URBAN TRENDS: An international conference for architectural and urban planning students

CONTENT AND RESULTS

The conference was hosted by Blekinge Institute of Technology and organised by a team of urban planning students:
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with advice and help from
Gunnar Nyström, university lecturer, Blekinge Institute of Technology
Abdellah Abarkan, head of the department of Spatial Planning, Blekinge Institute of Technology
CONTENT OF THE CONFERENCE
Presentation 1 13.40-14.10 on the 27th of April
Eva Dalman, projektmanager, City Planning Office of Lund
Theme: Urban development in Lund

Presentation 2 14.20-15.10 on the 27th of April
Göran Rosberg, informationmanager, City Planning Office of Malmö
Theme: Urban development in Malmö

Seminar 1 09.00-09.30 on the 28th of April
Christer Persson, university lecturer and researcher, DSN, BTH
Theme: Builders, planners and citizens: the interpretation of public interest in global urban competition

Seminar 2 09.30-10.00 on the 28th of April
Kalle Bergman, university lecturer, DSN, BTH
Theme: Public places - the preoccupation of public space and the spatial awareness that the current trends are based on.

Seminar 3 10.25-10.55 on the 28th of April
Gunnar Nyström, university lecturer, DSN, BTH
Theme: Urban ecology

Seminar 4 10.25-11.25 on the 28th of April
Tomasz Rozwadowski, teacher, Gdansk University of Technology
Theme: ‘Facing CITY 3.0 - are we ready for digital urbanism?’
In short: The discussion on new trends in urban planning in the context of digital communication technologies. The concept of ‘time’ and ‘place’ are changing as a result of diffusion of new ways of communication. Digital technology has become a kind of interface between man and city. How ubiquitous digital communication can affect the way we think about urban space and how it can influence the way we will build our environment in near future?

Seminar 5 11.50-12.20 on the 28th of April
Cornelius Scherzer, Prof., HTW Dresden
Theme: The role of landscape and open space in sustainable urban development. Focus on the contradictory aims of having a dense and compact or a spacious and green urban structure, using examples of current urban planning.

Seminar 6 10.00-10.30 on the 29th of April
Jerker Söderlind, urban researcher and teacher, KTH city development
Seminar 7 10.30-11.00 on the 29th of april  
Moa Tunström, researcher, KTH urban and regional studies

Tour guides, with Tours both at 14.15-15.30 and 16.00-17.15 on the 28th of april:
Ivar Wenster, former Head of the the culture department of Karlskrona.
Subject: culture and democracy in the city and in planning.

Leifh Stenholm, former Länsantikvarie of Blekinge county.
Subject: physical changes and the cityplan in a world heritage city.

Claes-Åke Kindlund, former head architect of Karlskrona.
Subject: revitalization of Stumholmen.

Olof Wolti, PhD, DSN, BTH.
Subject: "To be is to be in place - conservation and planning in relation to reality" - a mix between a discussion about current urban planning and restoration questions in Karlskrona and a problematization by key words such as; "cultural heritage", "conservation", "restoration", "planning".

Participants in the panel discussion 11.20-12.20 and 12.30-13.00 on the 29th of april:
Jerker Söderlind, urban researcher and teacher, KTH city development
Moa Tunström, researcher, KTH urban and regional studies
Tomasz Rozwadowski, teacher, Gdansk University of Technology
Dorota Kamrowska-Zaluska, teacher, Gdansk University of Technology
Cornelius Scherzer, Prof., HTW Dresden

Moderator in the panel discussion 11.20-12.20 and 12.30-13.00 on the 29th of april:
Gunnar Nyström, university lecturer, DSN, BTH
Participating universities:

Technische Universität Dortmund
HafenCityUniversität Hamburg
Technische Universität Kaiserlautern
Technische Universität Wien
Hochschule für Technik Rapperswil
Gdansk University of Technology
Bauhaus-Universität Weimar
Fachhochschule Erfurt
Nürtingen – Geislingen University
Hochschule für Technik und Wirtschaft Dresden
Blekinge Institute of Technology Karlskrona
The Royal Institute of Technology Stockholm

Chalmers university of Technology
Umeå School of Architecture
Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences Alnarp
Malmö University
RESULTS FROM THE CONFERENCE
LIMITS

- POLICY/LAW
- INFRASTRUCTURE
- TIME
- ECONOMICAL LIMITATIONS

POSSIBILITIES

- LIFT QUALITY
- SOCIETY
- GRAPHIC

DIVERSITY

YES

- SIMPLIFICATION
- GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE
- SIMPLE
- SIMPLIFIED
THE WORKSHOP

On the last day of the conference a workshop was arranged. The participants were divided into groups of 6-7 people. The groups each got a table where a question was presented. The group had 20 minutes to discuss and try to answer the question. When the 20 minutes were up, all groups switch tables, but the notes from the discussions where left on the tables.

The groups kept switching tables until all groups had discussed all questions. In total there was five questions to discuss, all on the topic urban trends.

At their last table the groups were told to summarize the notes that had been made. The summaries were presented as lists with the questions at the top. The lists were put up on the wall. Each person were handed one sticker per question and was thereafter told to mark the points that they found the most relevant.

The result was again summarized and is presented in the following pages. The concepts are listed in an order according to the number of votes given by the participants.

What kind of urban development is argued for in the context of recent urban trends?
1. Sustainability (participation, densification, recreation areas, nature + environment, inter-generational resource management, green transport/housing, energy)
2. City networks (short ways, walking distances)
3. Post-industrial revitalization
4. Reurbanisation (green belt, urbanity)
5. Urban compression/density + gated communities
6. Sustainable transportation
7. Greening
8. Urban farming + biodiversity
9. Smart city (IT)
10. “The European city”
11. Glocal city
12. Waterfronts
What kind of urban development is implemented in the cities in reality? Which joint terms/concepts could describe this kind of development (terms that could be compared with the trend concepts)?

Terms
1. Separation
2. Bicycle/pedestrians
3. Mobility
4. Green belt
5. Malls
6. Sprawl
7. “Planning from a human perspective is not always implemented.”
8. Flagship projects
9. Density
10. IT
11. Gated communities
12. Sustainability
13. Community gardens
14. Cars?
15. Less diversity- material, structure for example waterfront development

Concepts
1. The attractive city: revitalization, digitalization - hot spots, healthy cities – bike paths etc., landmarks – global competition, BIDS
2. The attempted sustainable city: ecological development, revitalization
3. The glocal city: digitalization - hot spots, same-same development, globalization, ecological development, McDonaldization
4. The unjust city
5. The smart city: digitalization - hot spots, McDonaldization, unmarked space
6. The compacts city: revitalization, “sustainable” development, transportation, BIDS
7. A city for the rich
8. The divided city: gated communities, segregation, society problems
Which role does the urban planner have when it comes to relating to urban trends? Which possibilities and limitations do we have?

**Role**
1. Balancing
2. Expert
3. Analyser
4. Lawyer of space
5. Mediator
6. To shape peoples ideas
7. Creator
8. Liar
9. Presenter
10. Observer
11. Researcher
12. To collect ideas
13. To present ideas
14. Visions
15. Moderator
16. Dictator
17. Director of the city life
18. Promoter
19. Writer/author
20. Sharing knowledge
21. Teacher
22. Dreamer

**Possibilities**
1. Life quality
2. Creativity
3. Society shaping
4. “The sky is the limit”
5. Increasing awareness of citizens
6. To make a change
7. Urban planners = servants?!
8. Flagship projects
9. Advices
10. To manipulate people
11. The cities always are changing
12. The possibility to choose
13. To create something completely different
14. To attract people
Limitations
1. Diversity
2. Economical limitations (money) through: ownership, landscape
3. Tree huggers
4. Ignorance
5. Money
6. Conflict of interests
7. Policy/law
8. Infrastructure
9. Time
10. Government
11. Citizens
12. Democracy
13. Human rights
14. Technology
15. Motivation
16. Lobbyist
17. Lack of knowledge
18. Misunderstandings
19. Interpretation
20. Deliberation

Which methods/tools does planners have to interpret and relate to the urban trends?

1. Communication: Visualization, interview, cooperation, concepts, vocabulary/terms, social media, press
2. Participation: public consultation
3. Education: Research, workshops, university, conference, experience, books
5. Open-mindedness
6. “Don’t get stuck in a trend!”
7. Scale: local context, compare to others - best practice
8. Persuasion: citizens, politicians
9. “Dare to try!”
10. Technology: Social media, internet, GIS
How do you create the city or the feel of the city which is the aim of the urban trends?

1. Include the history of the place, connect to history and make history
2. More cooperation between investor, city and people
3. Inspire people to take part in the development
4. Green spaces
5. Presence of people – life – citizens participation
6. Identification
7. Place making – identity, contexts
8. Human scale
9. Create communities, where people know each other
10. Social mixture
11. Unmarked/unprogrammed space – multifunctional space
12. Image
13. Arguments and long term thinking
14. Implementation of the infrastructure (accessability)
15. Affordable housing + living
16. Communication
17. Integration
18. Manipulation
19. Activate people
20. Make people understand/speak their language
21. Transparency
22. Tourist attractions
23. Inform people and politicians about different solutions
24. Create a city with owner based building groups instead of general investors
PANELDISCUSSION

During the conference a paneldiscussion was arranged, with participants from Germany, Poland and Sweden. The moderator was Gunnar Nyström, a lecturer in Urban planning at Blekinge Institute of Technology.

The participants were:

Jerker Söderlind, urban researcher and teacher, KTH city development

Moa Tunström, researcher, KTH urban and regional studies

Tomasz Rozwadowski, teacher, Gdansk University of Technology

Dorota Kamrowska-Zaluska, teacher, Gdansk University of Technology

Cornelius Scherzer, Prof., HTW Dresden

The questions that were discussed were similar to the ones that were presented in the workshop. The documentation of the paneldiscussion is presented in the following the pages.

Gunnar:

We are going to discuss some urban trends and when the panel has answered I invite you to give your comments and ask questions about this topic. For those who don’t know me I’m Gunnar Nyström. I work at the Swedish school of planning as a lecturer and I’m very happy now to have these qualified panellists here to discuss the urban trends. The topic has been set by the organisational committee; Siri, Jonas and others. Today and yesterday you have already listened to the panellists, but you (the panellists) can present yourself with your name.

[The participants present themselves.]

Gunnar:

Thank you very much. The main question for this seminar is; what is the main trend in urban development today? We have heard your various comments on this, but I want to ask the panel to answer this question shortly. What do you think is the main trend in urban development today?
Jerker:
I think it is that large cooperations are taking over planning as the state nations, city state and cities are loosing their power and decisions are made by big cooperations, like Carfur and IKEA. I read just a few days ago that IKEA is building a mixed use city, in Great Britain I think. So I think that we are having a new kind of medieval situation, where big cooperation are building mixed use areas on the private spaces, as a result of demand, higher costs for transportation and higher costs for oil. In Sweden I would say that the trend is that we talk about this and we do this, so I would agree on your criticism of the present discussion in Sweden, Moa. We are talking about the mixed use city but what are we seeing? We are seeing out of retail shopping killing almost every medium sized city in Sweden, so that’s the mismatch between that. But privatization and a lot of talk, I would say.

Moa:
I think that there are a lot of things that I and Jerker do not agree on. The answer to the question “what is the main trend in urban development?” depends on from which perspective you look at it or who you ask. It depends on if it’s about what planners are doing or how people are living or what the retail organisations are striving for. So this makes the question very difficult to answer. The obvious thing that I think about is the different ways of striving, and sometimes contradictory ways of striving for increased sustainability. That’s for me the main urban trend; that it takes different forms from different actors and differs in how they interpret what a sustainable city is, if it’s new environmental technology or if it’s a certain urban structure.

Gunnar:
How is the situation in your country, Tomasz?
Tomasz:
For me the question would be, to what extent the discussion about the urban trends is science specific and country specific and to what extent we can discuss the issue in general? I’m afraid we can’t. Urban science became so very advanced the last decade that all general discussion would be a little bit outside the subject in terms of certain countries. We do advanced knowledge about the city and I claim that it’s very objective knowledge but very much site specific, so we have to be very careful and aware about where we are, who we are and for whom we are working.

Gunnar:
Dorota, what do you say on this topic?

Dorota:
I don’t totally agree with Tomasz. I would say that I see some trends that are word [...] specific. The most general is the urban dynamics, which are getting bigger and bigger, in all contexts. Ofcourse, it will look different in different parts of the world, but all over the world the roles of the players of the development is changing. It is changing because more and more actors are involved. The balance between who has the most power and who has the least is also changing. I would say that the changes actually are the main trends now. What was right for a specific city one moment would in the next moment be totally untrue. At the same time it might then be right in an other part of the world, in an other city.

Gunnar:
Thank you. What do you say Cornelius?

Cornelius:
First or all I would like to challenge the term of sustainability, because it doesn’t say anything. There is a book called “designing sustainable cities, and in the final chapter it says; “there is no sustainable city”. I think that we have gone a long way in discussing that. We know that there are a lot of different aspects of sustainability and I think that we would be wrong to make a model of a city and say that this is the model that we will keep using and that there will never be any change. Many concepts of the sustainability are only looking at how I would keep up
something which I decided upon. So if you integrate change, that means that you have to integrate people, which raises the question of expertise. What are we doing as experts and who are other experts, so I believe that we have a role to play as experts, for example when it comes to looking at long-term trends, looking at needs which are not reflected upon that much. But we are also definitely dependent on the other experts, and I would very much like to have your view on who other experts are. From my perspective, children are fantastic experts. They are incredibly aware of what is going on. They have a view of what they want. And we all know from brain research and social research that if children have no room to experiment, to learn, in an appropriate experienced environment then we are running in to problems.

Jerker:
To continue, if you are going to look at urban trends you must go down to what matters. And forget about sustainability and environment, because that is not a driving force. The driving force today is the postindustrial economy in which more and more of us are sitting by computers. One part is the knowledge sector and the other one is the service sector; working in hotels, restaurant, bars and so on. We have a deindustrialisation in Europe, and all the production takes place in an other place. That’s one thing. So there are no smokestacks any more, no industrial areas any more. The second thing is that we have increased mobility and the prices for mobility, for moving things. To move one ton of something only cost today one twentieth of what it cost 100 years ago. So moving things and moving people means that we have an increased competition on where people locate and where companies locate. Why Karlskrona is dying is because the city here is not designed for women. I have a colleague, Lars Westin, from Umeå, who was interviewed in a newspaper here in Blekinge saying that if we have such a lousy city centre and both the retail, service and so on is so boring then women will not locate to Blekinge. Because they care about the [...] more then men. So the structure of industry; the German structure is that we have a growth of fewer and fewer very large cooperations. Today we have Audi, BMW, Volkswagen, Skoda. They have basically the same platform. So the big cooperations are winning and the very small will also survive. A mediumsized city, a mediumsized organisation, a mediumsized shop and so on - they are losing. So we have a situation with very mixed scales. The trend is then that all the big cities will survive and all the mediumsized will lose. The very small will survive because people are commuting, so we have an extreme situation
of longer and longer distance commuting. Either you go to work or you stay at home and do some work two days a week. So we have an increased competition between cities, but I don’t think that we should look at cities as something different from the general industry. If you make a survey about what has happened in the computer industry, hotel industry, car manufacture industry or clothing industry, H&M, they will have a very good picture of what is happening in the cities. As the cities have less and less money, just wait until the euro-crisis has gone to the bottom, I mean they have said that China will buy acropolis and I think that China will buy a lot of islands also. So we will see a situation where the political sector is going down so that we have a new sort of medieval situation. The best way to say what will happen is to read science fiction books. Today in Sweden we have more private security staff then we have policemen, and that goes in every sector. If you want to do something in urban planning don’t go in public planning go in private planning.

Tomasz:
I would like to raise two issues. First, if someone from Sweden is saying that the sustainability issue is not the driving force right now, that is strange for us, having all the organisations and new settlements from the last decade in mind and after seeing Europe in a way following the Scandinavian attitudes to the city. It sounds strange for us. The second issue is about what Cornelius said about expertise, citification, because I think that we always have to be careful about being the expert or having the expert. We also have a lot of wonderful example of cooperation with children in terms of inventing the city, but on the other hand I would be very afraid if the city would be designed by my father or mother. Very much so! It would be total collapse, disaster. So I claim that investigation, yes, but expertise is a domain of über-planning.

Gunnar:
I think that we should ask the audience here, since they also are experts on urban trends, and coming from a wide range of universities and cities. What do you think?
Moa: What did we miss when we answered the question?

Siri: I was thinking about the last part of the discussion and planning as a democratic process, because if the companies have a very big impact how does that affect the democratic process and where does the people come in?

Gunnar: I would like Moa to answer that question.

Tomasz: So you should just describe the democratic process in real planning but not everywhere, in terms of being effective for example? Take the example of China.

Moa: I don’t know but first I think that to equate planning to running a company is to me a bit problematic. Running a company is not the same thing as building a city or planning for dwellers or safeguarding public interest or environmental justice or integration. I mean a big company and a municipality have very different agendas. So I wouldn’t say that you should look at companies and call it planning. The other thing is that what you are pointing at is really a problem; what used to be a clear public task is now more of a public-private task and then the democratic process is sidestepped. I mean there are examples of this. So it’s definitely a problem, and it something that demands a lot of things from the legal system, from the people working in planning, how they view their role and their position. I’m from investigative journalism maybe, investigating scandals on local level.

Gunnar: So is there anyone else that would like to challenge the proposition that we are turning to a medieval kind of society? Is Germany really a medieval society already?
Cornelius:
I observe that the stakeholders who really take decisions which are visible for the future of the cities are less and less within the political system or controlled by the political system. You may regard that as positive if maybe ten people decide that they want to rebuild Frauenkirchen in Dresden, and it’s maybe 50 people at the end of the first year and they manage to raise 130 million worldwide and to convince the public sector to top it out with 30 million public money. So you can ask yourselves; who takes the decision? All the experts where against it for good reasons. So this is one example. The other example is; I showed you a slide about the discussion forum initiated by local people on Potsdam because they were not agreeing with the new urbanism project right opposite the city castle. They wanted to keep their East German wonderful situation public restaurants, public bath, beautiful park, and beautiful view back to the city. On this panel I asked the political representative council of the greens and I asked why they hadn’t made a lot more publicity on top of the official process on consultation in the public, which is available, you can do it on the internet and you can go there. There green party said that they had looked at it and that they didn’t think that it was so bad. They thought it was sufficient. Even political parties who have started to be very critical of the established consultation and planning system are now getting more and more integrated and are downscaling their expectations. And this worries me.

Gunnar:
I would like to ask Dorota if there are any groups defending the socialist construction in Poland today, the cultural heritage built after 1945?

Dorota:
Yes, we started to have this trend. The last few years there has been a quite load discussion in Poland, because they destroyed some very good monuments. The last one was a brutal destruction of a trainstation in kanta vista ?. There are people who are defending, but that would be mostly what we call experts.

Tomasz:
Even in facebook.
Dorota:
In facebook too, yes. What was new for us was that the discussion mostly was held in facebook or on other websites. But the society doesn’t appreciate it that much, though they do appreciate lower density of the modernist structures. The one which is now constructed in the [...] We now have urban sprawl but sprawl in Poland is not single family houses, it is 5-6 stairs high blocks. The cities are much bigger than they where before the 60’s. People start unconsciously to defend this. Something that I’ve also noticed is that we are in a specific situation in Europe, because in Poland the main parts of the prefabricated blocks have private owners. They are not social houses. And for example, in three cities the prices are for this kind of houses are very, very high. Sometimes the prices are even higher than in the inner city. The reason for the high prices is that these suburban blocks are in a better state than the, for example, 19th century buildings in the inner city where political problems have caused a lot of destruction. Here I have to agree with Tomasz, that this is site specific.

Gunnar:
Tomasz, is it so that facebook and other social media is changing the way of people trying to defend their values in terms of [...] You said yesterday that your father wouldn’t use facebook, if I understood you right? Is it just a small part of the population who can engage in this movement of preserving a certain environment?

Tomasz:
I don’t know about the situation here, but in Poland definitely yes. The process of building [...] society, due to the appearing of possibilities connected to the internet is absolutely tremendous. It’s incredible. People start to have interest and to express their will and expectation. They also start to discuss this. I think that the big challenge for us is how we can make this discussion important for the municipalities. Because right now it is two separate things. We have civil society in terms of discussion, but it’s absolutely outside the municipalities. I think that this is the main challenge for us as urban planners. We start to work with students and these subjects, to introduce and prepare them to work in the digital environment, because I’m absolutely convinced that it’s our environment as professionals.
Dorota:
I just have one comment to this angle. We have now more and more plans which are prepared by the society, alternative plans. For example, some of NGO’s are preparing alternative plans. They don’t just learn to criticise, they also learn to give own alternatives.

Student:
Yesterday you talked about that we will get more and more un-programmed spaces, and today you talked about wanting former shapes of the city, because that’s the style that people want and think is beautiful. Do you think that making the space unprogrammed is an easy way to go around the problem or do you think that is a solution for the future city?

Tomasz:
Yes, but the main point of being a human being is to exchange ideas and thoughts and analyse your life. You feel satisfied with your life if you have the possibility to discuss with others. You have probably 500 friends on facebook, because we like talking, we like to discuss. We are not separate human beings, because it makes us unhappy. The main point is how to create places that encourage people to discuss. The American attitude to urban planning right now is that you have to have a reason to be there. And it’s as easy as this. You have to make place where people have reasons to be at. That is enough. They will find a way. They will find how to act and what to do, but they have to have a reason. On one side it’s easy, but on the other it’s very complicated because it’s very difficult nowadays to invent the reason. Because people can realise lots of things from their home and do anything what they want from their desk at home. So to find a
reason for people to be somewhere is the crucial point for urban science for me right now. If we try to talk about trends I would say that this is the main one for me.

Gunnar:
Thank you. So I switch the topic and I ask you if you can say which tools that you use to interpret the situation of current urban trends? What are the media or the data that you use to make these statements about how it is today? Moa has to answer.

Moa:
There are so many different sources and again if you want to investigate what people think you talk to people and if you want to investigate what is written in planning documents you look in planning documents. So there are so many different sources, but I looked at a certain category of planning texts when I did my PhD and I think that I still am interested in what is put on paper in a certain context, what is written in news media, planning documents, public information material or on websites. I think that that is the result of planners and people talking to eachother. Then it’s put on paper and then it’s reflected upon, it’s not just something that is said in the spear of the moment. I guess that I’m sort of traditional in that sense, reading reports, newspapers, planning documents and research.

Gunnar:
Thank you. Jerker has an other answer.

Jerker:
I think that you must be a Marxist. You must go down to technology and economy and you should handle what is just said as just ideology. Ideology is just the tool, the oil that you can put into a machinery so that it can function. That’s Marx’s interpretation of ideology and talking. There are two answers to the question. Sustainability is just a tool and a catchword and behind that lays the facts, for example the price for extracting more oil in floating form or in oilsands in Canada and so on is rising. That makes it profitable to recycle. Aluminium cans contains a lot of energy and nowadays we are recycling them. So all this, I won’t say that it is sustainability, is something bad. It is only if we have scarce resources, then it makes sense to recycle. In the 80’s we had a removement that was driven by archaeology, concepts and
“we want to save the world”-attitudes. Today we have a removal that is driven by companies and economic interest. The same analyze you can do when it comes to what kind of urban environments you should build. I made a survey on similar three room flats condominiums in Stockholm. The result in short was in the city, exactly the same flat with the same equipment, same number of square meters cost 3,5 million Swedish kronor. Then we went to a suburb that was built in the 50’s and there the same kind of apartment cost 1,2 million Swedish kronor. In a housing area from the 1960’s it cost 750 000 Swedish kronor. Based on that I would argue that for the renaissance of planning, it’s also a possibility for renaissance of planning and for bold political discussions. Even the chambers of comers in Stockholm is a very strong driving force in developing the subwaysystem, to densification and so on. It means that in all other areas where you produce goods they can move, but you cannot move a city. There is a need for an overall planning and decisions made by politicians because that is connected to land. You cannot build a highway both there, there and there. You have to build it in one place. My proposal would be to introduce what they have in the US; a local property tax. A local property tax makes it favourable to invest and redevelop areas that are neglected and centred development. In US it is much easier than in Sweden because then the municipality can go in to start funding and the sell it off and the more that is built in central location the more the municipality owns. My second proposal I think is a hopeless discussion, but I’m going to present it anyhow. It is to tell the organization National road administration that they should redefine their models, from building highwaysystems from one city to the other and going outside of cities. If the main goal of the National road administration wasn’t to create streets for traffic where you could develop in a more urban way, and thereby forcing everything out of the cities then we would not have these external shoppingareas, external housing areas and external office areas. So it goes down to economies.

Gunnar: We are coming to the remedy of the situation, but I here you say that you sort of don’t really believe what people say. You deconstruct the message in order to find the underlying motives for what people are saying. It’s a bit in contrast to what Moa is saying about the importance of analysing the wording of what people say.
Jerker:
I think that it’s interesting to analyse the wording, very much so. And I think that me and Moa are just as critical to the comprehensive plan of Stockholm, but from different points of view. Maybe Moa thinks it’s bad and I think that some of the plans would be nothing. It would just be continuing building urban sprawl and highway projects in Stockholm. We are wasting money and just eating up land instead of doing what the planning document say. I will show you one picture of two suburban areas that should be linked together, but that will never happen.

Gunnar:
I’m going to ask Tomasz here. You were on this subject a few minutes ago. You said that the local authorities and the authorities are not in tune in what people actually discuss, because they don’t listen to the modern media. So how do you get your picture of the urban world, because you are a researcher so you are on the frontline.

Tomasz:
It is not easy to say. I would say that the answer to this question could be like that. Take into consideration; United States with their libertarian society and realisation of perfect freedom towards urban planning. One attitude. The best urban planning department in the united states used to say that they have the strongest economy in the world but the weakest planningsystem in the world. This could a kind of answer. Take the American deliberation attitude towards planning to Europe and try it, where it’s no dialogue at all. My question is if we are going to answer who is right and who is not because we have 500 million people there?

Gunnar:
I was just asking; how do you in a smart way get fresh data about what people really want in their built environment?

Tomasz:
Look into the local scale. In Poland the district councils are completely independent. They construct with the regular inhabitants and they try to improve the surroundings, and it’s a terrible situation because it’s a country saying do I not exist at all. So it’s not easy.
Gunnar:
So which is the greater community?

Tomasz:
[...]

Gunnar:
And you have district councils? Several?

Tomasz:
Every district used to have a district council and it's usually based on the civic society.

Gunnar:
So it's a confrontational attitude?

Tomasz:
Yes, and back to what Dorota said: these views are always in contradiction and we start to have a war attitude towards urban planning, because it's not a dialogue, it's a war.

Moa:
Just a short comment. It's very paradoxical that you at the same time as you ask for public engagement, people to engage in urban issues, when they do it often gets problematic.

Tomasz:
Yes, because the city had to report due to EU regulations, so we do make participation, but it's in absolute indifference, because it's simply us there that the participation starts on the level of the money. If the inhabitants can decide about the budget, that is participation for me. If not, we can talk about consultation for the space, for the decisions, but without any meaning. None in Poland would like to agree on letting the people decide about the budget.
Cornelius:
To answer this question, what I’m really interested in is longterm reviews of past projects, what you (Jerker) were telling about what are the prices of condominiums developing over 10, 20, 30, 40, 50 years. There are other aspects as a landscape architect I’m very much interested in the quality of open space, the vegetation, the type of use which you can document decades after the schemes were built. I agree that there are fantastic schemes of the 1950’s and 60’s which are highly valued by the inhabitants and we have a rather problematic area in the seventies and 80’s when the building industry actually took over and set the standards for the type of building. One of the problems is high-rise, that you should not disregard the problems of social mix because the allocation policy of households into certain quarters which have something to do with the financing of the quarters in the first place, is also a very important sector. So I suggest that you should look back and look at what is really successful in maybe a sustainable sense. Apart from that it’s really nice to look into recent journals and to look at the type of buildings and settings which are used as background for advertisement for any type of consumergroups; cars, cosmetics, holidays etc. I find it extremely interesting, this kind of picture and how it changes. There is a research of modern architecture and modern city life.

It’s not only the conservative picture which is run in the background.

Gunnar:
Is there anyone in the auditorium who wants to say something about this?

Siri:
I actually have another question about the tools, since that is the topic at the moment. I was thinking about trends; who decides how to follow the trends, Jerker says that it’s the companies and the economical interest, maybe it’s different in Poland and Germany, but which tools would you say that planners could use to affect the organisations or the people with the power to plan in the way…

Moa:
Planners have power also.
Siri:
Yes of course, but when I’ve discussed it in different groups it seems like it always comes down to an economical question. It’s always a very hard question about economics. So my question is which tools that planners could do to affect this? How can the planner work to implement the ideas that they have?

Gunnar:
I’m sure that Jerker can answer this.

Jerker:
I think that there are two answers to this. The general public role in urban development is to say no, that “we don’t want any more urban development”. We have organised the planning process according to the discussion of the American philosopher John Rawls. He wrote that if you don’t know where in the system you will be placed when you are designing the system of maybe slavery, low pay and very rich people. Then you will take out the rich people and you will have sort of a society where there is some kind of quality, but if you know where you are in the system then you will decide according to your interests. Those who have the most they have the most influence. That is to say that if you are going to make a new development in an area it is always so that those who have the view will oppose. Then you have to go beyond that position in the discussion. You have to search further; in workshops, long discussions, building models, looking at what you like and what your dream situation is and say that could a new development in this area actually give something back to you. Because people are opposing new housing in a housing area, but doesn’t keep anything else. I think that the example where we relocated the shops and so on actually created a situation where they knew that they would loose a lot of trees and green and space but that they would gain more of a social gathering place. The third question I think is linked to the discussion that Moa had about Husby. If I was living in an area that is sort of one of the least popular areas in Stockholm, if you have an increased income or win the lottery you would move someplace else. But if I would have a low income and an apartment there I would be absolutely against any kind of improvement in this area, because that would mean that prices would increase. So the only way of getting the people onboard for doing something is to make them the winners on economic terms of restructuring of the area. So if the people are protesting in Husby, and just very few shopowners, wanted to have im
proved traffic because their businesses are loosing, the solution would be to make the citizens of Husby owners of their apartments and maybe let them own some land around it, because then they would have an economic interest in improving the area and they would also have the power to make the decision. So put decisionmaking on a local basis, then you could have some kind of renaissance for a common discussion about what to do with Husby. They are from that point of view, according to John Rawth, in the lowest position. They know where they are and they want to stay there, they want to have cheap flats. Therefore they are opposing. We’ve had a lot of that kind of remaking projects in the 1960’s, 1970’s areas, and the only result is that you throw out the poor and in comes the lower middle class. But you have to go into long discussions and change the rules of the game, so the proposals would grow from those on the lower level. Otherwise you will only have “not in my backyard”.

Tomasz:
I would like to try to answer your question Siri. I think that you by this question express the need of the new course at the university, the new course about being affective, and what it means to be affective in contemporary culture. So maybe we urban planner shouldn’t trace exactly urban trends, but cultural trends, because this is a tremendous change, a kind of shift. 20 years ago we knew perfectly what to do when we wanted to realise a project. We had the process to go to the municipality, to the office, whatever. Now you can start a blog and get millions of dollars in a couple of weeks, spreading your idea, being affective. This is a matter of constructing your carers, your professional life. You can have brilliant ideas, but if you don’t express it the right way according to the new culture of cooperation, the idea will not exist. So we as teachers should invent a new way of teaching, because being affective nowadays with the culture of today is a separate issue, especially for urban planners. So how to spread the word and how to talk about theory, because we have theories, different ones, and they are sight specific. But how can we communicate in terms of our knowledge?

Gunnar:
Cornelius, how do you think that townplanners can affect the planning process?
Cornelius:
Well, I remember the contribution by Eva Dalman, in the beginning, and she said that you have to put a very strong view or picture in order to position yourself as a planner. The example that she used was this extension of Lund. And she said that we want to show this picture, to show that there won't be high raise, there will be enough green and so on, whatever you want to show. I think that it is a very important thing to visualize what you have to do, but you also have to catch other aspects, like social, cultural and economical aspects and show in detail what you want to do. I personally think that countries like, in some cases, the United States and Switzerland are very good because if you check on the internet there is information about planning schemes which set out in detail the consequences; what it costs, who the owner is. One aspect that is very important from my point of view is what the long term costs for running schemes are? So I totally agree with you (Jerker). Forget about motorways. It's just absurd what we are doing, investing, because we have to keep it up. Or forget about towns and everything. So try to find simple solutions. Somebody, I think it was also Eva, said that we have to think about reversibility of what we are doing. This should be proved, in a way, to the public or to people who are interested in our work. It is not the last words and it will not necessarily last 200 years or bring you to pay to much money for it every year. I think that this would be a requirement for producing-information, our expert point of view to the public and decisionmakers.

Jerker:
I just want to add a number. Between 10 times and 30 times more, is the cost of running a highway tunnel if you compare that to a tunnel or street on land. The struts puts its head in the sand and says that now I am invisible and noone can see me. That is the eco-kitsch way; to say that we are building highway tunnels and we can't see them so we are sustainable. If the public would know how much money that we spend every year, as supposed to education, schools or hospitals, for running these tunnels, then the tunnels would be less possible to build, because they are only built to keep up the car dependent society. So it's a very good idea, thank you.
Gunnar:
I have formulated another question that is similar to the former one; what instruments for change do you see in urban development, and you have touched it already. But what about the audience? Do we have any new ideas about this? You have probably been taught that the planning department launches various schemes for public debate, but do you see other instruments for promoting urban change?

Student:
I think that it’s very interesting when you are talking about the discourse and the words that you use as a planner when you talk about urban planning and architecture, cause it influences on how people look at the city and how people feel about the city. So if you live in the suburbs, where you often get to hear that it’s a bad place then you will also think that it’s bad, even though you might not actually feel it. So I think that planners have a responsibility for the words that we use. I think that we can make a positive impact on the city by using other kinds or words and an other kind of language. The mental image of the city.

Gunnar:
But I thought that it was rather refreshing to see your presentation images the very first moment of yesterday when you had some very satirical images about present development. The mainstream development. So words can also be very affecting in challenging the contemporary trend for urban development.

Student:
Speaking about what terms that planners use when they talk about urban planning and so forth and looking at the previous topic about which tools that planners use; would there be an interest in some sort of computer program, in an internet forum for example facebook or even textmessages to analyse and pick out words? If I would send my friend a textmessage saying that this morning it was not enough parking space, would that work as a tool? Would this allow the change in the city. It would have to be very fast. If you see that one month 1000 people are complaining about parking spaces, is it possible to adapt this quick? How quickly can you make changes? Yesterday you spoke about the adaptability of cities and you showed a video about augmented reality, but when it comes to the actual physical world, is it possible to change it fast?
Moa:
I'm just thinking that of course planning should adapt to what people want but there is this problem of longterm thinking, future generations and the question of biodiversity or the situation for animals, I mean those people who can not send text messages today, so maybe we shouldn't adapt to what a lot of people say today.

Student:
I thought of it as an unfiltered way to get the public's opinion.

Moa:
In the planning system, I think that we have contradictory images of the public. We want to know what they think but at the same time when they express what they think it's NIMBY and it's problematic. We can not deal with it, or they invent different ways of getting the public's opinion; new kind of workshops or dialogues, but then they don't really know how to put this into the system of planning documents and it becomes something on the side. So it's really difficult.

Jerker:
But it in major projects it could be mandatory put forward 2 or 3 alternative schemes. When I've talked to the politicians in Stockholm they say that ok we can have parallel competitions and then it's decided anyhow. It would be a much better dialogue if it's mandatory to have three different alternatives. There should be one mainstream, one traditional, one modern. Because how can people react when it's only one proposal? The only thing that they can say is that it's bad. That's the only thing that they can do. If you have three alternatives for a new university or a new housing area, then it becomes an interesting public dialogue. And that would also increase diversity and help us find new solutions. I'm not against development. I want new places to look much better and be much livelier than in the present and in the past.

Cornelius:
My experience is that in some juries that I have been member of regarding developing schemes there is a tendency of self centering us as experts and that has something to do with the constellation of people who are who are active in these juries. They tend to boil down the spectrum of solutions, which is given to the
more "middle of the road"-ones. Because they know that there is no point in proposing supermodern or superconservative, because it won’t happen anyway. So if you come in that situation it’s interesting to use planning competition and planning procedures to open up to a big diversity. One other remark that I would like to make is the instant change and reaction to for example internet reaction. Some years ago we made an internet forum, which was actually financed by a private developer in the inner city of Dresden and the slogan which we used to catch attraction was; “Ist Dresden ein Dorf?”, “Is Dresden a village?” It was to raise a reaction. It turned out to be extremely important to have a moderator to moderate the incoming comments of the population. Because there are some which you have to refuse and you have to write back; please stop this kind of comment, and at the same time you need someone who is sorting the answers. But in principles, as in an internet forum which is open for a certain amount of time and it’s press and exhibitions and if it’s transparent in terms of showing the result I think it’s a very good tool.

Student:
We experience the city in our everyday life and it becomes quite difficult to talk about it without a meeting, as what we’re having right now. So I think that a tool can be to pick up that instantaneousness that we have in textmessaging etc.

Cornelius:
When the people in Frankfurt suggested the green ring, one of the first actions was to take local people out of their houses and say that we offer walks. You just walk and you talk about your everydaylife and maybe things that I’ve never seen or though about before. Walks along or in neighbourhoods or at the edges of neighbourhoods which will be developed and so on. I think that it’s a brilliant way of getting people to enter with their opinions. And then in then end if it’s a constructive process also supporting the decisions.
Tomasz: I would like to raise the subject of tools again, because with my presentation yesterday I wanted to express the need of the theory. Before we start to do we have to have knowledge, we have to rework the new tool. I think that you understand that urban planning needs that, because this conference is in fact asking about this for me. Trends yes, but this is the question about what kind of material that we need. I do believe that the theory is the key. Without theory we are just regular citizens with opinions, or someone could claim that we are just terrorists for the space if we start to treat the space of the common good so there is no chance to have opinions about this, because we used to have different opinions. So my question to you is; do you feel the need of having theory in your professional life or not?

Student: Without theory you are a guesser that have a position. Your drawing is actually making changes to the city. If it's just guesses people will think that it's bad and they will have different opinions but nothing will happen. You also have to know about the costs, the future is difficult and we don't know what to do really and we need to sit down and think to find some path for the future. It might be quite wide but we have to find some paths that we don't want to work with.

Tomasz: As obvious as it is; there is the room for several theories. It's obvious. We don't need just one.

Student: Yes, exactly.

Student: I think that that's what it all comes down to; how to get a theory that reflects all of the different parts of the city. I can say that I base something on theory but that theory can still be opposed by an other theory. And I think that a lot in the city that we are criticizing today is based on theories, but it's just different theories. So how do we make theory into something that we can rely on? I think that that's an answer that we, with all the urban trends, are looking for as students. How can I do something that I know will be the right thing? I don't think that the question really has an answer.
Moa:  
It depends also on where you will be working. If you’re working in the public sector or in a private company, there will be completely different agendas.

Dorota:  
I’d like to raise one point. Between professionals we can argue about theories, but if we want to show the solutions to the public it’s very hard just to show our theories. It always has to be implemented up to a point. So I think that we need it.

Tomasz:  
There is no need to show the theories to the public. You have to show the vision of the future, based on the theories. They are not interested in theories; they just want to have a home, a car and so on.

Dorota:  
I would say then you are being a bit of an absolutist, because you only want one story, you’re the only one to understand it and shows one vision. If you want to show different visions based on different theories, then it’s extremely hard to show the result simplifying too much.

Jerker:  
I would like to comment on the experts theory. My criticism against experts does not mean that we don’t need experts. We need experts as chefs in restaurants, surgeons, people that land our airplanes, and that needs a lot of training. But the value of the food in the restaurant or if the plane crashes or not, and if the surgeon is good or bad is evaluated by the users. So the value is something that the user, not the expert himself, decides. When we are talking about competitions, there is a tendency if the experts are living in a post situation and maybe the result is not so good, and the same thing goes with theories. There is a need for theory, but the theory has to be based on empirical facts and studies on what works and what doesn’t work. So my argument was that the theory of the modern city being efficient and traffic safe and so on was not built on empirical studies, it was more of an idea when it was implemented and with, in many cases, a very bad result. So theories are ok, experts are ok if they are based on reality.

Student:  
But I thought that the role of the traditional planner, from the 30’s or something like that, has been to get people to act a certain way, and listen mainly to the politicians and not so much to the
people. And now we have to change and listen more and more to what people want and need.

Student:
I agree that you should build a society around studies that you have made, however, when these big changes were made in Swedish urban planning there were theories that hadn’t been implemented in reality, so for us now we can sit and say that this worked out good and this worked out bad, but similar to science; this was hypothetical. They could have a hypothesis that this would work out good, but it’s easy to criticise it but in the same way we have to think about that we can conduct science in two ways, one with a hypothesis and the other one on result basis. So since it hadn’t been used before it was an idea that had to be applied first and evaluated later, and that’s where we are right now.

Jerker:
But then you shouldn’t do as we did in Sweden. In 1931 and in 1947, we made the modernistic planning into law. You could not build two buildings close to each other. You could not build a house close to a street. It had to stand in the middle of the lot. So I think that the planning system then has to be much more accepting. The new urbanists of the US, they say; we don’t want our solutions to be the law. We want our projects to be accepted just as the majority of planning projects in the US are accepted, because they are following modernistic law. It is not allowed to have a street with buildings along both sides if you have xx-number of cars. So equal treatment of different concepts.

Student (Marcelo Rivera):
This is also a part of the society that changes all the time. We can say that, yes it’s the law, but we can change the law also.
Jerker:
Yes, but we have a problem if only one solution is accepted by law and the other is not. So the regulatory system should be more open and flexible, saying that you can try different ways of doing these things, as long as you fulfil a few base demands on fire prevention etc. When you come up with a new hypothesis, I would really like it to be built, then you would say; let’s build the project but do not let us change the law for the whole country according to the hypothesis. Let many hypotheses compete on equal grounds.

Student (Marcelo Rivera):
But do you think that the reason that we have built in this way since the 40’s is depended on that it’s a leak of architects that like this type of architecture and [...]? Or do you think that they actually think that it works and now 70 years later [...]?  

Jerker:
It was basically traffic planners that made the regulations, and I think that [...] made the traffic planning regulations himself. He said that now I’m proposing this idea or hypothesis and I know that if I would get the opportunity to build a project in the future I might be against the laws that I’m now stating. Then he published two very funny pictures by Sune Lindström, who was a traffic planner and an architect, and he said that the first picture was him building a ship inside a bottle. The second picture showed himself being put into the bottle. So he had an idea that maybe Building the regulatory framework now that I in short will feel that my freedom of designing will be limited. Then the bottle is too small. So I say; let’s expand the bottle. Let different hypotheses compete as in other areas of building and production.

Gunnar:
Thank you. Now I think that the time limit is reached and I would like to thank all the panellists for giving these much diversified answers to the questions.
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