sculpture by Carl Eldh facing the east entrance
Norra Bantorget

Remodeled by Erik Glemme in 1952
2.7 ha
City Park

The name Norra Bantorget refers to the cobbled square that once existed in front of North railway station, which opened in 1870. Norra Bantorget has a long tradition in the Swedish labour movement and for many years to gathering here on May 1st. (Stockholms Stad, 2015)

On 1952 the Branting Monument by Carl Eldh came in place and at the same time implemented changes to the older structure. Erik Glemme designed a stone-paved terrace courtyard between the walls thus created a room for monument to erect on. The room’s interior walls consist of concrete with patterns. The floor covering consists of black small cobblestones and red sandstone shaped the Yggdrasil from Nordic mythology, which represents the tree of life (Asker, 1986).

Norra Bantorget is a park surrounded completely by the transport selected streets. Along the park’s sides extending low embankments with perennial flower beds, shrubs and trees that provide for enclosure to the park. Straight walkways lead through the park and walking paths can be found around the park’s edges. Norra Bantorget got a completely new face arranged through the monument investment.

From 2008 to 2009 there was a comprehensive renewal of the park, including new perennial flower beds, trees and supply system. The year 2009 reform of Norra Bantorget by Nyréns arkitektkontor was awarded the Siena Prize for park. (Stockholms Stad, 2015)
Norra Bantorget
Plan with proposals to reform according to Nyréns arkitektkontor
Center square designed by Erik Glemme
Erik Glemme designed the terrace square in the middle of the park
Detail of the terrace square, concrete wall divide the space also strengthen the identity of the park
The Branting Monument by Carl Eldh, surrounded by the pavement pattern depicts the tree Yggdrasil from Nordic mythology
After the reform, the plant species from far east represent the high quality of the new *Norra Bantorget*
Vitabergsparken, 1954
Key Elements of Stockholmsskolan

With the researching of Stockholmsskolan and visiting some of the most represented parks, we summarize the key elements of Stockholmsskolan. These elements not only present a particular design method but also reflect from unique functional organization, which mostly are originally introduced to parks for the first time. From vibrant Parkteatern every summer to Plaskdamm and Parkleken spread all over Stockholm city, the key elements represent the historical treasure from Stockholmsskolan.

1. Paddling Pool (*Plaskdamm*)

2. Playground (*Parkleken*)

3. Park Theatre (*Parkteatern*)

4. Blossom Garden (*Blomstergård*)
1

Paddling Pool (Plaskdamm)

A paddling pool and water play is a basic swimming pool designed for young children, usually found in some public parks. Paddling pools were built in many districts of Sweden’s cities in the 1900s. The concept exists since 1929. Many paddling pools in public spaces and parks in recent years has been turned off because of hygienic reasons and safety reasons. However, there are some paddling pools still function well, mostly among the parks of Stockholmskolan, such as Fredhällsparken, Tengdahlsparken and the most popular spot in Tegnérlunden.
The modern Parkleken, with municipal employees, was introduced to Stockholm from the urban planner Osvald Almqvist.

“First Parkleken was tested in 1936 in Observatorielunden and Björns trädgård with great success, and two years later Parkleken was added to 14 parks in Stockholm (Asker, 1986).”

During Almqvist and especially Holger Blom and Erik Glemme’s progressive time, the range from staffed playgrounds, to play under supervision by trained personnel, who would monitor the children without stimulating them. Parkleken is not only a safe place for children to play, but also an organization and platform to connect children as well as parents living in the same neighborhood.
3

Park Theatre (Parkteatern)

Park Theatre was part of Holger Blom’s program for Stockholm’s parks. The parks would be filled with activities such as sports, party, dance, music and even theater.

“Parkteatern began to appear from 1942 in various parks. In 1948 a truck pulled scene wagon was acquired with endorsement Parkteatern who had retractable walls and a scene that could easily be moved between different venues (Asker, 1986).”

Many parks like Rålambshovsparken and Vitabergsparken have their own amphitheatre particularly for playing, others could provide temporary stage during summer time. Every year from June to August, varieties plays and concerts take place from one park to another, and no entrance fee is needed. The parks become truly places filled with art and culture, just as Blom proposed before.
In terms of park design, in most of the parks designed by Glemme, there is a common element we could call it blossom garden, which is deeply related to the Swedish cultural and natural context.

“The idea was to create a small garden room with a large variety of flowering shrubs, perennials, and herbs that blossomed through all the seasons of the year. A second idea behind the blossom garden was to inspire visitors with practices they might use in their own gardens, or simply to provide a surrogate for those citizens who could not create a garden of their own (Andersson, 1993).”

After few decades, the trees in those blossom gardens flourished prosperous, and the gardens themselves become perfect place for relax and meditation. Among them, the most successful one is the blossom garden in Tegnérlunden.
Reading in park
probably in Vasaparken
III. UNDERSTAND
Reasons of Success and Contemporary Relevance

After decades, several of the best examples of Glemme’s work and that of others of the Stockholmsskolan still exist to be seen, many would say the apex of Swedish landscape design. Their vegetation has now reached maturity, their open spaces are preserved; Stockholmers of today benefit from the unique intersection of design talent and opportunity (Andersson, 1993).

Meanwhile, when we look back, the success of Stockholmsskolan remains a great historical treasure that can bring enlightenment to the contemporary landscape design. There are some specific reasons behind the success of Stockholmsskolan, such as the departure from cultural context and regionality, the concern about everyday life and public function of park, and maybe the most essential one, the support of strong organization and proper social circumstance. Even though Stockholmsskolan is a movement which developed almost totally natively, we can still grasp several relevance to current park and public space planning and design in global context.

1. Respect the cultural context and regionality

Extraordinary natural resource and the great fond of nature in the Scandinavian context is one of the reasons Stockholmsskolan style became popular in Stockholm; while this reason depends strongly on the cultural context, what makes it so strong even decades past is exactly the aesthetic and ideological departure from regionality.

Before Stockholmsskolan played its historical role, the parks in Stockholm were mainly dominated by foreign style. Classic parks such as Drottningholm and Hagaparken, which acquired recognition in Europe and Scandinavia, have all the typical features of French baroque garden. The reason for this is the French cultural hegemony during the eighteenth century. Swedish parks of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, however, were heavily influenced by German tradition because of the geographic proximity. Also, lack of professional
educational programs in their own country resulted in Swedish landscape designers commonly trained in Germany during the first decades of the twentieth century.

The designers of Stockholmsskolan recreated features of the regional landscape within the city parks, from the rocky terrain of the archipelago to the mountain streams (Andersson, 1993). All of these created a regional landscape thus provide a place for local cultural activities to organize.

However, like the new, late modernist direction that replaced the regional sensibility, most of the modern landscape design under globalization context have lost their regionality and characteristic. Nowadays, with the rapid urbanization happening especially in developing countries, people tend to appreciate local culture and nature more than ever, as Stockholmsskolan emphasized decades before. Every culture is unique in terms of history, and simply plagiarizes things without considering its cultural background can hardly lead to successful design.

2. **Have the idea of park system in mind rather than single parks**

During the peak period of Stockholmsskolan, a series of parks within the city was built or redesigned, creating a green structure that benefited all the citizens even after decades. Moreover, when Holger Blom proposed the park plan for Stockholm, the idea of building a continuous park system was emphasized at the very beginning. The park breaks up the unrelenting flow of urban construction. Taken as a group, parks can form a network in the urban fabric that provides citizens with necessary air and light. They can create borders between different parts of the city and provide each district with an individual character and identity (Andersson, 1993).

This idea was almost taken for granted among current landscape theory and practice, whereas It was more than seventy years from contemporary discussion, that landscape urbanism tried so hard to highlight the the necessity of green infrastructure within urban planning and the driven role of landscape architect (Waldheim, 2016). On the other hand, this partly explained the reason why landscape urbanism theory was not widely recognized and spread within Europe, since the essential role of green infrastructure in urban planning was always part of the strategy in Scandinavia and European context from
then on.

3. The need for political and social circumstance

On the other hand, a significant background behind Stockholmsskolan is the powerful organization of park department and the specific social circumstance, which was structured differently than it is today. Many cities had powerful park departments whose own landscape architects were given the responsibility for almost all the important design work (Andersson, 1993). At the same time, the country had been spared from the ravages of war and was thus given a chance to develop a welfare state, also the possibility to discover their own style of landscape design. It was the unique political and social circumstance that make it possible for the development of Stockholmsskolan.

A strong organization was necessary to implement the new ideas and strong political connections were also need for influencing decision makings as well as funding. From this point, the circumstance of landscape urbanism is not only the lack of political support, but also the different organization system within planning department. We should keep in mind that even in contemporary context, the organization system of urban planning and design within European countries is totally different from North America and Asia, where landscape architect, architect and urban planner cooperate more frequently during the process of a project, and that lead to more adaptable layout most of the time. It was not fair to criticize a new theory or movement on its own, but always benefit to adjust the theory to local social and political circumstance.

4. Design for everyday life and public good - “public space for all”

One of the most significant treasures of Stockholmsskolan is the emphasis of publicness, which distinguished it from the preceding and following period of time. As a result of the social democratic policy, the movement proposed to provide “public space for all”, which might be a bit progressive at the time but still remains an argument in sociology and anthropology. For instance, Iris Young, the famous American sociologist, has a point for public space 50 years later that it should be “heterogeneous, plural and playful, a place where people witness and
appreciate diverse cultural expressions that they do not share and do not fully understand (Young, 1990),” part of the statement fits exactly with Holger Blom’s park program principles. These parks nowadays play fundamental roles in Stockholm public space system, they are more than spaces for activity and meditation, but rather stages to show and experience daily life.

However, in the other part of the world, particularly in China, park as public space and place for activity was rarely emphasized, whereas the ecological and aesthetical role of park was mostly taking into consideration. Different cultural context and habit would be one of the reason, since the public park was introduced to China from western world only a short time ago. But still, we believe that people from all over the world share the similar behavior and demand, park could be the place for everyone no matter of whose nation, cultural background, religious and age. The lessons we learn from Stockholmskolan such as regionality and publicness could be definitely brought back to other country and develop in their own way.
The Stockholmsskolan emerged in a golden movement in the history of landscape architecture in Sweden (Andersson, 1993). It was a unique period of time because hardly before that the landscape architect, architect, urban planner, botanists and cultural geographer could work together under the same organization and share the same belief.

Some argue that the over use of native vegetations in order to create a “Malaren Style” would destroy the different identity of each site. This once truly became an issue especially in the late phrases of Stockholmsskolan, when the same design was applied into different sites in order to catch up with the high pace of building construction. On the other hand, since most of the parks in Stockholmsskolan are located in the inner city of Stockholm, the ignoring of outskirt city was among the critiques of Stockholmsskolan. Would the principle of Stockholmsskolan work well in the outskirt parks and neighborhoods? What about the open area where there are not many people living nearby? More issues to be solved but we won’t attempt to apply the knowledge from Stockholmsskolan to every situation.

As we understand after one year of studying urbanism, is that the city itself is a dynamic-complex system, park or public space is one of the fundamental parts of the system. The problem of city can not be solved only by attractive parks or vibrant public spaces, it does matters with the political decision and economic situation; nevertheless, as we learnt from Stockholmsskolan, the work of bring better public spaces to city would gain benefits sooner or later.
Reference List


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* http://www.stockholm.se/KulturFritid/Park-och-natur/Parker/Parkhistoria