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From the Margins to the Core

Histories of Environmentalism, Sustainability, and Planning, 1970s–2000s

Submitted by:
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This PhD thesis explores the emergence of European environmental activism practices after 1968 and the subsequent assimilation of the ideas, participants, technologies, aesthetics, and design strategies thereof from the 1970s and in the early years of the new millennium, when the concept of sustainable urban development became normative in planning. Comprising five articles and a cover essay, the thesis is a critical historical analysis of sustainable urban development as a planning discourse, tool, and typology.

Papers Ia and Ib frame environmentalism as *insurgent planning practices* with agency to transform normative planning from the margins. I propose the creation of a counter-archive of environmentalist zines to incorporate the stories and practices of these previously neglected actors, and as a means to reposition and expand the history of sustainable development, which is currently flat, simplified, or incomplete.

Papers II and III explore intermediate stages in the assimilation of environmental activism practices through two case studies. Paper II analyses the 1976 exhibition ARARAT (Alternative Research in Architecture, Resources, Art, and Technology), in which alternative technologies and architectures focused on environmental protection were displayed at the Stockholm Museum of Modern Art and at the 37th Venice Biennale. Paper III studies the ecological, bottom-up community Understenshöjden, whose experiments with circular planning were later adopted by the housing company HSB to green their housing stock nationally.

The final paper, Paper IV, tells the story of the 2001 international housing exhibition Bo01 in Malmö, which was designed to become a role model for urban sustainability. I explore how the entangled interests of public institutions, research, and manufacturing industries have shaped the now-institutionalized concept of sustainability and reflect on the ethics and design principles that sustainable practices manifest.

This PhD study follows the shift of urban planning and capitalist urbanization from causing environmental degradation to becoming key agents for environmental sustainability and highlights the potential of planning history to critically narrate and contest contemporary techno-managerial and growth-oriented approaches to sustainability.

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Doctoral Dissertation in Spatial Planning

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All you always wanted to know about sustainability (but were afraid to ask)

September 11, 2008 in statement
Tags: biofuels, china, ecologic footprint, emirates, global warming, gmo, suv, toyota prius, vegetarian
Author: Volume

You care for the environment. You try to use less your car, and you buy your food from local farmers' market. You keep your ecological footprint under control, and become vegetarian. You regard yourself as a progressive, leftist one.
You read lots of newspapers, and the internet. Suddenly you discover that GMOs and nuclear energy are good for the atmosphere, and your new Toyota Prius is not so sustainable as you thought. Perhaps those biofuels are not so bio, and George W. Bush starts his war (yet another one) against global warming, while the best ecocities look like gated communities in the Emirates, or in China.
That's too much. It is clear that something, somewhere, went terribly wrong. You need to take a break, and start to re-think the whole thing from the beginning […] [sic]

Blog post, Volume Magazine blog, 2008.

Ecologism without class struggle
is just gardening

Chico Mendes, quoted in Jacobin Latinoamérica, 2024.

1.
Introduction

In August 2005, The Guardian published an article entitled 'Swede Dreams' on a new neighbourhood in the country's third-largest city. The subheading read: 'Malmö's new neighbourhood is funky, environmentally friendly, and the envy of architects worldwide. There is just one problem. The locals hate it.'[1]

The neighbourhood was Bo01, and it had been newly developed for the 2001 international housing exhibition The City of Tomorrow, designed to become a model of sustainable urbanization. As the article highlighted however, there was a gap when it came to the exhibition's reception; on one hand, the columnist wrote, urban planning professionals were praising Bo01 as 'one of the world's top destinations for urban designers seeking inspiration',[2] calling it 'too perfect to believe'[3] and suggesting that 'when visiting architects and planners see what they're doing in Malmo[sic], they must either pinch themselves or fall to their knees and weep'.[4] On the other, the article reports, local residents were criticizing the neighbourhood for its high housing prices, lack of social diversity, and an overall sense that the area had been designed for 'healthy, affluent, almost entirely white residents'.[5] The article concludes with scepticism about Bo01's sustainability claims, commenting that 'there's nothing particularly "sustainable" looking about Bo01'.[6]

The case of Bo01 delineates some of the uncertainties and contradictions that sustainability poses for planning practices, where technological improvements in waste management and energy systems coexist with a governance model that privileges economic rationalities and technocratic control, thereby reproducing conditions of social segregation. When I started inquiring into the meaning of sustainability for planning, its materialization, and how a planning history can help clarify uncertainties and unveil contradictions, these very tensions became the foundation of this research.

From a disciplinary point of view, we know that sustainability had become a globally accepted discourse and practice in planning by the early 2000s, driving developments and redevelopments worldwide.

1 The Guardian, August 29, 2005
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid.
4 Ibid.
5 Ibid.
6 Ibid.

It is at the top of the disciplinary agenda, and as such it guides goals, objectives, tasks, and challenges, naming syllabus and degrees. In the words of planning scholar Scott Campbell, the term 'has won the battle of big public ideas'.[7] Despite this ubiquity, sustainability remains an uncertain signifier; there is no clear consensus on its meaning or on its design principles, sometimes described as a 'menu of options'[8] from which to pick and choose and increase real estate market value, rather than a framework for implementing an approach to urbanization that is less exploitative of nature.

Geographers Rob Kreuger and David Gibbs write that 'sustainability is so ambiguous that it allows actors from various backgrounds to proceed without agreeing on a single action'.[9] This ambiguity, as geographer Erik Swyngedouw has stated numerous times,[10] has led to increasing depoliticization; that is, what was a vigorous social movement of environmentalism in the 1970s now appears cleansed, articulated into a more technocratic, consensually accepted domain, effectively neutralizing the original condition of struggle.

This thesis work has sought to comprehend the meaning of sustainability for urban planning practices and is concerned with the shift from the alternative to the normative. I look at the journey of environmentalist concerns and practices from the margins of urban planning in the 1970s to their central role for government bodies by the early 2000s. The thesis explores how environmentalism initially emerged in opposition to state-led planning processes and welfare state resource-consuming practices and gradually became integrated into planning frameworks under the banner of sustainability. It takes up environmental humanities scholar Stacy Alaimo's questioning of how 'environmentalism as a social movement became so smoothly co-opted and institutionalized as sustainability'[11] to investigate this shift through the lens of planning history.

I do not view sustainability as a negative force for planning, and I fully acknowledge the critical importance of reducing energy use and water consumption, minimizing waste, using less toxic materials, and shrinking carbon footprints in urban developments, as well as the important role of the state in driving these efforts. My focus is on critically historicizing the idea of sustainability in urban planning; specifically,

7 Campbell, 'Green Cities.'
8 Rapoport, and Hult, 'The Travelling Business of Sustainable Urbanism', 1787.
9 Kreuger and Gibbs, Introduction, 5.
10 Swyngedouw, Impossible "Sustainability".
11 Alaimo, 'Sustainable This', 559.

I explore how environmentalist ideas and experiments are assimilated, adapted, or rejected as they become institutionalized and scaled up within the urban planning profession.

The histories underpinning the institutionalization of sustainability and their ongoing influence on contemporary normative planning have remained largely unexamined in planning historiography. Architecture historian Panagiota Pyla points out the risks of this lack and emphasizes the need to critically engage with the historical roots of sustainability[12]; she argues that if sustainability has become an ethical imperative, we must be vigilant about its origins, how the term is utilized, and how its meaning shifts to accommodate various – primarily economic – interests. Nonetheless, Pyla advocates for finding these histories again as 'a way of being vigilantly aware of possible pitfalls in the strategies developed in the name of the new "just" case.'[13]

A Note on the Terminology

Environmentalism, *sustainability*, and *planning* are all epistemologically flexible terms that might need further clarification.

The *environmentalism* I refer to is the broad, transnational socio-political movement aimed at protecting the planet from further environmental and ecological destruction and deterioration. In the context of Western Europe, what distinguished environmentalism in the 1970s from that of the early twentieth century is that the former 'condemned not only environmental degradation but also the society that did the degrading'.[14] The new wave of environmentalism called for a fundamental transformation of society's relationship with nature, advocating systemic change to industrial capitalism. The manifesto published in the first issue of *Undercurrents* – a British publication that was key for European environmentalism – saw industrial capitalism, with its focus on consumption and growth, as 'an unjust economy and power structure' where 'pollution, standardisation, depletion of natural resources, and the other concomitants of industrial way of life begin to bite increasingly into people's awareness'.[15]

Sustainability is tied to the discourse of *sustainable development* and comes from the very core of institutions. As a global agreement promoted by United Nations, the sustainability discourse permeates institutions on

12 Pyla, 'Counter-Histories', 14.
13 Ibid.
14 Veldman, *Fantasy, the Bomb.*
15 *Undercurrents*, Issue 1, 1971, 1.

all scales of society, from governments to corporations to industries, civil society, academic institutions, and individuals. To find an accepted definition, we must go back to the 1987 *Brundtland Report*, commissioned by the UN World Commission on Environment and Development, and the famous 'development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs',[16] in which two seemingly conflicting goals are reconciliated: economic growth and environmental protection.

This convergence of sustainability and development – or between environmental protection and economic growth – has been widely criticized by scholars,[17] who often describe sustainable development as a paradox,[18] a fundamental contradiction,[19] or 'a semantic reconciliation of the irreconcilable'.[20] In this thesis, I am interested in how sustainable development goals have materialized and how they are translated into practice. In the European context, these materializations have been shaped by the theoretical approach of ecological modernization,[21] which advocates for technological innovation to further advance industrialization and address environmental problems.[22] This approach seems to be evidence of sustainability's contradictions and ability to 'keeping things going'[23] even more, as its critics have pointed out. Following this, sustainable development can be criticized for perpetuating the same destructive patterns of consumption and growth that the environmentalism of the 1970s opposed.

Applied to urban planning, sustainable development materialized through the concept of *sustainable urban development*. In Malmö (exemplified by Bo01, as presented in Paper IV of this thesis), as in many other European cities, specific experiences of sustainable urban development are linked to the implementation of the local Agenda 21 that followed the 1992 UN Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro. This comprehensive plan aimed to promote sustainable development for 'the fulfilment of basic needs, improved living standards for all, better protected and managed ecosystems and a safer, more prosperous future.'[24] A significant aspect

16 Brundtland, *Our Common Future*, 8.
17 See e,g,: Sachs, *The Development Dictionary*, 108.
18 Krueger and Gibbs, Introduction.
19 McNeill, The Concept of Sustainable Development.
20 Springett and Redclift, Sustainable Development, 17.
21 Fisher and Freudenburg, 'Ecological Modernization'; Baker, 'Sustainable Development as Symbolic'.
22 Mol, Sonnenfeld and Spaargaren, *The Ecological Modernisation Reader.*
23 Alaimo, 'Sustainable This', 559.
24 United Nations Conference on Environment & Development, *Agenda 21*, 1.1.

of Agenda 21 was its focus on 'strengthening the role of non-government organizations'[25] as crucial partners in the shift toward sustainable development: 'formal and informal organizations, as well as grass-roots movements, should be recognized as partners in the implementation of Agenda 21.'[26] By integrating the already established networks, experiments, and work done by environmentalist practices – who had been operating outside institutional frameworks – these institutions take advantage of their knowledge and mobilization capacity. As the document states, 'those groups ... possess well-established and diverse experience, expertise and capacity in fields which will be of particular importance to the implementation and review of environmentally sound and socially responsible sustainable development.'[27] This thesis thus argues that sustainability may be understood as a conscious institutionalization of the ideas and claims of former grassroots organizations.

The term *planning* is not simple to define either. It may be broadly defined as the realization of an idea of a better place,[28] or a better world,[29] although what that entails is contingent on different people's approaches and changes over time and depends on place, as do the ways in which planning tries to realize those ideas. It is commonly assumed that planning inherently 'carries with it a normative orientation and a tradition of debate',[30] as planning theorist Patsy Healey has remarked. The 'planning project', then, would comprise the collective effort made by planners and other institutional actors to improve place qualities.[31] However, this has been questioned for being reductionist and for describing only the aspirations of progressively minded planners rather than reflecting how planning actually works.[32]

Some scholars argue[33] that in practice, planning is a contested arena shaped by broader societal struggles. Civil society, grassroots organizations, and activist groups bring their own visions of a better world, and these visions may or may not align with institutional norms and frameworks. These groups often advocate alternative approaches that challenge the dominant planning paradigms, emphasizing diverse,

25 Ibid., 27
26 Ibid., 27.1
27 Ibid., 27.3
28 Healey, *Making Better Places.*
29 Mukhtar-Landgren, *Planering för framsteg,* 38
30 Healey, The Universal and the Contingent, 200.
31 Healey, *Making.*
32 See, e.g.: Harvey, On Planning the Ideology of Planning, 165–85.
33 See, e.g.: Friedman, *Planning in the Public Domain,* 1987; Sandercock, Introduction; Miraftab, Insurgent Planning.

sometimes oppositional, ideas about how planning should serve the common good. In this thesis, I view planning as an expanded field that includes both the institutional and professional realms – the work of planners through policy and design mechanisms – and the agency of civil society, specifically of environmental activism, its claims, and experimental alternatives.

In short, there is both potential and contradiction in the relationship between *environmentalism*, *sustainability*, and *planning*. Environmentalism called for systemic change, and institutional sustainable development assimilates these ideas without challenging the underlying capitalist structures of economic growth. European urban planning projects like Bo01 in Malmö exemplify how environmental concerns became a crucial planning discourse that has continued until today. The way the discourse has actually materialized is less clear, as are its historical roots. This thesis is concerned with these gaps and aims to thicken knowledge, from a planning history perspective, on this current sustainability mess.

1.1 Situating the Research

This thesis in planning history intersects with other fields such as urban history, architectural history, and urban political ecology. My approach to planning history is that of the International Planning History Society (IPHS),[34] which defines the field as interdisciplinary and 'dedicated to the enhancement of interdisciplinary studies in urban and regional planning history.'[35] The theoretical and empirical foundation and the overall setup of this thesis have been shaped by the project within which it has been developed, namely the H2020 training programme urbanHist. The focus areas of the project, its approaches to European planning history, and the critical disciplinary discussions on planning history within the consortium, together with my involvement in the Department of Spatial Planning at Blekinge Institute of Technology (BTH) and the emphasis on (planning) theory, have influenced the orientations of this thesis.

In the book *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others*, theorist Sara Ahmed (2006) interrogates how objects appear to us and

34 Many IPHS representatives have been actively involved in the project's activities: Dirk Schubert (HafenCity University, Hamburg), Florian Urban (Glasgow School of Arts), Carola Hein (TU Delft), Stephen Ramos (University of Georgia), Karl Friedhelm Fischer (University of Kassel), Michael Hebbert (UCL London) and Stephen V. Ward (Oxford Brookes University).

35 As described on the IPHS website, www.planninghistory.org/about-2/ [Accessed March 7, 2024]

provide us with points of orientation. 'Orientations are about the direction we take that puts some things and not others in our reach',[36] she writes. They thus depend on spatial settings and the conditions these settings provide us. Ahmed talks about proximity, visibility, and possibility, objects that are within reach and others that no longer are but that but still determine our future choices; objects that remain hidden; objects that are impossible for us to reach, and objects we desire. I bring in her view here to situate the research and try to make sense of the alignments I have chosen to take, and to describe how the conditions provided by the urbanHist project, and the research environment at the Department of Spatial Planning at BTH put enriching and sometimes divergent ways of approaching this work within my reach. Writing a planning history thesis and looking at the concept of sustainable urban development, taking the perspective of challenging the empirical tradition of the field, and acknowledging that planning is more than what planners do by bringing to the forefront the agency of environmental activist practices are some of the directions taken with this thesis.

In the following section, I contextualize the thesis as part of the urbanHist framework, as well as my positionality as an 'early-stage researcher' within it (1.1.1). I then situate the research in relation to the field of planning history within the so-called 'new planning history' (1.1.2), and to researchers outside planning history who have adopted a critical approach to sustainable development by expanding sustainability knowledge towards alternative epistemologies (1.1.3).

1.1.1 urbanHist

The research and training programme within which I have developed this thesis work, urbanHist, is a Horizon 2020 project that recognizes that the European planning historiography has been strongly characterized by Anglo-Saxon scholarship and comprehensively ignored the diversity of narratives from peripheral European territories (e. g. the former Eastern Bloc, southern European territories, Scandinavia). The programme urbanHist aims to fill that gap and has adopted a pan-European approach as a leitmotiv. The programme was structured as a 'polygonal constellation'[37] of forty-eight scholars with diverse academic backgrounds and twenty different nationalities who convened for biannual physical meetings [Figure 1]. Fifteen of its members were PhD students with

36 S. Ahmed, 'Orientations', 552.
37 Welch-Guerra quoted in Bihlmaier, 'urbanHist: A multidisciplinary'.

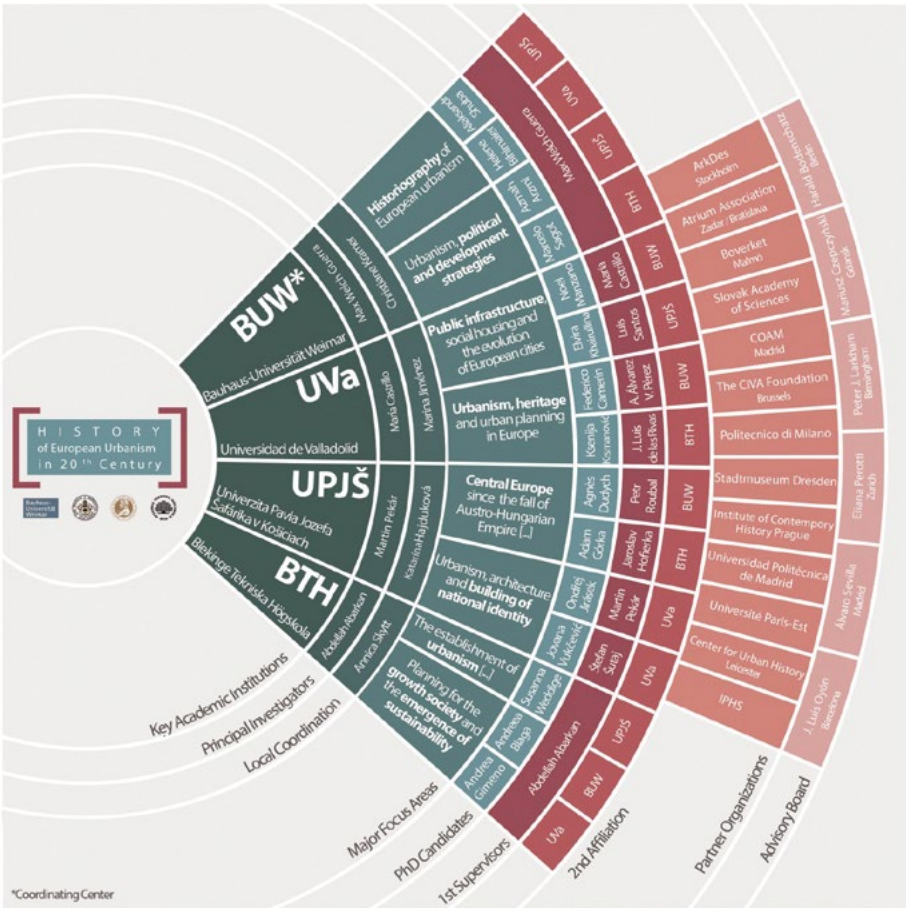


Figure 1. Overview diagram of the full urbanHIST consortium. Published in Bihlmaier, H. (2020). urbanHIST: a multidisciplinary research and training programme on the history of European urbanism in the twentieth century. *Planning Perspectives*, *35*(4), 731–739. Graphics: author

various academic backgrounds, distributed in four academic institutions – Bauhaus Universität Weimar, Universidad de Valladolid, Pavol Jozef Šafárik University in Košice, and Blekinge Tekniska Högskola (BTH). Fourteen are representatives from partner organizations such as archives, museums, associations, and academic institutions, and eight are planning historians, who comprise the advisory board.[38]

PhD candidate Helene Bihlmaier describes the project's general orientation as a response to three larger research tendencies in planning his-

38 For more information about the consortium's funding and duration, or for details about its members, see: www.urbanhist.eu

tory: the trend towards comprehensiveness; the promotion of transnational research approaches; and progressing disciplinary self-reflection.[39] These tendencies, adopted with more or less intensity in the individual PhD theses, have been important for modelling the design of the project itself.

First, *comprehensiveness* was addressed through the formulation of eight major focus areas within which the theses were expected to be situated. These focus areas concentrate on specific tasks of planning, such as the promotion of infrastructure, social housing, or societal growth, and emphasize the interrelation of planning and other subject areas, such as cultural heritage or environment. My PhD position, for instance, is anchored in the urbanHist focus area 'Planning for the growth society and the emergence of sustainability', which proposed linking economic shifts and planning tendencies by looking at the planning 'typology' of sustainable urban development, SUD. This will be elaborated more fully later.

In addition to the international composition of the urbanHist consortium in its entirety, doctoral students should embody the *promotion of transnational research* during their research stays. Mandatory research stays were designated by the programme and took place at two partner organizations and at the second supervisor's institution. In my case, I spent four months at the Swedish Centre for Architecture and Design in Stockholm (ArkDes), another four months at the Centre of Urban History (CUH) at the University of Leicester, and six months at the Universidad de Valladolid in Spain. At ArkDes, I worked on the institution's superb architecture collections, as well as on the collections at Moderna Museet. Besides gaining familiarity with archives and sources, I had the opportunity to work from the inside of the institution, engaging with important ethical questions about the production of historical knowledge and the role of archives in the reproduction of discourses and canons. My sojourn at the CUH brought me in contact with urban history. CUH is an international reference institution for the field and houses the Cambridge University Press Journal *Urban History*. There I found historians (and not architects or planners) who looked at urbanization processes and shifted the agency over the built environment towards civic life rather than adhering to the traditional planning history approach that puts the planner or designer at the very centre. Acknowledging that the agency over the built environment goes beyond simply what planners do – in my case, the agency of environmentalist practices over sustainable urban development – is an orientation that broadened during my stay there.

39 Bihlmaier, H. 'urbanHist: A multidisciplinary'.

Another important orientation that has developed is that it is necessary to engage with theory in order to scrutinize planning historiography and be able to formulate meaningful questions to the past. In the book *History and Cultural Theory,* CUH director and urban historian Simon Gunn stresses that theoretical assumptions always inform historical scholarship, even when historical writing is explicitly empirical or factual. He writes that 'history as a discipline is itself inherently theoretical'[40] and encourages historians to use theory to become more self-reflexive about assumptions that guide their research. This important takeaway from my stay at CUH impacted the theoretical orientation of the thesis, since 'compared to other social science research, explicitly theoretical work is rare in planning history'.[41] I will elaborate on this more fully in the next section. In Valladolid, on the contrary, I returned to the disciplinary approach to planning in which I was educated; that is, the understanding of planning as a technical discipline that governs local and regional development and urban growth through the work of planners or urbanists.

Orientations are not only directed by the choices we make in the present and that direct us into the immediate future. In Ahmed's view, choices are shaped by what is behind us from where we arrived, creating a loop between what is ahead and what is behind. 'What bodies "tend to do" are effects of histories rather than being originated',[42] Ahmed writes. I write this PhD thesis with my background as an architect educated in Spain and the approach to *urbanismo* taught at Spanish schools, which sets up for certain tendencies. For planning historians Javier Monclús and Carmen Díez, this approach – which also corresponds to Latin European territories' *urbanisme, urbanismo,* or *urbanistica* – pays more attention to urban forms, plans and projects and places less emphasis on the social, economic and political issues of planning than the Anglo-Saxon tradition and in Scandinavian nations.[43] Similarly, in his own debates with planning theorist John Friedman, planning scholar and anthropologist James Holton distinguishes two definitions of urban planning: one is planning as referring to urban design, mostly derived from architecture; the other is planning as referring to the application of social sciences in managing society inherent to the modern state.[44]

40 Gunn, *History and Cultural Theory*, 23.
41 Sorensen, 'Planning History and Theory', 35.
42 Ahmed, 'Orientations', 553.
43 Monclús and Díez 'Urbanisme, Urbanismo, Urbanística'.
44 Holston, 'Spaces of Insurgent Citizenship'.

This discussion on the diversity of approaches towards planning, both geographically – in Anglo-Saxon Europe, Latin Europe, the former Eastern Bloc, Scandinavia – and within disciplines – town planning, planning, urbanism, urban studies, urban history – was part of the *self-disciplinary reflectiveness* that was widely cultivated within urbanHist. The consortium debates crystalized in a roundtable entitled 'The Diverse Histories of European Urbanism in the long 20th Century' that took place at the International Conference 'Interpreting 20th Century European Urbanism' in Stockholm, an event that I designed and co-organized with Professor Abdellah Abarkan and my fellow PhD student Helene Bihlmaier in 2019.

I became acquainted with many different perspectives and traditions within the field through the promotion of mobility and transnationality in urbanHist, but my life also became nomadic, unstable, and chaotic. I changed residence five times during the first one-and-a-half years of the PhD studies. This led me to make the decision to arrange the thesis as a compilation of articles rather than the monograph form that is traditional for planning history theses. With all of the settling and transplanting, accessing materials and archives in different countries, presenting them at the urbanHist consortium meetings twice per year, I found myself in the dynamic of writing-while-on-the-move, where my computer was the only stable space. It mirrored the always-in-motion productive life that feminist philosopher Remedios Zafra anticipated in her 2010 book *Un cuarto propio conectado* (A connected room of one's own), which conceptualizes computers as 'returning home' devices in a time of 'excessive mobility'.[45] The compilation format of this thesis has allowed me to include some of the scattered materials from this initial life on tour.

Coming back to Ahmed's notion of spatial and material orientations, the point of departure for the PhD study was a four-page research proposal for the urbanHist focus theme 'Planning for the growth society and the emergence of sustainability', an interview, and the offer and acceptance of a doctoral position at Bleking Tekniska Högskola in Karlskrona, Sweden. I arrived at the institution having left behind a wild working situation as an architect in Madrid; suffice it say that I didn't arrive from inside, but from outside: outside planning, outside academia, outside Sweden. I turned from a practice-based career as an architect in my own country to research in Swe-

45 Zafra, *Un cuarto propio conectado*, 122.

den. The theme I addressed in the research proposal was broad and essentially linked privatization and deregulation processes in planning to the emergence and ubiquity of the concept of sustainable urban development, outlining an intimate link between 'neoliberal planning and sustainable urban development'.[46] The task was therefore to look at the contemporary phenomenon of the so-called sustainable urban development from a historical perspective. At the Department of Spatial Planning at BTH however, planning history is a residual part of the academic curriculum, and not a research interest field within the department. I thus had urbanHist and the field of planning history, a discipline that traditionally belongs to the humanities and is predominantly based on descriptive work, and in addition, close at hand, within my reach and at my department, were planning and planning theory and the social sciences way of doing research – each with its own conventions.

My affiliation with BTH and my stay at the Centre of Urban History at the University of Leicester underscored the necessity of engaging with theory in a field – planning history – in which this is not the main tendency. Urban historians at CUH naturally engage with theory, but theory is a central question at the Department of Spatial Planning in BTH, both in the educational training and in the research produced by the department. Here, as in other social sciences institutions, research without theory is inconceivable. Planning theorist Patsy Healey writes that theory is the guide for navigating the multiple uncertainties that planning as a discipline unfolds for the researcher: 'planning theories ask fundamental questions about a world which is never fully knowable and about the role of planning in such an unknowable world'.[47] During my years at the department, then, I was asked continually about the theoretical framework of my thesis at the research seminars. Beyond the initial 'moment of disorientation',[48] this questioning made me aware of the lacunae that the lack of theory leaves in planning history, prompting me to reorient my work toward scholars who approach planning history with a theoretical lens, as I explore in the next section.

Before proceeding however, I would like to explicitly acknowledge the European focus of this thesis. Although it perhaps diverges from the urbanHist project's general orientations, I have omitted manifestations of environmentalist spatial practices originating from peripheral

46 For further information see: www.urbanhist.org
47 Healey 'Introduction', 4.
48 Ahmed, 'Orientations', 544.

European territories such as southern or eastern Europe. This is mostly because the political circumstances in many of these regions between the 1970s and the 1990s prevented the agency of environmentalist struggles, and struggles in general, but it is also due to time limitations and difficulties accessing sources.

1.1.2 The 'new planning history'

Planning historiography has been a key discursive tool and shaped the planning discipline's self-perception.[49] Since Ildefonso Cerdá's foundational *Teoría General de la urbanización* (1867), early theories and manuals have used history to present urban design as an inherent part of the civilizing process, legitimizing an embryonic discipline and profession.[50] This approach persists today, and we find historical introductory chapters in most comprehensive planning literature works.[51] Descriptive narratives revisit foundational texts, pioneering schemes, and the work of selected male planners to present an image of planning as an unproblematic and progressive endeavour.[52] Although this role has been called into question during recent years, most of planning history literature remains largely positivistic and descriptive, relying on empirical case studies that aim to uncritically fill knowledge gaps rather than engaging in theoretical innovation.[53]

The urbanHist training programme generally reinforces this traditional descriptive tendency. Since its ambitions consisted of rectifying historical gaps from peripheral regions in Europe – understanding Anglo-Saxon historiography as the centre – the transnational perspective has been the cornerstone of the programme.[54] Most of the production within the project, as well as the internal training, has revolved around the identification of these gaps, their narratives, and transnational comparison. However, critical analysis and theoretical experimentation have not been central to the discussions, nor has the programme included seminars on planning theory or other theoretical frameworks.

49 Sevilla Buitrago, Introduction, 8.
50 Bihlmaier, 'Historiography *avant la lettre*?'; Sevilla Buitrago, 'Introduction', 8-9.
51 Freestone. 'Learning from Planning's Histories'; Ward, Freestone and Silver, 'The "New" Planning History'.
52 Sandercock, Rewriting Planning History.
53 Watanabe, 'Searching for the Framework'; Ward, Freestone and Silver, 'The "New" Planning History', 244.
54 Looking beyond national borders is part of the tendency of writing planning histories. Authors such as Leonardo Benevolo, Anthony Sutcliffe, or Françoise Choay initiated this tendency around the change of the millennia. The shift has evolved towards a global scale in what is called Global History of Planning. See Watanabe, 'Searching for the Framework'.

In the introduction to the *Routledge's Handbook of Planning History* (2017), which is the most ambitious, rich, and recent attempt to map the planning history evolution as a field, Carola Hein examines the reasons for the above limitations. The main motives for the lacunae, she explains, may be the relative youth of both planning and planning history as independent disciplines, the lack of history courses in planning education curriculums, and the absence of training for planning historians in academic institutions. The latter particularly, she argues, leads to a flagrant lack of self-reflection.[55]

Nonetheless, blurring the border with urban history and the emergence of more critical perspectives in the 1980s produced bright reference examples of theoretically informed planning histories. I refer to examples as Christine Boyer's engagement with Foucault; Dolores Hayden's feminist critique; Anthony D King's post-colonial studies; or Leonie Sandercock's frame of insurgent planning practices in the late 1990s.[56] Rather than assuming history to be positivistic, these scholars produced significant advances in the diversification of topics, experiences, and planning agencies under scrutiny, and combined theory and traditional historical sources to constructing the narrative and contribute to a critical planning historiography. While the call for a critical turn played a fundamental role in renewing the field, it did not bring about a paradigm shift in planning history as it did in planning theory.[57] 'The "new" approach in planning history', as Ward et al. call it, is still comparatively minor.[58]

I identify my work within this critical tradition that 'challenges empirical history'.[59] I am very much indebted to the groundbreaking work of Leonie Sandercock and her denunciation of systematic exclusions in 'official' planning history, which she calls the dark or *noir* side of planning history.[60] Unlike its American counterpart, which has been studied recently,[61] the agency of European environmental activism throughout the long 1970s – returning to the focus of this thesis – remains largely unexplored in European planning historiography; hence, it may be considered *noir*. Sandercock demands planning historians to pay more attention to theory for disciplinary self-reflexivity:

55 Hein, C. The What, Why, and How.
56 Boyer, *Dreaming the Rational City*; Hayden, *Redesigning the American Dream*; King, Exporting Planning; Sandercock, *Making*.
57 Sevilla Buitrago, Introduction, 9.
58 Ward, Freestone and Silver, 'The "New" Planning History', 246.
59 Freestone, 'Writing'.
60 Sandercock, *Making*.
61 Scott, *Architecture of Technoutopia*.

> There are systematic exclusions which emerge from the authors' epistemological positions concerning the proper subject and object of planning, concerning the writing of history, and concerning the relationship of planning to power and the power of systems of thought. In order to understand these systematic exclusions, we need theory.[62]

Similarly, architecture historian Mark Jarzombek calls for restoring historicity in critical historiography. 'How does one historicize the history of our discipline's intellections now that these intellections have impacted the very history that will investigate them? How could we as interpreters slip beyond the limits of tradition?'[63] Getting rid of the positivistic and progressive of the modern narrative is a burden that requires the substantial and sometimes difficult effort of 'taking up the uncomfortable position of an uninvited guest in its own house'[64] by pointing out the gaps, inconsistencies, and weaknesses in one's own discipline, according to Jarzombek. Jarzombek and Sandercock advocate for the adoption of theory as a way of linking the present to the past and producing meaningful narratives. Theory, Sandercock writes, can be 'a transformative act'[65] for the field of planning history.

Bringing contemporary concerns about climate change and the current debates about normative sustainability to the historical analysis facilitates the formulation of new questions and the unveiling of overlooked stories about the relationship between planning and environmental protection.

1.1.3 Towards 'other' sustainability epistemologies

There is a vast amount of academic literature on sustainable urban development from the point of view of planning, much of it focused on examples that constitute successful practices. Through case studies, researchers seek to show how sustainability plays out in different places and under different policies by analysing policy documents[66] or developing systems for rating cities based on indicators, assessment schemes, or measurable

62 Sandercock, *Making*, 13.
63 Jarzombek, 'A Prolegomena', 197.
64 Ibid., 203.
65 Sandercock, *Making*, 26.
66 Beatley, *Green Urbanism*; Birch and Wachter, *Growing Greener Cities*; Wheeler, *The Sustainable Development Reader*; Fitzerald, *Emerald Cities*; Slavin, *Sustainability*.

goals.[67] According to planning scholars Rob Krueger and David Gibbs, this quantitative, managerial, and measurable approach presents sustainability in an acritical and optimistic tone, sustained by data from analytic firms, research institutions, and businesses.[68] This perspective situates the origins of sustainable urban development in the multi-authored Brundtland Report, thereby ignoring the earlier agency of environmentalism and the influence of its spatial and technological experiments and ideas.

However, an emerging stock of (planning) literature from different fields, particularly Marxist scholarship in urban political ecology[69] and feminist environmental humanities,[70] takes a less optimist stance and suggests that sustainability marketing is not supported by actual environmental outcomes,[71] pointing to the recurrent social and spatial injustices produced by sustainable planning practices.[72] Moreover, these scholars argue that the aforementioned uncritical and optimistic perception of sustainability tends to depoliticize the concept of sustainable urban development (SUD) and its built outcomes, presenting it as the best and only environmental option, thereby stifling the imagination of alternatives.[73]

To counteract this, many of these scholars turn to local communities, protest movements, and non-human actors to open up imaginative spaces for other possibilities[74] and to reveal the contradictions of normative planning and its sustainability practices. These alternatives, referred to as 'Other Worlds'[75] by geographer Gibson-Graham, 'Altering Practices'[76] by architect Doina Petrescu, or 'other stories'[77] by philosopher of science Isabelle Stengers – to mention only a few – reject the capitalist, consumerist, and resource-consuming western model of sustainable development and growth.

Environmental humanities scholar Stacy Alaimo brings historical attention to the overlooked consequences of assimilating prior environmentalist struggles into a normative framework and suggests that 'we may well ask how environmentalism as a social movement became

67 Fitzerald, 'Eco-districts'; Mori, 'Review of Sustainability'.
68 Krueger and Gribs, Introduction.
69 Swyngedouw, 'Depoliticized Environments'; Heynen, *Neoliberal Environments*; Kaika, *Turning up the Heat.*
70 Alaimo, 'Sustainable This'; Schalk, Gunnarsson-Östling and Bradley, Feminist Futures.
71 Holgersen and Malm, '"Green Fix"'.
72 Checker, 'Wiped Out by the "Greenwave"'.
73 Swyngedouw, Sustainability, 38.
74 Heynen, Kaika, and Swyngedouw, *In the Nature.*
75 Gibson-Graham, 'Diverse Economies'.
76 Petrescu, *Altering Practices.*
77 Stengers, I. *In Catastrophic Times. Resisting the Coming Barbarism*, Open Humanity Press, 2015.

so smoothly coopted and institutionalised as sustainability.'[78] The ideas and experiments of environmentalist individuals or groups have been discredited as non-professional, utopian, or dismissed as the actions of 'tree huggers',[79] and they have remained outside planning historiography. Sustainability, Alaimo warns, has become a 'politically embedded practice that is too important to be left to the experts'.[80]

Following this, I explore the possibility of including the agency of western European environmentalist practices and the agency of 'ordinary experts' to historicize sustainable urban development. By tracking the ways in which these 'other' practices became normative, I aim to formulate a productive critique of the assumptions, ideological entanglements, inconsistencies, and questionable goals of today's normative sustainability.

1.2 Structure of the *Kappa*

This PhD thesis comprises this cover essay and five papers. The role of the cover essay, *kappa* in Swedish (literally 'coat'), is to situate and give coherence to the theoretical, methodological and empirical choices made in the papers, and to join together the papers in a wider discussion. The kappa thus highlights the broader theoretical and empirical contributions of this research.

Chapter 2 is a 'state of the art', or a literature review, and follows this introductory chapter. It identifies historical gaps and tendencies in planning and architecture history literature regarding the historicity of sustainable urban development. Chapter 3 clarifies the aims and research questions in relation to the gaps indicated in the previous chapter.

In Chapter 4, I present the theoretical approaches that have informed my research position, both throughout the papers, and in the cover essay. In Chapter 5, I show the research process and explain my work on the archives and how I have processed the primary sources in greater detail.

Chapter 6 consists of summaries of the five papers. I discuss the main findings in the three parts of Chapter 7. These correspond to the overarching research questions presented in Chapter 3, and to different critical approaches outlined in Chapter 1. Finally, Chapter 8 contains the conclusions of the research and points at directions for future research.

78 Alaimo, 'Sustainable', 559.
79 Ibid., 558.
80 Ibid.

1.3 List of Papers

Paper Ia

A Gimeno-Sánchez, 'A Look to Transgressive Planning Practices: Calling for alternative sources and actors' in M Welch-Guerra et al. (eds.) *European Planning History in the 20th Century. A continent of urban planning*, New York and Abingdon: Routledge, 2023, 233-245, https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003271666-25

Paper Ib

A Gimeno-Sánchez, 'Urbanism of Zines: The potential of environmentalist zines as sources for planning history', Planning Perspectives, 37(6), 2022, 1115-1146, https://doi.org/10.1080/02665433.2022.2025887
Planning Perspectives Prize 2024 – Highly Commended

The article and chapter are continuations of the paper 'Dilettante Builders: Undercurrents and the environmentalist habitat in the 1970s', which was presented at the *Second urbanHist Conference "Interpreting 20th Century European Urbanism"*, in the panel 'Cities and the Environment'. Ebba Högström and I co-chaired the panel in October 2019.

Paper II

A Gimeno-Sánchez, 'Environmental Ideas Coopted: ARARAT Exhibition, Stockholm, 1976'.
A&U Journal of Architectural and Town Planning Theory. Vol. LIV Number 3 – 4, 2020, 180-195.

The article is the continuation of the conference paper 'Archaeology of Future Sustainability: ARARAT 1976' presented at the *First urbanHist International Conference* in UPJS Kosice (Slovakia) in April 2019. https://doi.org/10.31577/archandurb.2020.54.3-4.3

Paper III

A Gimeno-Sánchez, 'Green Housing Dream: From Welfare Equality to Deregulation and Desire: Understenshöjden, 1989,' in Proceedings of the II International Congress Cultura y Ciudad, organised

by AhAU (Asociación de Historiadores de la Arquitectura y el Urbanismo [Spanish Association of Historians of Architecture and Urbanism]), Granada, 23–25 January 2018, 1397-1407. ISBN 978-84-17301-24-8.

Paper III was the first paper I wrote, and my intention has always been to rework it for inclusion in my thesis. Recently, in July 2024, I presented a revised version at the 20th International Planning History Society Conference in Hong Kong entitled 'Environmentalism from the WC: Understenshöjden, Stockholm, 1989-1995.' In the presentation, I used the empirical material combined with new material, mostly from HSB publications, and incorporated Selznick's cooptation theory to discuss the assimilation of both the planning ideas and members of the ecological community by the housing company HSB. Rewriting this paper remains a pending task for after submission.

Paper IV

A Gimeno-Sánchez, 'The City of Tomorrow? The Bo01 Housing Exhibition in Malmö, Sweden, 2001, as Model of Sustainable Urban Development', Architectural Histories, Volume 13(1), 2025, 1-30. https://doi.org/10.16995/ah.11566
Note: The version printed in this dissertation corresponds to the uncorrected author proof.

The article is the continuation of the paper 'When Environment Becomes Spectacle. Bo01 Housing Exhibition – or the City of Tomorrow – in Malmö, Sweden, 2001' which I presented in a higher seminar in the Department of Spatial Planning at BTH in November 2023.

2.
Finding the Gap: Sustainability in planning history literature

Having situated the research within the urbanHist research project and outlined the structure of the PhD thesis and its papers, the present chapter is dedicated to the state of the art or literature review. It provides an overview of what has been written about the history of the concept of sustainable urban development and explores the shifting relationship between planning and environmentalism over the last fifty years. First, I look at the historization of the concept itself. I then present two key thematic and argumentative strands from planning and architectural history that inform this study. These strands provide a framework for my analysis and highlight critical knowledge gaps that have shaped the formulation of my research questions.

Little has been written about the history of sustainable urban development from the perspective of planning, which is the field to which this study aims to contribute. General historiography, however, links the emergence of the concept *sustainable development* to United Nations conferences, commissions, and reports, situating its official birth in 1987 with the publication of the so-called Brundtland Report, *Our Common Future.*[81] This seminal document followed the UN Conference on the Environment in Stockholm in 1972 – considered when environmental diplomacy emerged – and the UN Conference on Human Settlements, Habitat, in Vancouver in 1976. In both events, rapid urbanization processes were highlighted as a destructive force for the environment.[82]

Beyond the famous definition of sustainable development as 'development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs', and its framing around the 'three pillars'– human, environmental, economic – the Brundtland Report brought together two questions that were important for Europe's approach to *sustainable urban development*: the institutionalization of selected practices, people, and ideas stemming

81 Caradonna, Introduction.
82 Ibid., 19.

from the environmental struggles of the preceding decades, and the coupling of environmental concerns with economic growth.[83]

The institutionalization of environmental concerns took place parallel to the massive deregulation, privatization, and decentralization processes that went on in many European welfare states, producing enormous changes to the role of planning. Writing about the neoliberalization processes in the 1980s in Europe, planning historian Peter Hall called it 'planning turned upside down';[84] planning went from 'regulating urban growth, to encouraging it by every possible means.'[85] Hall describes how urbanization became an important economic asset in which to invest: 'cities, the new message rang loud and clear, were machines for wealth creation'.[86] In a new situation where responsibilities were decentralized and public management moved towards local governance, planning offices implemented growth-oriented policies and formed partnerships with private actors to enforce them and adopted processes of 'urban entrepreneurialism',[87] a term coined by geographer David Harvey. Planning historian Stephen V Ward describes this phenomenon as the 'marketization' of planning policies, where cities engaged in fierce competition and 'intended primarily to enhance and demonstrate their attractiveness to mobile investment and consumption.'[88]

This was also when urbanist Richard Florida advocated for the creation of attractive urban environments to appeal the 'creative class' for the new knowledge-based economy: 'places that attract people attract companies and generate new innovations, and this leads to a virtuous circle of economic growth.'[89] Therefore, I wish to highlight that we cannot understand the popularization of the concept of sustainable urban development in Europe without acknowledging the marriage of environmentalism and growth in the context of market deregulation, municipal entrepreneurialism, and the conceptualization of cities as attractive for investment.

83 For example, the European Environmental Agency was established in 1993; the European Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive was approved in 1991; various Environmental Protection Acts were endorsed in most European countries in the late 1980s; and cities such as Freiburg (1990), Copenhagen (1993), or Barcelona (1995), developed their own local Agenda 21 to promote sustainable urban development. Environmentalist NGOs and activists were integrated as consultants into formal decision-making processes, policy development, and implementation of initiatives. Caradonna, 'Introduction', 159.
84 Hall, *Cities of Tomorrow*, 415.
85 Ibid.
86 Ibid.
87 Harvey, 'From Managerialism'.
88 Ward, *Selling Places*, 2.
89 Florida, *The Cities*, 139.

A comprehensive action plan presented at the subsequent UN Conference in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, entitled Agenda 21, listed specific tasks at different levels of society for the century to come. One of them was 'promoting sustainable urbanization'.[90] With no further specifications provided as to its actual implementation, and in the context of local governance mentioned above, many European countries adopted Agenda 21's tasks at the municipal level. Laws were passed that required all municipalities to produce their own Agenda 21 documents, and planning offices became responsible for handling the uncertain question of urban sustainable development. In 1994 in Sweden for instance, a new law (SOU 1994:36 Miljö och fysisk planering) required municipalities, which had the full responsibility for planning since 1987, to concretize their interpretation of sustainable development within physical planning processes.[91]

Thus, in a context of deindustrialization and economic crisis, municipalities found a way of killing two proverbial birds with a single stone in the vision of sustainable urban development: addressing economic recovery by attracting investments and employment whilst at the same time shaping a type of urbanization that 'protects' the environment. Still in its experimental phase, sustainable urban development started to entail rewards in the form of public funds, international recognition, and an improved public image.[92] Hall paints a clear picture of how planning was trying to reinvent itself: 'City administrators and city planners found themselves in competition with other cities as they sought to reconstruct their economies, replacing dead or dying industries with new ones, and rebuild the shattered industrial landscapes that resulted from this cataclysm economic change"[93] What he described as the 'competitive city' and 'sustainable city"[94] became the same thing for many western European cities since the turn of the millennia.

In practical terms, sustainability has become closely linked to circularity, technology, and privately managed certification systems such as LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design), BREEAM (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method), and C2C (Cradle to Cradle Certified). Architect William McDonough and chemist Michael Braungart introduced the concept of sustainable

90 Agenda 21, 7.21.
91 Nilsson, 'Planning for Sustainability'.
92 Busch, 'Green Attraction'.
93 Hall, *Cities*, 10.
94 Ibid.

design in *The Hanover Principles: Design for sustainability* (1992), which later crystallized in their book *Cradle to Cradle: Remaking the way we make things* (2002). Their work promoted a circular economy model focused on reuse and recycling. Although these certification systems are private sector initiatives, they significantly influence public policies and regulations, with public institutions often requiring them for certain projects.

But what can we actually find about the genealogy of sustainability in urban planning historiography? The answer is not very much. Despite the huge impact of sustainability – at least discursively – on planning practices, planning historiography has not tackled the history of sustainability in a comprehensive way. According to architecture theorist Simon Guy, the history of sustainability is 'unresolved, with attempts to historicize sustainability appearing to manage little more than to catalogue a confusing proliferation of movements and styles, resulting in a *cul-de-sac* of confusion and a rather pessimistic outlook.'[95] Similarly, architecture historian Kim Förster states that 'an environmental history of architecture is still in its infancy' in comparison to the work developed by the young disciplines of environmental history or environmental humanities.[96] Although Guy and Förster's analyses refer to architecture history, the same may be applied to planning history.

Peter Hall's seminal book of urban planning history *Cities of Tomorrow* contains only a five-page section devoted to the impact of 'The Search for Sustainability'. The planning historian states that, although sustainable urban development from the 1990s had become a 'Holy Grail' and 'everyone was in favour of it', it lacked historicization, and the task of historicizing it was difficult as 'nobody knew exactly what it meant'.[97]

Nevertheless, Hall agrees with some of the SUD design principles: compact urban form, buildings facing the street, promotion of places reachable by foot and by bicycle, or 'building forms that conserve energy and minimize emissions of pollutants' are common patterns. Yet, he vaguely situates the New Urbanists' proposals as one of the practical implementations of the sustainability ideas. Similarly, planning historian Eric Mumford, who recently published *Designing the Modern City. Urbanism since 1850* – a wide survey of planning ideas, theories, and practices since 1850 – also names the American New Urbanists as early implementors of

95 Guy, 'Introduction', 567.
96 Förster, 'Undisciplined Knowing'.
97 Hall, *Cities*.

sustainability ideas.[98] In the same chapter, he links them to the European urban renovations events of the IBA Berlin in 1987 and the Barcelona Olympics in 1992, citing their celebration of the compacity and walkability of the historical city.[99] There is, however, no mention of the social struggles and radical experiments that accompanied urban regeneration processes in Berlin and Barcelona.[100]

The *Routledge Handbook of Planning History*, instead, links sustainability to the concept of liveability, tracing a genealogical link from the sanitary reforms at the end of the 19th century to the plans to improve hygiene and air quality in the beginning of the 20th century, connecting the garden cities and the postwar New Towns.[101]

Historical narratives about the relationship between the built environment and the natural environment – e. g. nature as something to preserve, to contemplate, to venerate, to exploit – depend on its conceptualization, on the positionality of the human towards the natural world. In her *What is Nature?*, philosopher Kate Soper writes that our contemporary views are a result of, on the one hand, the Romantic ideas of the 17th and 18th centuries and the tension between the positive aesthetic and the destructive and sublime power of the natural world, and on the other hand, the Enlightenment desires for control-by-design of nature's physical powers.[102] Building on Soper's approach, architecture theorist Peg Rawes points out that planning and architecture discourses have paralleled this twofold dialectical condition, taking anthropocentric (human-centred) and non-anthropocentric (non-human centred) characteristics of nature.[103] Following the same dichotomy, but in Marxist terms, urbanist Matthew Gandy distinguishes a 'first nature' that would have existed independently from human intervention, and a 'second nature', shaped by human activity, that has encompassed the entirety of the natural environment in contemporary times.[104] Geographer Nik Heynen proposes 'neoliberal nature' as a subcategory of 'second nature'. [105] The term entails the total commodification and marketization of nature in contemporary neoliberal power systems.

Different conceptualizations, then, have informed planning and its terminology, from the term 'landscape' to 'environment' in the

98 Mumford, *Designing*.
99 Ibid., 371.
100 Förster, 'The Green IBA'.
101 Schott, 'Livability'.
102 Soper, *What is Nature?*
103 Rawes, *Relational Architectural*, 3.
104 Gandy, *Natura Urbana*.
105 Heynen and Robbins, 'The Neoliberalization of Nature'.

1880s, and to 'environmental' discourses in the 1920s, 'ecological' in the 1970s, and the more recent 'green' developments or 'sustainability' since the 1980s.[106]

Environmentalism in the 1970s was substantially different from the traditional environmentalism of the early 20th century, when environmentalists tended to be conservationists interested in wildlife and landscapes. Part of the emancipatory social movements after May 1968, environmentalists since the 1970s condemned not only environmental degradation but the society doing the degrading.[107] On the contrary, sustainability advocators around the turn of the millennium are embedded in an eco-modernization discourse where the focus is on technology and science to decouple growth and environmental damage, and therefore does not require systemic change.[108]

The limited planning histories related to environmental protection are thus diverse, scattered, and sometimes contradictory, depending on the researcher's conceptualization of the relationship between humans, planning, and the natural world.

Architecture scholar Susannah Hagan, for instance, in *Ecological Urbanism: The Nature of the City,* foregrounds a view of the city as a literal and metaphorical ecosystem, what she calls 'artificial ecosystems'.[109] Cities are 'an engineering model'[110] that achieve interdependent efficiencies and life-preserving redundancies as natural ecosystems, demanding and supplying resources, generating energy, captioning water, and recycling waste.[111] Hagan outlines three possible urban ecological models – the garden city, the compact city, and the continuum ideogram – and a historical context for each of them to validate her proposal. The genealogies start with Ebenezer Howard, Patrick Abercrombie's London Metropolitan Green Belt and the phenomena of 'green infrastructures', and arrive at the 1980s eco-city Vauban in Freiburg. The second moves from Le Corbusier's Ville Contemporaine (1922) to the New Urbanists in the 1990s and the contemporary compact model, and finally, from Moisei Ginzburg's Green City and the Russian Disurbanists in the 1920s, Frank Lloyd Wright's Broadacre City (1935), Patrick Geddes' *Cities in Evolution* (1913), and Ian McHarg's *Design with Nature* (1967) to shift the focus on

106 Hawkes, *The Environmental Imagination,* 26.
107 Veldman, *Fantasy Bomb.*
108 Fisher and Freudenburg, 'Ecological Modernization; Baker, 'Sustainable Development'.
109 Hagan, *Ecological Urbanism,* 4.
110 Ibid.
111 Ibid.

the regional scale. Hagan's efforts to contextualize ecological urbanism reveal the complexity of the task and how the selection of precedents often reflects the researcher's intention to legitimize a practice though the lens of history.

In the article 'The Complex History of Sustainability' published in *Volume*, urban studies scholars Amir Djalali and Piet Vollaard attempt to draw a timeline that spans from 1000 to 2040, tracing the evolution of theories, movements, and actors that preceded notions of sustainability. The illustration shows an escalating complexity in the field over time and a peak in names and theories since the 1970s.[112] Moreover, it shows the impossibility of covering them exhaustively – not least within this chapter of the cover essay of this thesis.

Acknowledging the 'cul-de-sac of confusion'[113] – to revisit Simon Guy's perspective about the state-of-the-art of the historization of sustainability – I bring two argumentative strands found in planning history literature that have helped me identify gaps in historiography and guided the formulation of my research questions. The first situates the origins of ecological concerns in the anarchist lineage of planning; and the second highlights how North American counterculture dominates the historical narrative of environmentalist practices.

2.1 The Anarchist Roots of Environmentalism

> 'History', said W.R. Lethaby, 'is written by those who survive, philosophy by the well-to-do; those who go under have the experience.' But once you begin to look at human society from an anarchist point of view you discover that the alternatives are already there, in the interstices of the dominant power structure. If you want to build a free society, the parts are all at hand.[114]

The anarchist lineage of environmentalism is important for this PhD study, particularly that communicated via the work of planning historian José Luis Oyón, who traces the origins of environmentalist planning to 19th-century anarchist thought. He focusses on Eliseé Reclus' city-nature fusion and Piotr Kropotkin's city-country integration,[115] linking their ideas to contemporary approaches to bottom-up urbanism and natu-

112 Djalali and Vollaard, 'The Complex History'.
113 Guy, 'Introduction', 567.
114 Ward, *Anarchism*, 20.
115 Oyón, *Autoconstrucción*; Oyón, *La ciudad*.

re-city fusion.[116] Oyón's work is significant for historicizing anarchists' spatial ideas such as urban decentralization, self-sufficient communities, provision of countryside infrastructures, and nature protection in urban environments, and also for highlighting how these visions were tied to radical socioeconomic shifts. In particular, he stresses that the anarchist vision of an emancipated, cooperative, and self-sufficient society required a revolutionary break with capitalist models of spatial planning (e.g. food supply, housing, and municipal public services).[117]

Official historiography has widely recognized the link between planning and the anarchist tradition. Actually, 'The anarchist roots of the planning movement' is a key aspect and the title of the first chapter of Hall's *Cities of Tomorrow*.[118] Hall shows the influence of anarchist ideas such as cooperation and decentralization and the holistic understanding of the city-region from Ebenezer Howard and Patrick Geddes before tracing a genealogical path to Lewis Mumford's regionalism. Oyón and geographer Marcelo Lopes de Souza have pointed out that Hall's historiography disregards the impact of anarchist ideas outside the Anglo-Saxon context, as well as its further influence in the 1970s, neglecting authors as e.g. Murray Bookchin and his 'municipalism', 'social ecology', and visions of a 'liberatory technology'.[119]

Recent scholarship highlights the concepts of *critical regionalism*, as developed by Kenneth Frampton, and *habitat*, introduced by the younger generation of CIAM participants (Team X), as pioneering approaches to rethinking planning and ecology.[120] In linking these ideas to Geddes' legacy, architectural historians emphasize how these practices underscored the trans-scalar interdependencies between domestic space, the city, the region, and the environment. However, by focusing primarily on spatial strategies, they overlook the socio-economic transformations proposed by earlier anarchist thinkers, which challenged the hierarchical structures of capitalist states.

This PhD research addresses this historiographical gap, arguing that key principles of environmentalist movements in the 1970s – such

116 Oyón and Kuzmanic, 'The Anarchist Strain'.
117 Although the approach is presented in his seminal *Fields, Factories and Workshops* (1899), Kropotkin's book *The Conquest of Bread* (1892) also anticipated some of the ideas. In both writings, he conceptualizes post-revolutionary reorganization and self-management of the city through socialized consumption established to provide basic needs before restarting the production after the revolutionary successes.
118 Hall's approach is continued, for example, in Hillier and Healey, 'Intro to Part II'.
119 Bookchin, *Social Ecology.*
120 Avermaete, 'Revisiting Critical Regionalism'.

as community autonomy, self-management, cooperative mutuality, ruralization, and self-construction – must be historicized as part of the anarchist planning tradition.

Interestingly, geography scholars situate these early anarchists' geographers as proto-post-humanists, arguing that their ideas – especially Kropotkin's – 'challenged the occidental philosophical tradition that put humans at the top of the naturalistic hierarchies and anticipated today's relational ideas on hybridity, more-than-human interaction, and even affectivity.'[121] Seeking a more ethical relationship with nature becomes crucial for understanding the inconsistencies of contemporary sustainable developments. I return to these ethical dimensions of sustainability in the discussion (Chapter 7), where I bring in anarchist visions of technology as a means for non-domination of nature.[122]

2. 2 The Hegemony of North American Histories

Historiography has largely focused on the impact of the North American counterculture of the 1960s and 1970s in shaping environmental consciousness, often dismissing contributions from European emancipatory movements. North American back-to-the-land movements, along with the famous *The Whole Earth Catalogue*, are commonly assumed to be precedents of an 'ideologically oriented sustainability lifestyle',[123] Back-to-the-land movements entailed voluntary migrations from cities to the countryside in search of an alternative way of life. The countryside was thus the ideal setting for an autonomous socio-spatial change from the cities, which are seen as socio-environmentally degraded due to urbanization and as promoting a depraved urban lifestyle.[124] Urban historian Dolores Hayden's *Seven American Utopias: The Architecture of Communitarian Socialism 1790-1975* (1979), and Liselotte and Oswald Mathias Ungers' *Kommunen in der neuen Welt 1740-1971* (1972) explore various examples of these anti-urban communal living experiments, all of which were located far from urban centres, emphasized self-sufficiency, and displayed a range of anti-modern architectures.

The idealization of the countryside as a space of autonomy contrasts with the urban-centred institutionalization of environmentalist practices promoted by the establishment. Architecture historian Felicity Scott highlights the contradictions of this process in *Outlaw Territories* (2016),

121 Springer, *The Anarchist Roots*, 29.
122 Bookchin, 'Towards'.
123 Sandström, 'Resurgent Back-to-the-land'.
124 Ibid., 546.

unveiling the complex alliances between North American institutions (diplomats, governments, politicians, and scientists), activists and NGOs. Crucially, she situates these alliances within the broader expansion of global governance structures and the rise of neoliberal capitalism.

Scott explores how planning practices extended beyond the local or regional level to the global scale in response to the looming threat of environmental collapse, with planning transformed into a post-political, hyper-technical discipline grounded in scientific management, measurable data, and experimental technologies.[125] According to environmental historians Paul Warde, Libby Robin and Sverker Sörlin, this technological turn caused a rupture in the validity of environmental knowledge. Rather than being produced by individuals, communities, or local groups, environmental expertise became an 'aggregative expertise',[126] embodied in multi-authored mega-reports commissioned by international bodies and reliant on computer-generated data. This shift fundamentally redefined who holds legitimacy to speak up for the environment and who does not.[127]

Scott's work has been instrumental in informing this thesis, not least for its presentation of the contradictions between establishment and anti-establishment practices and illumination of how planning and architecture became technocratic global practices driven by data management, which has been key for the new structures of global governance. Her work opens the door to further explorations of similar dynamics in geographies outside the dominant North American context.

125 Scott, *Outlaw Territories,* 9-33.
126 Warde, Robin and Sörlin, *The Environment,* 22, 27, 134.
127 Ibid., 16.

3.
Aims and Research Questions

This PhD thesis is within the urbanHist focus area 'Planning for the growth society and the emergence of sustainability'. According to the programme, this focus area links 'neoliberal planning and sustainable urban development' and aims to explore sustainable urban development from a planning history perspective.

The literature review has revealed the fragmented historization of sustainability as well as a disconnect between historical European environmentalism – and the influence on it of anarchist thought – and the contemporary techno-managerial sustainability practices that emerged parallel to the rise of neoliberal capitalism. This research bridges these two perspectives and explores how sustainability has been shaped, institutionalized, and, in some cases, depoliticized. It seeks to uncover alternative planning trajectories that draw on evolving grassroots-, cooperative-, and self-managed traditions, offering a critical lens through which to scrutinize the dominant sustainability discourse in urban planning. The general purpose of this collection of articles and this cover essay is to increase knowledge on the history of sustainable planning by addressing this historiographic gap and exploring the link between environmentalist ideas and sustainability practices that has hitherto been overlooked.

The first aim of the research is therefore *to identify environmentalist practices, experiments, and ideas and assess their agency to planning.* Environmentalist activism in the 1970s in western Europe was inherently messy and heterogeneous and left behind a fragmented historical record. Approaching it from a planning history perspective raises critical questions about sources, as well as about the production and validation of historical knowledge. By incorporating the histories of environmentalist practices into planning history, the study also *addresses the methodological challenges of recognizing the agency of non-professional actors and integrating undisciplined activist sources to the historical narrative of sustainability.*

Accordingly, the following questions will be investigated:

- RQ1: What is the agency of the environmental activism of the 1970s in shaping planning? Which practices, experiments and ideas have been overlooked or dismissed in historiography?
- RQ2: How can planning historians identify, approach, and address this neglected agency? What sources should

be examined? Which voices and knowledges should be raised, and how do they relate to the established canon of planning historiography?

The popularization of sustainable urban development ran parallel to policy reforms that affected planning, such as market deregulation, decentralization of government responsibilities, municipal entrepreneurialism, and an overall new conceptualization of cities and urbanization as attractors for investment. Sustainable urban development became a way of 'taking care' of the environment whilst promoting growth and at the same time producing a new, green, and attractive image of the city. The normalization of green values in planning therefore took on a techno-managerial and commercial character that diverged from the collaborative, experimental, and almost dilettante proposals of environmental activism.

This study explores the transition from grassroots movements to institutionalization, and the second aim of this thesis is *to investigate how the environmentalist practices of the 1970s transferred ideas, experiments, technologies, and people along the journey from alternative or activist epistemologies towards institutionalized and normative sustainability, and the results of this transference*. The study thus explores the following question:

- RQ3: Which of the ideas, experiments, technologies, practices, and people were assimilated and scaled up, and which were discarded as sustainability became more institutionalized and normative? What is the legacy of environmentalist practices from the long 1970s in contemporary sustainable urban development?

Each article serves as a distinct case study and examines a different media manifestation of spatial practices driven by environmental concerns, representing various scales and stages of the process of becoming normative, from the 1970s to the new millennium. There is a gradual scaling-up of the papers' focus, from environmentalist zines to a museum exhibition, a bottom-up urban ecological community, and a state-driven international housing exhibition. Presented in a loosely chronological order, the articles as a whole follow different representations of environmentalist ideas along with the process of them becoming normative.

Paper Ia and Paper Ib focus on the ideas, practices, and experiments of environmentalism as a grassroots movement in opposition to authoritative planning. Papers II and III look at two intermediate stages of the institutionalization of sustainability and show participation

of environmentalist practices in government events. Finally, Paper IV shows the adoption of sustainable urban development as a driving force for urbanization, exemplified by a government-promoted housing exhibition. The timeframe is the long 1970s to the 2000s, specifically from 1968 and the emergence of urban protest movements – amongst them environmental activism – to the beginning of the 2000s, when the concept of sustainable urban development started to be tested on the ground in large-scale developments.

Although most case studies are Swedish, confining this research to the historicity of Swedish sustainability planning practices has never been intentional. Instead, I situate these practices within broader transnational networks. The environmentalist movement of the 1970s and the rise of sustainable urban development in the 1990s were both shaped by cross-border exchanges of ideas, practices, and policies, particularly within the European context. I emphasize these transnational connections, aligning with a global history perspective that examines how environmental and planning discourses circulated, mutually influenced one another, and became institutionalized across different regions. This wider lens is especially reinforced in the *kappa*, where I highlight the interwoven nature of local and global sustainability narratives.

4.
Theoretical Approaches

As mentioned in Chapter 1, I am indebted to the work of 'new' planning historians that, under the influence of post-structuralism, identify the urgency of bringing theory to the field of planning history to challenge its empirical bias and its omissions, and as a way of making planning history present. Following this intellectual lineage, I use a combination of theoretical approaches to sustainability, urbanization, and growth to challenge dominant historical narratives on planning and the environment.

I begin this chapter by acknowledging the agency of actors outside planning, foremost influenced by the writings of Leonie Sandercock (1998) and James Holston (1995). I then go on to discuss the displacement of environmentalist knowledge and practices from outside and against planning to the very centre of normative planning. I use the minor theory of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari (1986) and the cooptation theory of Philip Selznick (1949) to unpack the transference between the alternative and the normative. The former sees the process as progressive, while the latter sees it as disempowering. Combining them, I examine the extent to which environmentalist practices retain their disruptive power or become instruments of governance. Finally, I elaborate on how I use perspectives from urban political ecology to study sustainable urban development as a neoliberal planning practice from a historical point of view [Figure 2].

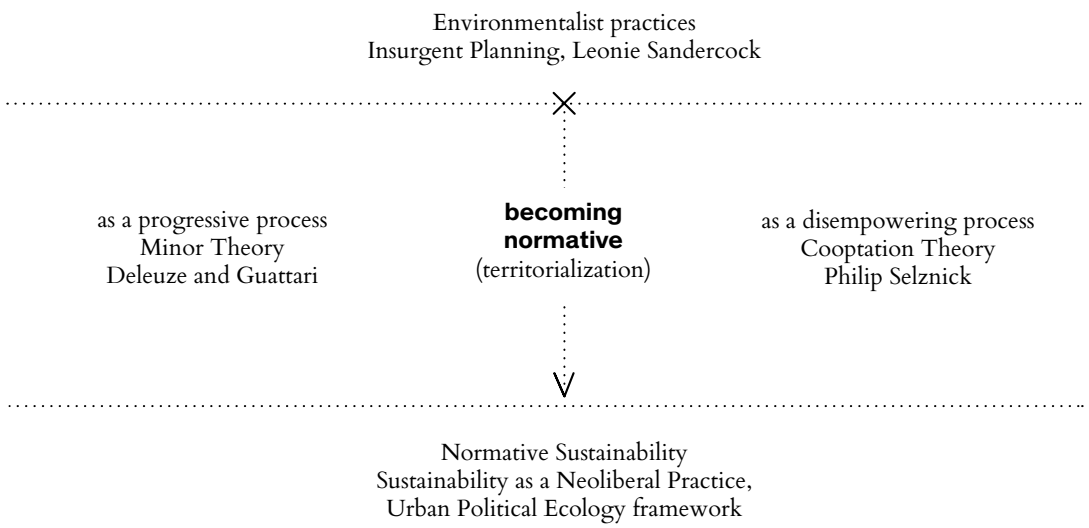


Figure 2. Diagram of the relational structure of the four theoretical approaches of this thesis.

4.1 Environmentalism as Insurgent Planning Practices and Histories

Leonie Sandercock launched two publications in 1998: the volume *Making the Invisible Visible* and the book *Towards Cosmopolis*. Both build on James Holston's work on 'insurgent citizenship'[128] and develop the theoretical space of 'insurgent planning histories'[129] to trace and include the narratives of practices of resistance to the state-directed, modernist planning in planning historiography. Following the first aim of the thesis, namely, identifying environmentalist practices and assessing their agency in planning, I bring the framework of insurgent planning histories to conceptualize environmental activism (RQ1).

Holston's notion of insurgent citizenship emanates from the analysis of ordinary actors, such as women's associations, networks of immigrants, or squatter settlements, which, he states, are typically neglected in planning processes. Despite their exclusion, they 'introduce into the city new identities and practices that disturb established histories'.[130] Precisely because of their agitative nature, Holston argues, these actors are not merely side effects of planning endeavours, but essential elements that persistently challenge planning aims, processes, and outcomes, and therefore they cannot be ignored.

Building on Holston's approach and putting it in a historical stance, Sandercock proposes the framework of insurgent planning histories: 'stories of people and organisations and agencies who are practicing a radical, democratic, and multicultural planning in the interstices of power, sometimes in the face of power, and sometimes (although less often) from positions of state power.'[131] Utilizing planning theorist John Friedmann's concept of radical planning , which characterized radical planning as a necessary outgrowth of social mobilization,[132] Sandercock describes insurgent planning as a repertoire of practices such as 'mobilising constituencies, protests, strikes, acts of civil disobedience, community organization, professional advocacy and research, publicity, as well as the proposing of new laws and new programs of social intervention'.[133] In other words, practices that challenge and imagine alternatives to normative planning.

128 Holston, 'Spaces'.
129 Sandercock, 'Introduction', 2.
130 Holston, *Insurgent Citizenship*, 48.
131 Sandercock, *Towards*, 129.
132 Friedman, *Planning*.
133 Sandercock, *Towards*, 204.

The framework stems from Sandercock's earlier criticism of what she calls 'official' planning history. According to the Australian planner, official narratives portray planning as a flawless, heroic, and progressive endeavour, integral to the western project of modernization, and believe that development is possible through science and technology.[134] Official narratives would principally deal with 'the story of the modernist planning project, the representation of planning as the voice of the reason in modern society.'[135] Sandercock identifies the bias in planning history, which is written from within the profession and results in an epic version of planning as an unproblematic endeavour that highlights the genius of individual planners and designers; this approach disregards and casts aside the epistemologies and agency of ordinary people. She calls these hidden and latent stories the *noir* side of planning history.[136] The framework of insurgent planning histories challenges these official narratives and proposes filling the *noir* gap by acknowledging the influence of social mobilizations.

Since the publication of this theoretical framework over twenty years ago, actors such as ethnic communities and women have rightfully been encouraged to take their part in planning historiography.[137] However, as shown by the literature review, the agency of environmental activism, and the agency of European environmentalism more specifically, remains largely neglected. Following Sandercock's proposal of resisting planning history omissions, I revisit environmentalist practices as a contesting force to normative planning in Papers Ia and Ib, bringing their ideas and actors as active subjects with agency within planning.

Environmentalism was part of the heterogeneous and emancipatory protests that followed May 1968, which theorist Fredric Jameson called a reaction to the emerging post-Fordist and post-industrial society.[138] It entangled its own critique on environmental grounds with the more general criticism of the modernist city and the state-directed and top-down modernist planning processes. Referring to the context of postwar USA, architecture historian Joan Ockman describes this reaction as a response to the 'sense of alienation and lack of personal agency experienced by individuals in highly bureaucratized and technological mass society';[139] this may be extended to apply to European welfare states. Modernist urbanism started to be perceived as a serious threat, especially after

134 Sandercock, 'Introduction', 3.
135 Ibid., 2.
136 Ibid.
137 See for instance Sandercock, *Making*.
138 Jameson, Architecture and the Critique, 67.
139 Ockman, Toward a Theory, 142.

it became an issue for institutions like the UN. At the 1972 Stockholm Conference about Human Environment, for instance, horrifying scenarios were described about the imminent 'major collapse in many of the larger cities of the world' that would 'endanger the precarious existence of human settlements',[140] creating what Paul Virilio called a 'permanent state of insecurity'[141] due to the destructive capacity of urbanization. Environmental activism turned fiercely against normative modern planning. The destruction of urban nature, the toxicity of urbanization processes, the demolishment of traditional buildings, and the pollution caused by a car-dominant transportation model were recurrently criticized, with criticism manifested in 'protests, strikes, and acts of civil disobedience'.[142] In addition to criticism, environmental activism proposed alternatives, many of which grew into full-scale experiments in various formats, eventually becoming 'new laws and new programs of social intervention'.[143]

Conceptualized as insurgent planning practices, then, the stories of environmentalist practices help reposition and expand the flat and incomplete history of sustainable development. Recognizing its agency within planning entails recognizing the transformative capacity of practices at the margins of normative planning, 'in the interstices of power', and even 'in the face of power',[144] as Sandercock writes. This revision entails methodological challenges such as shifting disciplinary networks and scales and including non-professional voices and sources. This question will be expanded upon further in the method chapter.

4. 2 Alternative and Normative Liaisons: Minor Theory and Cooptation Theory

The second aim of this thesis is to track the transferences of planning ideas and practices from alternative environmentalist epistemologies to institutionalized and normative sustainability frameworks; that is, from soft, unprofessional, and experimental technologies, aesthetics, and design strategies outside the canon, into the hard and objectively verifiable field of institutionalized planning expertise. I employ two theoretical frameworks to follow the displacement: minor theory[145] and cooptation theory.[146]

140 Ward and Dubois, Only One Earth, quoted in Goldsmith, 'The Ecologist'.
141 Virilio, *The Administration.*
142 Sandercock, *Towards*, 15.
143 Ibid.
144 Ibid., 17.
145 Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka.*
146 Selznick, *TVA and the Grass Roots.*

Minor theory follows the relationship between the alternative and the normative positively, as dynamic, mutually enriching, and co-dependent. Conversely, cooptation theory adopts a critical perspective, highlighting that in the process of becoming hegemonic, previously activist forces lose their potential for mobilization and affecting change. From the cooptation theory point of view, the alternative and the normative are oppositional, and the process of becoming normative leads to depoliticization.

I employ minor theory to examine the reciprocal influence of environmentalist activism and official planning and address the methodological challenges of bringing activist sources into the planning historiography canon (RQ2). Yet, I apply the cooptation theory to track the legacy of environmental activism within normative sustainability, investigating the assimilation and transformation of activists' ideas, actors, technologies, and work (RQ3). Employing both perspectives offers a nuanced understanding of how environmentalist ideas navigate the tension between resistance and assimilation in the evolving structures of planning.

4.2.1 Progressive, revolutionary, necessary: Minor Theory

The minor concept is drawn from Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's analysis of Kafka's writings as radical in *Toward a Minor Literature* (1986). They identify three characteristics that distinguish minor literature: the *transformative* or *deterritorializing* capacity of its language, its *political* nature, and its *collective anticipatory value*; in their words, these are 'the deterritorialization of language, the connection of the individual to a political immediacy, and the collective assemblage of enunciation.'[147] Kafka's wrote in German, despite being part of a Czech-speaking Jewish minority in Prague; this reflects minority status. The sense of estrangement embodied by the characters in Kafka's writings shows the tension of his deterritorialized social position and society and renders the stories inherently political. Through absurdity and surrealism, Kafka criticizes the bureaucratic and oppressive socio-political environment of his time. Yet, his solitary and generic characters, who often lack names, reflect the position of the 'other', of the unheard, anticipating broader social and political themes. Thus, the minor arises from unheard voices and proposes a new language that characterizes it as political and, eventually, anticipates a collective major claim. Applied to our field, minor environmentalist

147 Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka*, 18.

practices may then be defined by deterritorialization or transformative agency, for their *political* awareness, and for *anticipating* a cultural shift.

I use this framework to explore the interdependencies between activist- and normative realms in two ways. The first is to address the methodological implications of incorporating non-professional environmentalist histories, sources, and actors (conceptualized as minor) into the planning history canon (major); and the second is to understand the influence of (minor) practices outside and against planning on (major) normative planning, scrutinizing whether this influence leads to progressive transformation.

In their text, Deleuze and Guattari argue that the minor condition possesses a latent power in relation to the major: 'A minor literature doesn't come from a minor language; it is rather that which a minority constructs within a major language'.[148] The major and the minor are therefore understood as connected rather than opposing, as integral to each other and co-dependent. As such, Deleuze and Guattari state that the minor becomes the seedbed for subversion and transformation of the major and ultimately triggers cultural transformations: 'there is nothing that is major or revolutionary except the minor'.[149]

As discussed above, planning historiography has dismissed the agency of environmental activism as pushing new planning agendas. Traditional planning history sources, such as planning documents, manuals, institutional records, or the built environment itself, are highly specialized, professionalized, and stable knowledges. The knowledge produced by activism is on the contrary amateur, self-promoted, and unstable, containing a polyphony of voices and, frequently messy content. As a result, the mediums used to disseminate environmentalist ideas such as zines, pamphlets, or ephemeral actions have not yet been systematically considered as sources on which to build the historical narrative. This absence has contributed to increasing the historical gap related to environmentalist practices in planning. I bring the minor theory to situate these sources in relation to the planning history canon.

Non-professional sources that were once conceptualized as minor become a way to revise, shift, and even reposition mainstream planning histories; this is discussed at length in relation to environmentalist zines in Paper Ib of this thesis. Made by non-professional actors outside normative planning, these zines display a criticism and a set of alternative proposals

148 Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka*, 16.
149 Ibid., 26.

that anticipate many of today's debates about sustainability. The dynamic relationship between alternative sources and the canon is therefore understood as productive and positive, as it prompts progressive change within planning historiography, repositions official, 'major' histories, and reveals new readings of existing narratives regarding the environment. Minor sources and voices thus open a range of possibilities for working with historiographical gaps in planning history.

The minor theory has already been used a number of times to discuss architecture practices, principally to examine dominant (major) discourses in the field and promote emergent (minor) experimental practices. It was first used by theorist Jennifer Bloomer (1992) to discuss Manfredo Tafuri's concept of major architecture. Bloomer argued that minor architecture practices operate critically, challenging dominant disciplinary debates and addressing matters usually omitted from the field, such as dirt or waste.[150] Similarly, academic architect Jill Stoner (2012) described minor architectures as practices and events that operate on the margins of the canon, co-existing with and challenging the established structures of power in architecture.[151] Architecture historian Joan Ockman develops a different perspective in the text 'Towards a Theory of Normative Architecture' (1997). She uses the minor theory from the point of view of architecture history to revise the process by which European modern architecture became hegemonic in the United States after World War II and suggests that the minor theory helps to explain the emergence of new revisionist ideologies within architecture culture.[152] I follow her historiographical trail, extended to encompass planning culture, to revise how environmentalism became a revisionist framework for normative planning.

For Ockman, modern architecture in the interwar period is characterized as minor because of the 'revolutionary and political content that characterized it in the context of European socialism'.[153] I understand environmental activism in the 1970s as minor practices in relation to modernist planning as it challenged the dominant system of power inherent to the modernist planning system of postwar capitalism. It was therefore *deterritorializing*, proposing a new language, *political*, and *anticipated a cultural change*, as the claims helped extend environmental consciousness and pushed planning to adopt green agendas. In Papers

150 Bloomer, 'Minor Architectural'.
151 Stoner, *Towards*.
152 Ockman, 'Toward', 123.
153 Ibid., 124.

Ia and Ib, I discuss examples such as when the situationist Dutch group Provo distributed dozens of white bikes on the streets of Amsterdam in the late 1960s in a protest against the predominance of cars in the city, or when the British Street Farm launched countertactics to de-urbanize and re-ruralize cities, displaying aesthetics, actions and design strategies antithetical to normalized urban planning and challenging it in unconventional and exploratory ways. Importantly, these practices emerged from the sphere of the *dilettante*, from outside the professional realm, and were driven by young activists, artists, students, and mobilized citizens, all expressing political environmental consciousness by pointing at the unsustainability of the postwar way of life.

Significantly, minor theory implies that the relationship between the major and the minor continually evolves over time. It is continually being reassessed. Ockman stresses that it has 'to be understood as a historical condition in which that which is major is constantly redefining itself in relation to what is minor, and that which is minor is always potentially challenging or hybridizing that which is major'.[154] This hybridization, or the continuous transformation of the major, might entail a substantial shift of the minor's original progressive meaning; that is, the previous political or revolutionary condition is removed. Ockman uses Henry-Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson's 1932 exhibition 'International Style' at MoMa to illustrate the shift in meaning 'from social reform to architecture style',[155] and describes the process of depoliticization of modern architecture from a revolutionary element in socialist Europe to a hegemonic language of American capitalist society.

Aware that the question of disempowerment is absent from Deleuze and Guattari's theory – in which the mutual effect between the alternative and the normative is perceived as revolutionary and progressive – Ockman suggests 'a less utopian corollary',[156] proposing to reverse their terms:

> If a minor architecture (...) may be defined by deterritorialization, intensified political consciousness, and an anticipatory assemblage of new forces, then might a *major architecture* be defined as *territorial*, *apolitical*, and *conservative of the status quo*, or *normative*? [italics in original].[157]

154 Ibid., 123.
155 Ibid., 124.
156 Ibid., 123.
157 Ibid.

Can sustainability, then – as a major environmentalist practice once environmentalism becomes normative – be defined as territorial, apolitical and conservative of the status quo? The idea that institutionalization can lead to depoliticization has been studied extensively within feminist studies, where cooptation is interpreted as the decline and depoliticization of a formerly vigorous and emancipatory collective struggle.[158] To elaborate deeper on this gravitation from the alternative to the hegemonic, and considering the associated disempowering dynamics (RQ3), I draw on cooptation theory.

4.2.2 Disempowering: Cooptation theory

Formulated by sociologist Philip Selznick in 1949, cooptation theory explains the process of managing opposition by giving formal or informal power to groups that challenge institutional power, thereby neutralizing their potential opposition and preserving stability.[159] According to Selznick, when the major integrates the minor, the latter becomes deactivated, which undermines its potential to mobilize and effectuate deep change. The perspective contrasts with Deleuze and Guattari's view, in which such integration is considered positive and progressive. Selznick developed his theory through the study of the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), showing how it targeted and eventually absorbed community activists into its administrative structure to transform local opposition against TVA policies into support for those policies.

> One means of winning consent is to coopt elements [of opposition groups] into leadership or organization, usually elements which in some way reflect the sentiment, or possess the confidence of the relevant public or mass. As a result, it is expected that the new elements will lend respectability or legitimacy to the organs of control and thus reestablish the stability of formal authority.[160]

In other words, cooptation brings the opposition to the side of the elites and creates a new situation: the challengers now have an interest in defending the position of the elites. Applied to the question of environmentalist ideas and practices, linking environmentalism and economic growth in sustainability discourse brought public and private interests

158 See: Eisenstein, *Feminism Seduced*; Fraser, 'Feminism'; McRobbie, *The Aftermath*.
159 Selznick, *TVA and the Grass Roots*.
160 Ibid., 34.

and businesses to the environmental question, adding a techno-managerial, profit-generation focus that previous activism had resisted. This is not to argue that institutional bodies consciously decided to engage with environmental activism in a cooptation process to debilitate their opposition, which was never perceived as real threat, at least in the Global North.[161] It is however plausible that when environmental ideas and practices became popular and started to appear in policy discourses, an intention of cooption was present at various points and through various actors and practices.

Sociologists Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello make a similar argument through 'the new spirit of capitalism',[162] positing that 1968's 'artistic critique', with its desires for freedom, self-realization, creativity, and spontaneity, contributed to the transformation and legitimization of the flexible neoliberal capitalism of our time. Sharon Zukin extends this argument to artists' use of industrial loft spaces (1989), showing how the symbolic values of creativity and bohemian lifestyles integrated these spaces into contemporary living and neoliberal planning and made them sites of capital accumulation through deregulation and privatization.[163]

Architecture theorist Tahl Kaminer uses the term *récupération* to argue a similar point: the efficacy of using oppositional accounts is undermined through a 'selective inclusion' of counter threats and critique.[164] Like Boltanski and Chiapello, he links it to 'the resilience of middle-class, capitalist society'.[165] Kaminer uses political theorist Ernesto Laclau's theory of empty signifiers[166] to explain this 'selective inclusion', where ambiguous terms that lack a fixed meaning and are susceptible to reinterpretation – such as sustainability – are used to unite groups in a common cause. The approach is therefore focused on the discursive sphere of cooptation. Kaminer brings the use of the term 'utopia' in Collin Rawe and Fred Koetter's *Collage City* (1978) as an example, arguing that they use utopia only as a rhetorical force that justifies developments, dispossessing the term's promises of progress and systemic shift, which is ultimately what makes it utopian.[167]

This criticism could be extended to the use of term sustainability in neoliberal planning practices. Following Laclau, cooptation implies

161 Malm, A. *How to Blow Up*, 36.
162 Boltanski and Chiapello, *The New Spirit*.
163 Zukin, *Loft Living*.
164 Kaminer, The Integration, 54.
165 Ibid., 53.
166 Laclau, *Why*.
167 Kaminer, The Integration, 59.

emptying signifiers and establishing new equivalent chains to depoliticize the initial significance. Environmental activism – as part of the emancipatory protest movements after 1968 – entangled environmental concerns with criticism of the modernist city and the top-down, technocratic, and growth-oriented policies of normative planning. Once environmental activism has been institutionalized and the idea of environmental consciousness starts to be promoted by the same technocratic and growth-oriented planning policies, its equivalent chain arguably shifts from suggesting systemic shifts to the techno-managerial and depoliticized approach of sustainability. In the next section, I use urban political ecology to discuss this approach further.

Selznick points out however that cooptation affects the discursive sphere (the assimilation of language), and it also significantly impacts the material reality, including the assimilation of people and work from the challenging movements. In her discussion on the institutionalization of modern architecture, Ockman explains that the language was rapidly extended into corporative and institutional buildings, and it was also adopted in American academia through the inclusion of architects such as Walter Gropius or Mies van der Rohe,[168] who, according to Ockman, never challenged the ideological cooptation of a previously revolutionary architecture: 'Like their American colleagues, the transplanted architects were for the most part eager – whether out of new convictions or simply acquiescence – to realign the agenda of modern architecture with the imperatives of American capitalist society.'[169]

How, then, has the realignment of the planning agenda towards ecological approaches manifested? Aiming to track both the discursive and material cooptation and to give order to this complex process, sociologists Patrick G Coy and Timothy Hedeen developed a four-stage model based on Selznick's cooptation that helps orient the process. The model includes the *inception*, *appropriation*, *assimilation*, and *regulation*[170] of grassroots organizations and their ideas.

The first stage, *inception and engagement,* describes how the activist movement emerges to transform, raise political awareness, and mobilize people into collective action,[171] outlining a process aligned with the minor approach; the second, *appropriation*, and the third, *assimilation and transformation*, describe intermediate stages of infiltration into institutions

168 Ockman, 'Toward', 125.
169 Ibid., 127.
170 Coy and Hedeen, 'A Stage Model', 410.
171 Ibid.

that I aim to uncover through Papers II and III. *Appropriation* includes appropriation of the language, the challenging of methods, and the work of activist actors through invitations to participate in official institutions.[172] *Assimilation and transformation*, however, take appropriation to another level: 'The state and vested interests develop or sponsor formal reform programs and then attract movement leaders to staff these new institutional initiatives.'[173] I look at two case studies to explore these two phases: the first is that of ARARAT (Alternative Research in Architecture, Resources, Art, and Technology), which was invited to exhibit environmentalist technologies, architectures, and planning processes at the foremost contemporary art museum in Stockholm, *Moderna Museet* (The Museum of Modern Art); and the second is the bottom-up ecological community Understenshöjden in Stockholm, which developed under the auspices of Sweden's largest housing company, HSB, and the initiator of which was ultimately engaged as HSB's environmental manager and tasked with 'greening' its housing stock.

The last of the four-stage process proposed by Coy and Hedeen is *regulation*; this describes the institutionalization of formerly activist ideas that have been transformed and adapted to an institution's interests. It 'consists of achieving administrative rules or enacting laws that regulate, codifying some of the activist claims'.[174] To explore the regulation of environmentalist practices in sustainability practices, I look at the housing exhibition Bo01 in Malmö (2001) in the final paper (IV).

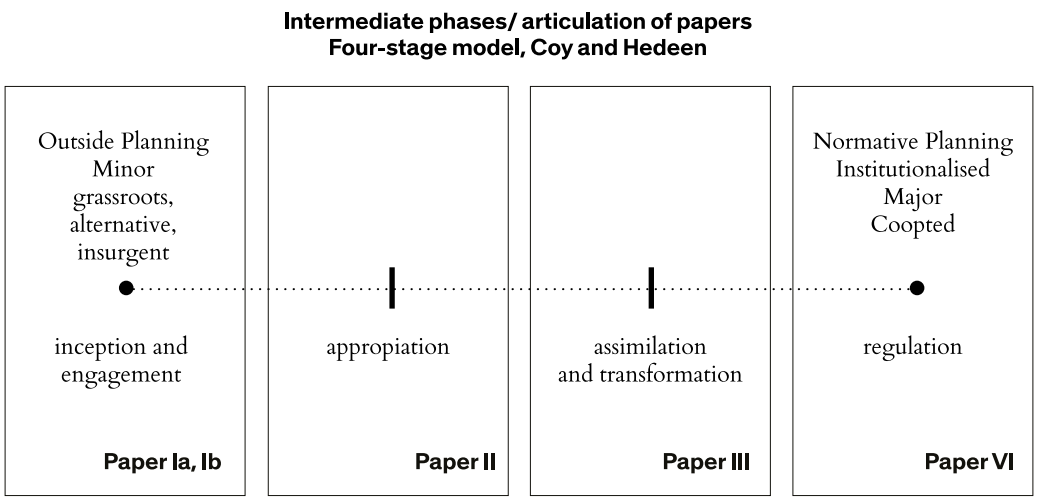


Figure 3. The papers of this thesis structured by phases of cooptation.

172 Ibid., 413.
173 Ibid., 420.
174 Coy and Hedeen, 'A Stage Model', 424.

Coy and Hedeen's phases of cooptation thus serve to structure the progression of the articles in this cover essay [Figure 3] and provide conceptual framework for critical analysis of the symbolic and material cooptation of environmentalist practices through the cases presented.

4. 3 Urban Political Ecology for the Study of Sustainable Urban Development

So far, I have acknowledged the agency of environmentalist practices in the realm of urban planning and framed them as insurgent. Minor theory has facilitated understanding of environmentalist practices as a driving force to positively transform the planning canon discourse – both from the point of view of historiography and that of the practice, specifically in making advancements towards sustainability. While this agency (of environmental activism over normative planning) is perceived as positive and as leading to progressive change to achieve sustainability, the cooptation framework indicates an implicit disempowerment in the process. Grasping this disempowerment, or understanding what is *selectively* included and rejected from environmentalist practices once they become normative, requires crossing environmentalist ideas with the main ideas advanced by normative sustainability.

Paper IV uses the housing exhibition Bo01 in Malmö (2001) – a pioneer model of sustainable urban development – as a representative case study of normative sustainability. The final theoretical approach of the thesis however consists of critically examining sustainable urban developments as neoliberal planning practices with the help of the framework proposed by urban political ecology.

Before embarking on this analysis, it is important to call to mind once again the link between sustainability and neoliberalization processes highlighted in the literature review. The emergence of sustainable development coincided with processes of neoliberalization that deregulated and decentralized planning. Urban sustainable development became an urbanization model, a physical reality with its urban forms and aesthetics, but also a powerful discourse- and marketing tool with which cities were branded and rebranded cities as competition between cities increased.

In the article 'Nature as Accumulation Strategy' (2007), geographer Neil Smith distinguishes between formal and real subsumption of nature, drawing his terminology from Marx's differentiation between formal and real subsumption of labour, which refers to a difference between when capital takes control of pre-existing labour processes without fundamentally changing them, and when production itself is restructured for maximization through a deep organizational and

technological change, remaking labour in capital's image. Smith utilizes this framework to differentiate between the exploitation of natural resources, and nature preservation based on financial instruments, such as ecosystem services (e.g. wetlands, recycling, and organic food industries), in a neoliberal framework.[175] Smith's view on the real subsumption of nature may be applied to sustainable urban development in the way ecological concerns are integrated into the logic of capital accumulation. Rather than representing an alternative to capitalist urbanization, sustainable urban planning often functions as a mechanism for its expansion and deepening. As a real subsumption of nature, sustainable urbanism reorganizes nature, urban space, and governance to align with market-driven imperatives.

In *Neoliberalism on the Ground* (2020), architecture scholars Kenny Cuppers, Catharina Gabrielsson and Helena Mattson examine how architecture became an important resource and an asset for shaping the neoliberal model, and how it was at the same time affected by it: 'Architecture is not simply a mirror of politics and social conditions but an active agent that shapes individuals, institutions, and policy.'[176] To study the complexity of such reciprocal affects, they build on historian Mary McLeod's historiographical route when studying architecture in the USA during the Reagan era and propose interpreting architecture both as a production process and as a cultural object (designing urban shapes and aesthetics). They also add however that a third category is necessary at the intersection of neoliberalization and architecture, and that the interpretation of architecture as a discourse must also be considered and extended.[177]

Applying this to the subject studied here, it must be acknowledged that urban planning has contributed to and been shaped by sustainability discourse. This double condition implies dismantling the idea that environment, economics, social issues, planning discourses, and the outcome of built environments are separate issues. Sustainable urban development cannot be interpreted as merely a process related to politics and economics or simply a cultural object that shapes the urban landscape; it is also a powerful planning discourse and a tool that shifts perceptions of urbanization processes and cities and their citizens under the good cause of environmental care while securing or extending the possibility of capitalist accumulation.

175 Smith, 'Nature'.
176 Cupers, Gabrielsson and Mattson, 'Introduction', 7.
177 Ibid.

When seeking to comprehend the complexity of sustainable urban development, urban political ecology is an exciting interdisciplinary field that examines the entanglements of urbanization processes, climate change, and sociopolitical dynamics. Its theoretical framework provides insights into how the production of sustainable urban development operates across scales, bringing into focus the power interests involved and the ethics and subjectivities proposed.

In the introduction to a recent attempt to map the theoretical and methodological contributions of the field, *Turning up the Heat: Urban Political Economy for a Climate Emergency* (2023), two ontological shifts are proposed for studying the link between urbanization processes and the processes of exploitation of nature. The first, 'urbanization of nature', unsettles traditional perceptions of cities as distinct from nature.[178] It claims that urban materials – bricks, asphalt, steel, or concrete – are processed natural resources assembled through human labour, capital investment, and technology, all governed by power relations: 'There is no "city" as such; no "nature" as such. There is a perpetual dialectical process: the "Urbanization of Nature"'.[179] The second, 'extended urbanization',[180] expands the geographical scope of urbanization to include extractivist sites that supply urban developments. This concept highlights interactions between landscapes in the Global North and in the Global South, or between peripheral rural lands and urban centres, as our increased sustainability and smartness is based on what is a socioenvironmental disaster for someone else.[181] These two shifts help us broaden the historization of urbanization processes; rather than these being confined to limited spaces in a city, the shifts allow for socio-environmental processes to be included in which natural resources shape the built environment through labour, capital, and technology. Power dynamics and ethics are brought into focus, putting forward key questions about who benefits from these urbanization processes – and who does not – and for whom they have been envisioned.

Some scholars of urban political ecology have specifically studied sustainable urban development conceptualized as a neoliberal model of urbanization and argue that while it appears to be an ecologically and socially conscious planning strategy, it often prioritizes profit over equity.[182]

178 Tzaninis et al., Introduction, 3.
179 Kaika, *City of Flows*, 7.
180 Tzaninis et al., Introduction, 2.
181 Kaika, '"Don't Call Me"'.
182 For example: Gould and Lewis, *Green Gentrification*; Krueger and Gibbs, *The Sustainable Development Paradox*.

Geographer Erik Swyngedouw defines sustainable urban development as an example of technocracy, managerial governance, and consensual politics that evades essential antagonism and thwarts the imagination of alternative models due to its widespread acceptance.[183] He argues that the sustainability consensus tends to depoliticize the question of urban development, aligning it with neoliberal agendas and promoting market-based solutions, privatization, and the commodification of nature, which hinders debate and the envisioning of other ways of urbanization.[184]

The simple question 'for whom?' posed by urban political ecology becomes central for examining sustainable developments. After all, a sustainable urban development consists of erecting new urban environments shaped fundamentally by dwelling, and is thus deeply intertwined with biopolitics. Extending the Foucauldian discussion of technologies of power and self to the biophysical reality of the world, political ecology scholars have used the term eco-governmentality to analyse how institutions, knowledge producers or experts construct subjects concerned with the environment, or 'environmental subjects'.[185] Moreover, authors such as Roger Keil or Nik Heynen have critically examined how the sustainable self is permeated by neoliberal forces, enhancing individual responsibility and an ethical consumption.[186] As I argue in Paper IV however, sustainable urban development prioritizes, for instance, a car-free and dense layout, or a green technology network for energy production and waste management, thus contributing to the creation of a model of a socially prescribed and institutionally supported way of green living. I touch upon these questions briefly in the analysis of Bo01 in Chapter 7, where I discuss dissonances between the alleged individual environmental responsibility and the public investment required to label a district as sustainable.

In summary, using the lens of urban political ecology to study the link between sustainable development and neoliberalization from the point of view of planning history helps 1) dismantle the idea that sustainable urban development is apolitical; 2) raise ethical considerations of sustainability; and 3) broaden the scope of urbanization processes to include socio-environmental processes that operate on multiple scales.

Minor- and cooptation theories help reveal the cultural and epistemological transformation that occurs when environmentalist knowledge

183 Swyngedouw, '"Sustainability"'.
184 Ibid., 38.
185 Mulvaney and Robbins, *Green Politics*.
186 Heynen, 'Justice'; Keil, *Suburban Planet*.

is integrated in institutionalized planning, and urban political ecology provides insight into the material implications of this integration. Specifically, it focuses on how sustainability ideas shape and are shaped by urban environments, material processes, and power dynamics within planning systems.

paper	research question	research approach	empirical focus	time frame	theoretical framework	cooptation phase
Ia	RQ1	disciplinary reflexibity	environmentalist actors and sources	the long 1970s	insurgent planning	inception and engagement
Ib	RQ1, RQ2				minor theory	
II	RQ3	case-study	art exhibition	1976	cooptation theory	appropiation
III	RQ3	case-study	ecological community	1989-1992	cooptation theory	assimilation
IV	RQ3	case-study	international housing exhibition	1998-2001	urban political ecology	regulation

Table 1. Organization of papers by co-optation phases and corresponding distribution of theoretical frameworks.

5.
Methods and Material Considerations

Stephen Ward notes that planning historians' traditional methods consist of 'identify and mining archival sources' as a way of 'bringing the vital aspect of time into consideration' and adding 'the depth of historical knowledge'[187] to contemporary planning debates. This approach resonates in my own work. However, as the previous section shows, I also find it relevant to emphasize the importance of using theory to extend the depth of historical knowledge and contribute to those debates further still.

Identifying and mining archival sources has been the primary method used for this PhD work. I draw from the 'archival turn'[188] in history that, influenced by Foucault,[189] understands the historical archive as a locus of power/knowledge; and I also follow feminist historians who have argued for broadening the concept of the archive to include alternative sources in order to recover neglected histories.[190] Papers Ia and Ib point at the absence of environmentalist actors in planning historiography and propose an open counter-archive of transnational environmental zines gathered from different archives as sources from which to craft the historical narrative. Papers II, III, and IV examine cases selected to emphasize urban planning's capacity to coopt environmentalist practices. They build the historical narrative using sources from archives in different institutions, material gathered from observations and interviews, and secondary sources from planning- and architecture magazines and the general press. I have thus mainly used two types of primary sources for this study: unofficial and non-professional sources, the zines; and traditional planning history sources about a specific case (i.e. an exhibition, a bottom-up community, an international housing exhibition) from city archives, planning archives, and the archives of cultural institutions.

This section begins with a description of my work in the archives, of where and how I have gathered the data, and how I have managed and processed it. Then, with the help of *history croisée* ('entangled his-

187 Ward, 'Planning Diffusion', 87.
188 King, 'Working'.
189 Foucault, *The Order*; Foucault, *The Archaeology*.
190 King, 'Working', 17; Burton, *Dwelling in the Archive*; Burton, *Archive Stories*.

tory'), I explain the rationale behind this process and how the archival work has been processed to understand the institutionalization of environmentalist ideas.

5.1 The Archives

The urbanHist project made it possible for me to spend long periods of time at different institutions, provided financial support for study visits, and enabled me to travel, visit, and work for extended durations in ten archives in different cities.

Paper Ia, Ib	KNAW Internationaal instituut voor sociale geschiedenis	Amsterdam, Netherlands
	KB Sveriges Nationalbiblioteket	Stockholm, Sweden
	Architectural Association Library	London, United Kingdom
	British Library	London, United Kingdom
	RIBA Archives	London, United Kingdom
	DKA online archive https://dekleineaarde.nl/archief	Riethoven, Netherlands
	Biblioteque Nationale de France	Paris, France
	Norges Nasjonalbiblioteket	Oslo, Norway
Paper II	ArkDes Archive	Stockholm, Sweden
	Moderna Museet Archive	Stockholm, Sweden
Paper III	ArkDes Archive	Stockholm, Sweden
	Stockholm City Planning Archive	Stockholm, Sweden
Paper IV	Malmö City Planning Archive	Malmö, Sweden
	Malmö Municipal Archive	Malmö, Sweden

Table 2. Archives visited for material for each paper

The first archive I visited was that of the ARARAT exhibition at Moderna Museet in Stockholm when I was a visiting researcher at ArkDes for four months in 2018, during my first urbanHist secondment. The ARARAT exhibition mainly consisted of mapping alternative technologies aimed at a better balance between urbanization, dwelling, and environmental protection. In the archive, I found many boxes with an enormous amount of preparation material about the exhibition and its reception in the press – there were product catalogues, pamphlets, publications, pictures, and preparatory materials

with sketches, budgets, minutes, plans and notes. This became the empirical material for Paper II.

The minutes from the ARARAT working group, which had been responsible for organizing the exhibition, contained preliminary schedules listing suggested speakers for the exhibition's parallel talks. While there were some references to Swedish, Danish, and Norwegian practices and technologies, the majority of names were British and North American, and there was little mention of continental Europe. This suggests that Swedish environmentalism in the 1970s was closely connected to – or at least more influenced by – environmental discourse from the UK and the USA, with significantly less emphasis on European perspectives.

In one of the ARARAT boxes labelled preparation material, I found several underlined and annotated issues of the zine *Undercurrents*. This discovery was the first indication of the potential to use such publications for examining the intersection of planning and environmentalism – this later became central to Papers Ia and Ib. During in my second research secondment, at the Centre of Urban History at the University of Leicester, I visited the RIBA archive and the archives of the British Library and gathered additional issues of the Undercurrents zine. None of these institutions had the complete collection (published between 1971-1983) and I found the missing issues on a blog by Chris Squire, one of Undercurrents' editors from 1974, at https://undercurrents1972.wordpress.com/. The two issues of the zine *Street Farm* (1971-1972) were in the archive of the library of the Architectural Association in London; at *Kungliga Biblioteket* (Swedish Royal Library) in Stockholm, I found the collection of *Almbladet* (1971-1974); *Norges Nasjonalbibliotek* (Norwegian National Library) in Oslo had all of the issues *of Vannbæreren* (1974-1978). I had plans to travel to Paris and visit the *Biblioteque Nationale de France* to collect the zine *La Gueulle Ouverte* (1972-1980), and to Amsterdam to the KNAW - *Internationaal instituut voor sociale geschiedenis* to do the same with *Provo* (1966-1971) and *De Kleine Aarde* (1972-1997). The visits had to be cancelled because of travel restrictions due to Covid-19, however. I managed to get the materials from *La Gueulle Ouverte* through the BNF online service. In the case of *Provo*, an archivist from KNAW put me in contact with an independent Dutch publisher that had re-released all of the issues. I discovered that *De Kleine Aarde* was not at KNAW; I contacted the *De Kleine Aarde* foundation, and they kindly sent me all the numbers, which were in the process of being digitalized at the time. Today they are available at https://dekleineaarde.nl/archief.

In historical research, this process of source hunting, or following one source to find another, is known as 'source tracking'.[191] Through intertextual reading, I examined how zines reference and build upon each other, tracing the embedded connections suggested in the sources themselves. Many zines even included reprints from other publications, emphasizing that knowledge dissemination took precedence over commercial value. This practice of cross-referencing further reinforces the idea that the collection of zines I assembled remains inherently open and incomplete with the potential for continuous expansion through the addition of new titles, as noted in Paper Ib.

The first paper I wrote, Paper III, focuses on the ecological community Understenshöjden in Stockholm. My research combined archival work, fieldwork, and interviews to gain a comprehensive understanding of the community's planning and development. I conducted archival research at Stockholm City Planning Archive and ArkDes, supplemented by materials from the architect's personal archive, documents from the housing association HSB (under which the community was developed), and relevant secondary sources from architecture publications and the general press. In addition to archival research, I carried out fieldwork through site visits and interviews. My observations were done walking through the area, taking photographs, and engaging in informal conversations with residents. I also conducted two semi-structured interviews, each lasting about an hour, with two residents of the community. Furthermore, I corresponded via email with the architect, asking specific questions to which he responded while also sharing additional materials from his personal archive.

I have long intended to develop Paper III into a research article for journal submission. To this end, I have continued to gather materials, primarily from HSB's monthly publication, *Vår bostad* (Our Dwelling), which documented both the collective planning process and the ecological principles underpinning the project. This publication also details the *Gröna HSB* (Green HSB) strategy and the appointment of Mia Torpe – formerly the initiator of Understenshöjden – as HSB's new environmental director. A preliminary version of this revised paper was presented at the 2024 IPHS Conference in Hong Kong. Due to time constraints however, I have not yet had the opportunity to develop it into a full article. This remains a prioritized task that will follow the submission of this cover essay.

191 King, Working With, 16.

I visited two archives to gather primary sources about Bo01 for Paper IV: Malmö City Planning Archive – *Stadsbyggnadsnämnden* – to access to preparatory documents, marketing material, planning documents, official records, and building permit plans; and Malmö Municipal Archive – *Malmö stadsarkiv* – to delve into microfilms and a photography collection documenting the construction process and the display of the exhibition itself. To analyse the reception of the exhibition, I conducted a systematic review of articles from the press published between 1998 and 2005 in three leading Swedish newspapers: *Sydsvenska Dagbladet*, *Svenska Dagbladet*, and *Dagens Nyheter*. I used the media archive Mediearkivet as well as the newspapers' own online archives to access these articles.

5. 2 Crossing Histories and the Relevance of Reflexibility

The extensive process of gathering sources resulted in over 15GB worth of scans on a hard disk, several kilos of photocopies, and dozens of original zines, pamphlets, and articles from the press. I systematically organized and analysed all the material, creating Excel files to catalogue the zines, classifying the press articles and spending many days translating them, sometimes with the assistance of colleagues (Ida Nilsson helped with Swedish translations, Andreea Blaga with German and Swedish, Quique Bayarri with Norwegian, Tim Verlaan with Dutch). This sometimes-tedious process was essential for making sense of all the material and bringing order to the occasionally chaotic sources and enabling me to carry out the analytical and interpretative work. The materials were then studied using a hermeneutic approach with an emphasis on contextualized readings.[192] Rather than considering texts solely at face value, I analysed them in relation to their historical, cultural, and social contexts, allowing for a more nuanced understanding of their role in planning discourse and environmental narratives.

The process has been guided by the principles of history croisée; this framework emphasizes a trans-national, cross-cultural, and interdisciplinary approach to history, guided by a process of reflexivity. Defined by historian Michael Werner and sociologist Benedicte Zimmermann, history croisée proposes interweaving stories from dominant agents with the narratives of those previously neglected or outside the canon. The aim is 'to reconsider the interactions between different societies or cultures, erudite disciplines, or traditions'.[193] This thesis brings professional

192 Ricoeur, *Memory, History*.
193 Werner and Zimmermann, 'Beyond Comparison', 30.

and non-professional sources into dialogue, integrating materials from diverse origins and languages across a range of scales from a 24.7-hectare international housing exhibition to a self-produced zine on folded and stapled A4s. Rather than merely mapping relationships between these materials however, history croisée is concerned with their mutual influence, focusing on 'the novel and original elements produced by the intercrossing as much as with the way in which it affects each of the "intercrossed" parties.'[194] In this sense, by juxtaposing messy, non-professional sources such as zines with official planning documents and UN reports, I have identified points of convergence and divergence, tracing how activist environmentalist knowledge has influenced normative planning ideas, and how activist movements, in turn, continuously respond to institutional planning, adapting and reinventing alternatives.

History croiseé emphasizes the importance of adding reflexivity to situate the way narratives are crafted; 'it calls for reconsideration of the way history can combine empirical and reflexive concerns into a dynamic and flexible approach',[195] and argues that giving situatedness and positionality to historical work 'can be generative of meaning.'[196] By pointing to the absences in planning historiography and its archives, engaging with critical historiographical approaches and source critique, and adopting a situated perspective on the cases – including my own positionality as a PhD student – this thesis enhances the reflexibility that history croisée advocates throughout the kappa.

By intercrossing official, activist, and experiential sources, I map the entanglements between dominant and neglected narratives, illustrating how planning history is not a linear process but rather a contested field shaped by multiple and often conflicting voices.

194 Ibid., 38.
195 Ibid., 30.
196 Ibid., 32.

6.
Summary of Papers

In this section, I summarize the five papers that comprise the thesis, outlining the aim and focus of each case, and briefly account for the theoretical framing and source materials.

Paper Ia: **A Look to Transgressive Planning Practices: Calling for Alternative Sources and Actors**

In this chapter, I argue for a broader and more inclusive approach to planning historiography that recognizes the presence and influence of actors and practices often excluded from the disciplinary canon. I introduce the concept of *transgressive planning practices* to describe the spatial imaginaries and experimental actions of environmentalist and countercultural groups active across Western Europe during the long 1970s.

My aim is to challenge the conventional focus on actors and sources, which usually entails looking at official plans, policies, and planner's professional expertise, and to instead consider the epistemologies produced by activists, dilettantes, and other non-traditional actors. These figures engaged in criticism of modernist planning and proposed alternative ways of inhabiting, building, and organizing social life, often operating on the margins of institutional visibility. I argue that their work, though rarely formalized, has shaped many of the ecological and participatory ideals later absorbed into planning discourse.

The chapter draws on scholarship calling for 'alternative' or 'noir' planning histories and makes a case for considering ephemeral and informal materials – and the people behind them – as essential to understanding the evolution of environmental thinking in planning. This conceptual groundwork prepares the methodological and empirical investigation I pursue in the subsequent article, where I begin to explore these practices in greater depth.

Paper Ib: **The Urbanism of Zines: The Potential of Environmentalist Zines as Sources for Planning History**

In this article, I explore the historiographic and methodological potential of environmentalist zines as sources for planning history. Building on the conceptual framework I outlined in the previous chapter – in which I argued in favour of including alternative actors and practices – this article deepens the analysis by focusing on the material produced by environmentalist movements across western Europe during the long

1970s. I treat these self-published magazines not simply as archival curiosities but as spaces of planning knowledge production, sites where spatial ideas were articulated, circulated, and tested.

Zines have historically been overlooked by planning historians, in part because they fall outside conventional archival categories. Their amateur, collage-like aesthetic and ephemeral nature place them in tension with the discipline's reliance on official documents, plans, and built form. Yet I argue that this very instability is what makes them valuable: they allow us to reconstruct the affective and speculative dimensions of planning imaginaries emerging from the counterculture.

Drawing from a collection of western European environmentalist publications (e. g. *Almbladet, Undercurrents*, *Street Farmer*, *La Gueulle Ouverte*), I show how these zines operated as transnational platforms for experimentation in ecological architecture, communal living, energy autonomy, and post-capitalist forms of urban life. Their pages were filled with alternative spatial representations – diagrams for off-grid homes, utopian settlement layouts, DIY construction manuals, criticism of fossil-fuel dependence, and reflections on land ownership. Through this content, the zines enacted what can be called an *urbanism from below*: a form of spatial thought that was materially grounded, socially engaged, and critical of dominant planning paradigms.

Methodologically, I use zines to test the limits of the traditional archive and propose a reading practice attuned to the fragmentary and collective nature of countercultural media. Rather than authored in a conventional sense, these publications were assembled and circulated in ways that blur the boundaries between document and performance, critique and proposal.

Such material not only illuminates the environmental debates of the 1970s but also unsettles how we define expertise, authorship, and agency in planning. Dissident knowledge and informal networks shaped imaginaries that would later be institutionalized in the language of sustainability.

By reclaiming zines as historical sources, I aim to contribute to a more polyphonic, open-ended historiography that accounts for the informal, the ephemeral, and the marginal as sites of planning imagination. This article ultimately suggests that zines do not merely document a moment; they perform it, and in doing so, they invite us to rethink what may be considered planning knowledge, and who gets to produce it.

Paper II: **Environmental Ideas Co-opted: The ARARAT Exhibition, Stockholm, 1976**

In this article, I examine how cultural institutions serve as early entry points for the cooptation of environmentalist ideas into state-aligned narratives. I focus on ARARAT (Alternative Research in Architecture, Resources, Art and Technology), an exhibition held at Moderna Museet in 1976 and later presented at the Venice Biennale. I analyse how the exhibition recontextualized countercultural ecological discourse within an institutionally endorsed, technology-centred environmental narrative.

Drawing on archival documentation and press coverage, I show how ARARAT drew from grassroots environmentalism – including autonomous housing, alternative energy systems, and critique of industrial society – and mapped the state of the art in environmental technology and design, presenting technological experimentation as innovation within an institutional cultural framework.

Importantly, ARARAT also functioned as a pedagogical project. Its goal was to educate the public on future ways of environmentally concerned living, and it did this through didactic panels, interactive installations, a DIY environmental solutions catalogue, an open library, and an optimistic curatorial tone. While there were elements of structural criticism, they were filtered through an institutional logic that tended to neutralize conflict and emphasize problem-solving. Radical proposals were rearticulated as manageable technological challenges.

I argue that ARARAT marks a first step in a broader process of cooptation – appropriation – in which ecological imaginaries gain cultural legitimacy but lose much of their critical force. The exhibition contributed to the absorption of environmentalist ideas into Sweden's emergent narrative of ecological modernisation and reframed as opportunities for innovation and industrial leadership rather than demands for political transformation.

This case highlights how cultural institutions play a central role in translating dissident imaginaries into forms that align with state and policy agendas, often under the guise of public education and progress.

Paper III: **Green Housing Dream: Understenshöjden, 1989**

In this paper, I examine Understenshöjden, a collectively planned, ecological community initiated in Stockholm in the late 1980s under the auspices of HSB, the largest housing company in Sweden. I trace how this grassroots, environmentalist, participatory initiative was shaped by the institutional framework of HSB and how it simultaneously influenced the institution in return.

Understenshöjden was conceived by a group of future residents who joined together around a vision of communal, low-impact, non-toxic, circular living. They imagined shared energy and waste management systems and ecologically responsible building practices as an alternative to individualized, resource-consuming suburban housing. Drawing on interviews, planning material, and media reports, I explore how this vision was realized through collaboration with planners, architects, landscape architects, HSB representatives, and the city's technical departments.

This paper highlights how participatory ideals from the 1970s were transformed when confronted with the realities of late-1980s planning structures. In contrast with earlier, more openly oppositional forms of activism, the residents of Understenshöjden negotiated within the system, seeking approval rather than confrontation. What emerged was a hybrid project that achieved certain ecological goals but softened its political charge.

Through this case, I reflect on the shifting meaning of participation in sustainable planning. Understenshöjden offers insight into how environmentalist aspirations were incorporated into urban development through selective assimilation and transformation. It marks a moment when the dream of ecological living was no longer outside the system, but could be shaped – and in many ways limited – by it. It also reveals how sustainability increasingly became a technology-based planning practice.

Paper IV: **The City of Tomorrow? The Bo01 Housing Exhibition in Malmö, Sweden, 2001, as a Model of Sustainable Urban Development**

The final article revisits Bo01, the housing exhibition staged in Malmö's Västra Hamnen in 2001, as a pivotal episode in Swedish planning history and a case that depicts the regulation of environmentalist ideas. I bring the lens of urban political ecology to understand how sustainability became entangled with Malmö's ambitions to reinvent itself after industrial decline. I argue that Bo01 was not only a showcase of green technologies; it was also a branding exercise in which ecological modernization and municipal entrepreneurialism merged to reposition the city within a competitive, Europeanized planning culture.

I situate Bo01 within the Swedish discourse on the 'Green Welfare State' of the 1990s, a period marked by deregulation and decentralization, during which municipalities increasingly pursued growth-oriented policies while also seeking to implement Agenda 21 guidelines. Within

this context, Malmö mobilized public funds and forged partnerships with industry to create a district-scale demonstration of sustainable living. Aquifer-based heating, solar panels, wind energy, vacuum waste systems, and biodiversity metrics were integrated into the plan, and the exhibition's architect, Klas Tham, designed a compact, walkable, and visually diverse urban layout, inviting both well-known architects and smaller developers.

My reading of Bo01 exposes important tensions. The sustainability narrative was largely articulated in technical and aesthetic terms rather than social or political ones. A 'Quality Programme' served as both a governance tool and a design brief, prescribing environmental metrics while freeing architectural expression. Marketing materials constructed an imagined resident – affluent, mobile, technologically adept – that bore little resemblance to Malmö's socially and ethnically diverse population. I also trace the difficulties and failures of the exhibition: contaminated land, missed deadlines, partial construction, low visitor numbers, and eventual bankruptcy.

By reflecting on Bo01, I show how sustainability was deployed as both an ethical claim and a market strategy, promoting technological solutions and architectural variety while sidestepping deeper questions of equity and structural change.

7.
Discussion and Main Findings

This chapter is a discussion of the main findings of the papers in relation to the overarching aims and research questions introduced in Chapter 3. In it, I analyse the findings from the papers and contextualize them in relation to broader theoretical and empirical discussions.

Section 7.1 is a three-part historiographical discussion; Section 7.2 discusses the cooptation of environmentalist practices; and Section 7.3 addresses the question of what constitutes sustainable urban development, discussing its aesthetic dimensions, procedural principles, and ethical foundations.

7.1 Historiographical Discussion

This three-part historiographical discussion addresses RQ1, concerning absences, and RQ2, where the focus is on sources and actors. In the first part, 7.1.1, I examine how recognizing the agency of environmentalist practices facilitates a more comprehensive history of sustainable planning. In the second part (7.1.2), I discuss how minor theory provides a framework for navigating the methodological challenges of incorporating such agency. Finally (7.1.3), I expand the discussion to the global scale, exploring how the study's findings contribute to the global history of sustainability by highlighting Sweden's role in shaping transnational sustainable planning discourse.

7.1.1 From margins to mainstream: The transformation of institutional planning

This PhD study has demonstrated that the dual framework of *insurgent planning histories* and *minor theory* offers a rich analytical lens for understanding the historical dynamics between grassroots activism and established planning systems. As the literature review in Chapter 2 showed, planning history rarely acknowledges European environmentalist practices as forces that push new planning agendas toward sustainability, and their actions, demonstrations, experiments, and publications are often overlooked as sources from which to build a narrative.

Drawing on Leonie Sandercock's concept of *insurgent planning histories*, which acknowledges 'the struggle of the people against power'[197] as an important part of planning historiography, this thesis

197 Milan Kundera quoted in Sandercock, *Towards*, 37.

recognizes the agency of environmentalist practices that operate outside, or even in opposition to institutional postwar planning systems. It thus expands the narratives that shape the planning history of sustainability. Deleuze and Guattari's minor theory extends Sandercock's perspective further and emphasizes the transformative potential of the minor over the major, in this case, of environmentalist practices over institutional planning institutions. When conceptualized as minor, these practices do more than merely react to planning institutions or postwar capitalist development; they become *transformative* or *de-territorializing*, *political*, and *anticipatory* of a cultural shift.[198] In other words, through their opposition to dominant planning frameworks, environmentalist practices not only criticize and resist, but also prefigure alternatives, gradually transforming the very institutions that they initially opposed.

In the five articles of this thesis, there are four recurring environmentalist claims that emerge as key contributors to the transformation of planning agendas and that are closely associated with contemporary sustainability practices. These are: opening planning processes to actively involve community members; promoting the use of bicycles as an alternative to car-dominated mobility; pioneering experiments with green technologies; and advocating for the preservation of both urban fabrics and nature and rejecting the widespread practice of demolition and nature destruction. A more nuanced historization of sustainability must therefore include these grassroots contributions, acknowledging that they are neither peripheral nor anecdotal, but formative for the evolution of sustainable urbanism.

On collaborative planning

A transnationally recurring theme in European environmentalist practices is the extended perception of postwar planning as undemocratic. Planners and planning offices were often portrayed as 'authoritarian' and 'fraudulent' and accused of creating unhealthy environments.[199] Their hermetic power structures and top-down processes were increasingly called into question, highlighting the need to redefine the planners' role in society. This sentiment is reflected in most of the zines in Paper Ib, where there are reports of local protests staged against specific planning decisions.

198 Deleuze and Guattari, *Toward*.
199 Almbladet 2, 8-9.

By the 1970s and 1980s, calls for greater transparency and public participation in planning processes had become unifying demands, and in the 1990s they crystallized in what has been termed 'the collaborative turn in planning'.[200] Influenced by post-structural and feminist theory, planning theorists started to revise the discipline.[201] Figures such as theorist Patsy Healey argued that planning should concern governance processes through which communities engage in the active shaping of their own futures. For Healey, 'the challenge of planning is not just technical problem-solving, but the mobilization of attention, values, and resources towards collective action.'[202] These ideas prompted a fundamental shift from a technocratic and top-down model to one that prioritizes collective agency and participatory governance.

The 1976 ARARAT exhibition incorporated the public into the exhibition-making process and transformed the museum into a democratic space for collective self-building and learning, anticipating this 1990s collaborative shift.[203] ARARAT employed more than a hundred people in the making of the exhibition – including artists, architects, engineers, and natural scientists – demonstrating a truly multidisciplinary endeavour. Similarly, albeit scaled up to the neighbourhood level, the planning process of ecological community of Understenshöjden developed a consensually based planning- and design process within the structure of the housing company HSB. Cooperative members developed negotiation tools to navigate challenges and resolve conflicts between the inhabitants, between themselves and the architect, and between the inhabitants, the architect, and HSB. These included designing aggregative solutions for the dwelling design, tracing invisible property lines to resolve disagreements about the outdoor space, or creating teams and alternating shifts for maintenance work.

The practices from the zines, ARARAT or Understenshöjden emphasize participatory governance and collaborative decision-making and thus exemplify a broader paradigm shift toward decentralized, community-driven approaches in planning [Figures 4–8]. Such approaches became closely linked to the idea of sustainable development in the 1990s, particularly after the introduction of Agenda 21. The non-professional, experimental, and embodied nature of these environmentalist practices further enriches the understanding of this connection, moving beyond

200 Allmendinger and Tewdwr-Jones, *Planning Futures*, 206.
201 Servon, 'The Language'.
202 Healey, *Collaborative Planning*, 248.
203 Bishop, *Artificial Hells*.

the usual critique of technocratic planning found in planning theory literature usually referenced by authors such as Habermas, Beck, and Giddens,[204] and instead foregrounding the practical, everyday labour of building alternative planning futures.

On sustainable mobility

Countering the car-governed consumer society is also crucial. European historic centres have been inundated with cars since the 1960s, with fatal accidents and pollution becoming the everyday, as many of the zines in paper Ib document. The car lobby's grand visions of urban highways transversing cities, or the metro infrastructure's cut-and-covers in European capitals, meant tearing up parks and demolishing buildings, and even entire neighbourhoods. Bicycles, a traditional and vulnerable technology (in comparison to car-machines), became a symbol of opposition and resistance to car domination in cities. Provos and their *Witte Fietsenplan* (White Bicycle Plan) made the white bicycle an international countercultural symbol, particularly after widely circulated photos from 1969 showed John Lennon and Yoko Ono with a Provo bicycle on their 'bed-in for peace' during their honeymoon at the Amsterdam Hilton [Figures 9-10].

The main room of the ARARAT exhibition showcased a Vietnamese bike with DIY modifications that made it able to function as a cargo bike, offering a sustainable transportation alternative that did not pollute. Environmental zines often documented bike parades and direct actions, reflecting a shared vision of liberating cities from cars and promoting bicycles as a core element of urban mobility [Figures 11-13]. They show how activists campaigned for sustainable mobility solutions to be integrated into public transit. Their efforts also sought to change car drivers' behaviour through road pricing, more efficient road use, and restricted car access in urban areas. The car-free urban layouts of both Understenshöjden (Paper III) and Bo01 (Paper IV) are scaled-up realizations of this vision [Figures 12-17].

Mobility historians have recently begun to historicize today's calls for sustainable or 'smart' mobility solutions such as municipal bike-sharing programmes, peer-to-peer sharing platforms, and other emerging technologies.[205] The historiographic focus has largely been on individuals, on innovators and on their interactions with policymakers to develop

204 Allmendinger and Tewdwr-Jones, *Planning Futures*; Beauregard.
205 Ploeger and Oldenziel, 'The Sociotechnical'.

these technologies. Integrating the perspectives of environmental activism in the promotion of walkability, public transport, and the use of bikes can provide valuable insights, particularly for European planning historiography, offering a broader lens that moves beyond the typical references to North American narratives such as Jane Jacobs and Robert Moses' struggle, Carl Calthorpe's pedestrian pockets, or the traditionalist approach of The New Urbanists.[206]

On circular planning

Experiments with small-scale, community-oriented energy production technologies are a recurrent theme in the practices discussed in all the papers comprising this thesis. Technologies such as wind energy devices, biomass systems, solar panels, individual sewage treatment plants, urine-separating toilets and more are envisioned, tested, modified, disseminated, or discarded. All of them aim to foster a more ethical, less exploitative relationship with the natural world. The pursuit of circular approaches to energy production and waste management thus became a significant focus for environmentalist practices [Figures 17-19].

Underlying these efforts is Bookchin's eco-anarchist concept of social ecology,[207] which posits that when decentralized, human-scale, and ethically driven renewable energy systems are controlled by communities, they hold great potential to counter the ecological and social damage brought on by industrial capitalism. In his words:

> Modern technology has now reached so advanced a level of development that it permits humanity to reconstruct urban life along lines that could foster a balanced, well-rounded, and harmonious community of interests between human beings and between humanity and the natural world. This ecocommunity would be more than what we have always meant by a city; it would be a social work of art, a community fashioned by human creativity, reason, and ecological insight.[208]

In the introduction to *Radical Technology* (1976), edited by Peter Harper and Godfrey Boyle, both of whom were editors of Undercurrents and followers of Bookchin, noted that 'technologies could help create a less oppressive and more fulfilling society' if implemented 'through

206 Hall, *Cities*, 462-467.
207 Bookchin, *The Philosophy*.
208 Bookchin, *Toward*, 91.

small-scale techniques in a wider social context of humanized production under workers' and consumers' control.'[209] Thus, technology is envisioned as a key tool for building environmental futures, but only when it is decentralized and community-controlled, as opposed to top-down.

The ARARAT exhibition (Paper II) mapped available technologies in this regard. It displayed a myriad of low-tech and cutting-edge technologies and showed their implementation in full-scale constructions [Figures 20-22]. Understenshöjden (Paper III) tested available technologies on a neighbourhood scale, using trial-and-error processes to test solutions for wastewater treatment and energy production. These experiments ranged from individual devices to collective systems and eventually incorporated reliance on public infrastructure [Figure 23]. Similarly, Bo01 (Paper IV) tested cutting-edge technologies developed by Sweden's green industry (heat pumps, thermal collectors, wind turbines) aiming to establish a circular system of waste management and energy production on a district-wide scale [Figure 24].

While each of these projects explored technological solutions for sustainability, their approaches reveal a fundamental tension between bottom-up experimentation and top-down implementation, reflecting the broader trend of sustainability being increasingly shaped by corporate and institutional agendas rather than controlled by communities. Bookchin writes in one of his first published works, *The Limits of the City* (1974):

> technology, subserved to irrational and demonic forces [of industrial capitalism], becomes not the instrument of harmony and security, but the means for systematically plundering the human spirit and the natural world.[210]

On urban nature preservation

Environmentalism brought attention to the need to preserve and enhance natural infrastructures in urban areas. In the 1970s and 1980s, protests and actions spread rapidly across European cities against the demolition of parks or natural landscapes, which were often sacrificed in modernization plans that followed a *tabula rasa* approach promoted by planning offices. Many of the actions and movements were documented in the zines discussed in Paper Ib [Figures 25-27]; some examples are Undercurrent's calls for legal protection of green urban areas, Street Farmers' 'transmogrifi-

209 Harper and Boyle, *Radical Technology,* 5.
210 Bookchin, *The Limits,* 139.

cation actions' to replace asphalt with compost and seeds, or Almbladet's satirical articles against the destruction of natural spaces in Stockholm.

Understenshöjden's collaborative masterplan in Paper III reflects a design response rooted in environmentalist claims. By adapting to the existing site conditions, the dwellings leave the landscape largely untouched, preserving its natural features and engaging in more ethical relationships with the existing environment. Here, landscape design becomes a key approach for fostering these ethics, emphasizing coexistence rather than dominance over nature [Figures 28-29]. This aligns with Bookchin's formulation of ecological societies:

> No longer a mere spectatorial object to be seen from a window or during a stroll, nature will become an integral part of all aspects of the human experience, from work to play. Only in this way can the needs of the natural world become integrated with those of the social to yield an authentic ecological consciousness that transcends the instrumentalist "environmental" mentality of the sanitary engineer.[211]

Paper IV's exploration of Bo01 shows a further step in the reorientation of public spaces towards landscapes, where biodiversity and the integration of green spaces into the urban fabric became central to development. The landscape in Bo01 is carefully designed. Instead of preserving natural areas in non-domination relationships or emulating wild nature, its parks feature educational habitats; there are streets and squares with beds of reeds, birdhouses and frog ponds, and experimental gardens; these reflect an enormous investment in the outdoor areas, 'higher than there had been for many decades anywhere else in Sweden'.[212] This was not purely ecologically driven, but also strategic. As landscape scholar Nicole Porter observes, by the 1990s, landscape architecture had become a powerful tool for sales:

> the landscape has, in due course, been transformed into a promotional object, a seamless product whose very physical presence and people's subjective experience of it cannot be separated from the marketing aims processes.[213]

211 Ibid., 91.
212 Kling, A. Landscape Architecture in the Western Harbour, in Persson, B. (ed.) The West.
213 Porter, *Landscape and Branding*, 170.

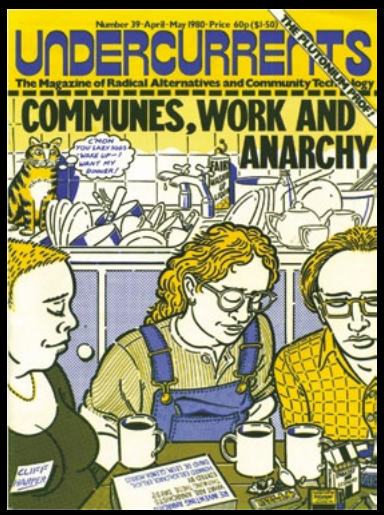
The commodification of urban nature was central in city competitions from the late 1990s onward, and investment in outdoor spaces became a key strategy for marketing new cities and districts. Bo01 embodies this approach, turning green space into a defining visual and experiential feature.

In conclusion, the findings of the articles comprising this thesis suggest, from a historical perspective, that practices such as collaborative planning, sustainable urban mobility, circular planning, and a growing emphasis on preserving urban nature were already tested through environmentalist experiments led by non-professional actors external to, and opposed to, planning institutions. As I will discuss in Section 7.2, their gradual absorption is not simply a story of influence, but one of tension, negotiation, and depoliticization. Environmentalist practices challenged dominant planning from the outside, but as they were absorbed, their critical edge was often softened by technocratic and consensus-driven agendas. As historian Joan Ockman so eloquently puts it, 'the strategy of a minor architecture might be incremental, subtle, and persistent',[214] and its agency over the norm 'entails a process that begins within the major little by little appropriating it and making it strange, until the normative, the familiar, becomes something new, the inception of a different consciousness'.[215] The papers trace this subtle transformation process whilst also highlighting its contradictions: environmentalist experiments reshaped planning, but they were in turn also reshaped by it, exposing the tensions inherent in institutionalizing sustainability, and showing that its politics remain historically contingent and unresolved.

7.1.2 Beyond the absence/presence binary: The category of minor sources

The concept of minor sources proposed in Paper Ib offers a method for addressing historical absences, making significant methodological contributions to the study of planning history. The PhD study demonstrates that applying the category of minor to historical sources helps reposition canonical major narratives – or what Sandercock[216] refers to as the 'official' version of planning history.

214 Ockman, Toward, 152.
215 Ibid.
216 Sandercock, *Making*.



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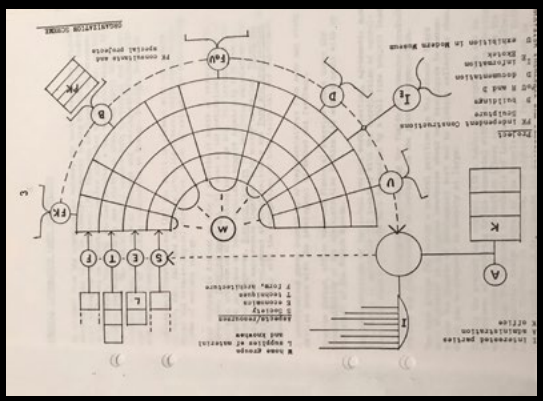
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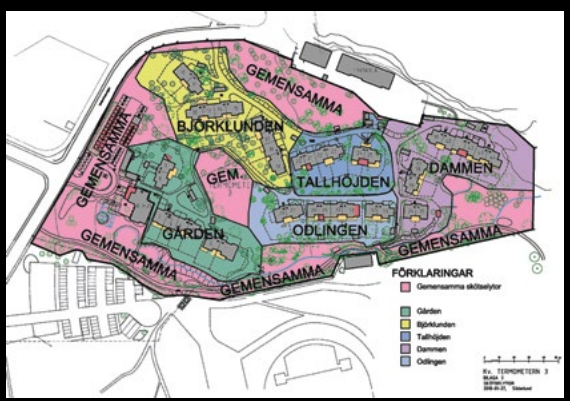

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4. *Undercurrents* no. 39: "Communes, Work and Anarchy," 1980. 5. ARARAT workshops on collective building in the courtyard of the Moderna Museet. Photographer: Olof Antell. Moderna Museet Archive, 1976. 6. Organizational scheme of participants, spaces, and audiences for the ARARAT exhibition, from the preparatory document *Ararat experiment station 1975 – ARARAT exhibition Moderna Museet Apr–Jun 1976. Ecological Building and Living*. Moderna Museet Archive, Stockholm. 7. Community gathering at Understenshöjden, from HSB pamphlet *The Story of Understenshöjden*, 1992. 8. Diagram of Understenshöjden's maintenance groups: *Gemensamma* (collective) in pink, with other colours denoting additional groups. Note the absence of visible property lines. From *Förvaltning av mark och utemiljö BRF Understenshöjden*, 2017.

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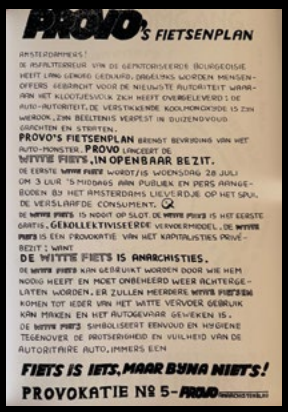
PROVO'S FIETSENPLAN

AMSTERDAMMERS!

DE ASFALTTERREUR VAN DE GEMOTORISEERDE BOURGEOISIE HEEFT LANG GENOEG GEDUURD. DRIEËNTWINTIG WORDEN MENSENOFFERS GEBRACHT VOOR DE NIEUWSTE AUTOMITEIT. WAARAAN HET KLOOTJESVUUK ZICH HEEFT OVERGELEVERD: DE AUTO-AUTORITEIT. DE VERSTIKKENDE KOOLMONOXIDE IS ZIJN WERDOK. ZIJN BEELTENIS VERPEST IN DUIZENDVOUD GEDICHTEN EN STRIETEN.

PROVO'S FIETSENPLAN BRENGT BEVRIJDING VAN HET AUTO-MONSTER. **PROVO** LANCEERT DE **WITTE FIETS, IN OPENBAAR BEZIT.**

DE EERSTE **WITTE FIETS** WORDT OP WOENSDAG 28 JULI OM 3 UUR 'S MIDDAGS AAN PUBLIEK EN PERS AANGEBODEN BIJ HET AMSTERDAMS LIEVERDJE OP HET SPUI. DE VERSLAAFDE CONSUMENT.

DE **WITTE FIETS** IS NOOIT OP SLOT. DE **WITTE FIETS** IS HET EERSTE GRATIS-, GEDOLLEKTIVISEERDE VERVOERMIDDEL. DE **WITTE FIETS** IS EEN PROVOKATIE VAN HET KAPITALISTIES PRIVÉ-BEZIT: WANT

DE WITTE FIETS IS ANARCHISTIES.

DE **WITTE FIETS** KAN GEBRUIKT WORDEN DOOR WIE HEM NODIG HEEFT EN MOET ONBEHEERD WEER ACHTERGELATEN WORDEN. ER ZULLEN MEERDERE **WITTE FIETSEN** KOMEN TOT IEDER VAN HET WITTE VERVOER GEBRUIK KAN MAKEN EN HET AUTOGEVAAR GEWEKEN IS.

DE **WITTE FIETS** SYMBOLISEERT EENVOUD EN HYGIENE TEGENOVER DE ONTSIERDHEID EN VUILHEID VAN DE AUTORITAIRE AUTO, IMMERS EEN

FIETS IS IETS, MAAR BYNA NIETS!

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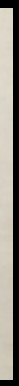
ARARAT

Vietnamcykeln - exempel på anpassad teknologi

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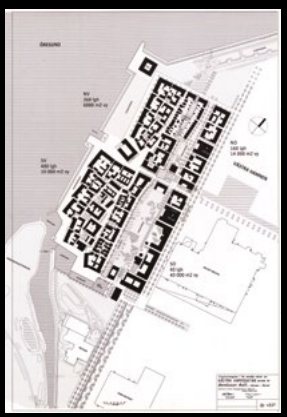

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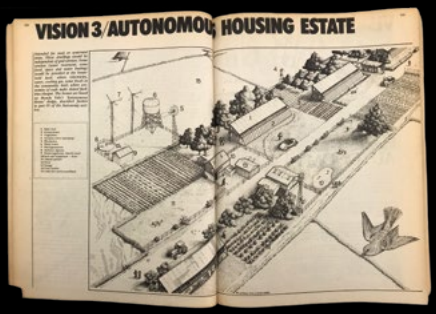
9. John Lennon and Yoko Ono during the "bed-in for peace" at the Hilton Hotel, Amsterdam, with a white bicycle from the Provo White Bike Plan. Photographer: Nico Koster, 1969. 10. Provo's *fietsenplan* (Bike Plan) pamphlet. The final sentences read: "The White Bicycle symbolizes simplicity and hygiene in comparison with the artificiality and dirt of the authoritarian car, after all a bicycle is something but almost nothing." *Provokatie* no. 5, 1969. 11. Protest against cars in Stockholm, the banner reads: "Cars or People." *Almbladet* no. 1, p. 22, 1971. 12. Pamphlet featuring a Vietnamese cargo bike displayed in the ARARAT exhibition. Moderna Museet Archive, 1976. 13. Vietnamese cargo bike on display at the Giardini, Venice Biennale. Photographer: Olof Antell. Moderna Museet Archive, 1976. 14. Free-car masterplan of Understenshöjden, with parking located along the western border of the site. Marie Åslund, 1996. 15. Free-car masterplan of Bo01. Malmö Stadsbyggnadskontor Archive, 1999. 16. Woman cycling in Bo01, front page of *Klimatsmarta Malmö. Hållbarhet blir verklighet* (*Smart Climate Malmö. Sustainability Becomes Reality*). Malmö Stad, 2009.



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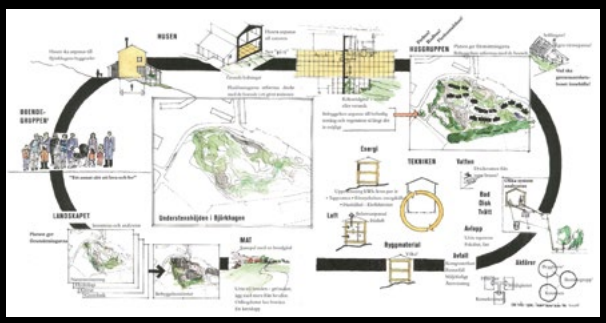

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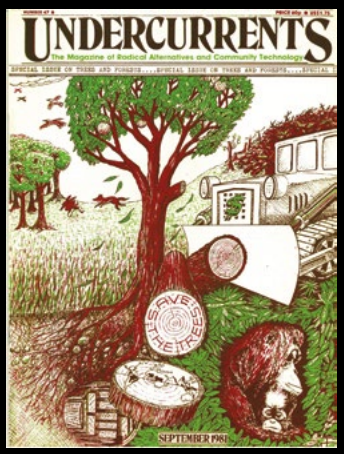
17. “Autonomous Housing Estate,” in Peter Harper and Godfrey Boyle, *Radical Technology*. London: Wildwood House, 1976, pp. 132–133. 18. Poster for COMTEK79, the Community Technology Festival, Bath. *Undercurrents* no. 35, 1979. 19. Diagram of basic interdependencies in the Street Farmhouse. *Street Farm 2*, 1972. 20. Entrance to the Moderna Museet with displayed devices, technologies, and architectures. Moderna Museet Archive, 1976. 21. ARARAT on display at the Nordic Pavilion, Venice Biennale. Photographer: Olof Antell. Moderna Museet Archive, 1976. 22. Diagram of ARARAT’s main room illustrating the energetic interdependencies of nature’s four elements. Moderna Museet Archive, 1976. 23. Circular plan of Understenshöjden, including site, inhabitants, buildings, and technologies. Bengt Bilén, 1994. 24. Diagram of Bo01’s circularity, visitor brochure for the housing exhibition, 2001.



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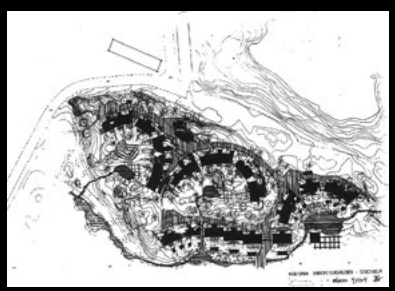

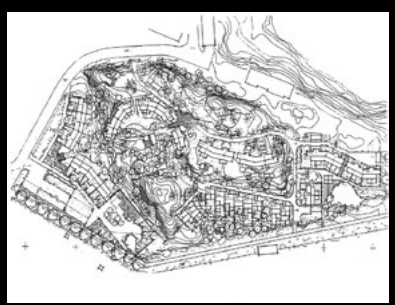

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25. Special issue on trees and forests, *Undercurrents* no. 47, 1981. 26. *Vann-Baereren* no. 7: "Utopiene Lever" ("Utopias are Alive"), 1975. The issue explores reintegration of nature and cosmological thinking into domestic life. 27. *Almbladet* no. 1, 1971. Cover illustration satirising the battle over the elms (*almstriden*) in Stockholm, with caricature of local politician Hjalmar Mehr wielding an axe. 28. Iterations of Understenshöjden's masterplan, positioning buildings to maximise preservation of nature. Bengt Bilén, 1995. 29. Landscape of Understenshöjden. Photographs by the author, 2019.

Sustainability is frequently framed as a transnational challenge, its official historical narrative rooted in the Brundtland Report.[217] This narrative is typically supported by resolutions, reports, treaties, and conventions from global, national, or local institutions, such as the United Nations, the European Commission, national legislation, or planning policies; these serve as primary sources for its historization. However, this official framing frequently overlooks environmentalist practices operating at the margins of these institutions (see Chapter 4). How, then, should historians position these practices and their historical traces in relation to the official historiography? It is precisely in this regard that the concept of the minor proposed here – which encompasses minor histories and sources – has emerged as valuable framework.

Writing about a modern architect overlooked by architecture historiography, Joan Ockman points out that when working with neglected sources or actors, there is a risk of focussing excessively on their absence: 'The problematic of the marginal subject, like any other, can all too easily fall prey to a tautological or reciprocally confirming subject and method. In the end, it may be unclear if our work is a *parable* or a *parody*. Nonetheless, such unaccustomed illumination – whether indirect or 'ultraviolet' ... may well be the potential of the minor historiography [italics in original].'[218] This thesis therefore makes use of the minor framework's ability to reposition and transform major histories beyond simplistic, moralizing or trivializing readings. That is, it can reveal aspects of history that are typically overlooked, thereby enriching our understanding beyond the binary of absence/presence.

Environmentalist histories and sources are minor in comparison to major narratives derived from municipal planning offices, government bodies, or European Commission actions. Engaging with these minor sources offers new interpretations of those dominant histories. Examples such as those discussed in Section 7.1.1 complete the historization of sustainability by including the agency of environmentalist experiments in participatory planning, sustainable mobility, circular planning, or recent practices of urban nature preservation. These narratives not only intersect with mainstream sustainability discourses; they also modify and enrich them.

By incorporating zines and other ephemeral environmentalist materials as valid resources for historical inquiry, the thesis extends the

217 Brundtland, *Our Common Future*.
218 Ockman, 'Reinventing', 98.

conventional boundaries of historical knowledge in planning regarding the use of sources, which is extensively discussed in Paper Ib. It includes the insights of ordinary individuals, amateurs, and embodied knowledge, thereby proposing a more nuanced and layered understanding of the origins of sustainable development.

7.1.3 Swedish histories in the global history of sustainability

As the cases of ARARAT, Understenshöjden, and Bo01 – The City of Tomorrow are Swedish, I acknowledge Swedish geographical and cultural positionality in the papers. The stories reach other places however, primarily western European geographies (Papers Ia and Ib), and also extend globally. The transnational focus in the papers has revealed some Swedish contributions to the history of environmentalism, and more remarkably, to the global history of sustainability. After all, sustainability is a global agreement, made through global events and pushed by global institutions to counteract the environmental crisis, which is an indisputably global question. In line with this, the thesis nods to historian Sebastian Conrad's idea of global history.

According to Conrad, the notion of global history aims to overcome the fragmentation in historical studies produced by a 'methodological nationalism'[219] in which the nation-state is usually the fundamental unit of investigation. In our field, studying the movement of planning ideas across borders – this is usually referred to as 'knowledge diffusion' in planning history literature[220] – is not new. Urban historian Carl Nightingale from the Global Urban History Project[221] reminds that planning historians are accustomed to the 'global' approach: 'Planning historians, who emphasize the inherently international profession of planning, were among the first to anticipate the "transnational" or global turn in urban history … examining the exchange of planning ideas and policy frameworks.'[222] However, Conrad stresses that certain phenomena require 'a more comprehensive understanding of the interactions and connections that have made the modern world'[223] than the linear transnational transfers usually covered in planning history research.[224] The argument gains force in a seemingly more and more uniform world that seems to be evolving

219 Conrad, *What*, 9.
220 See, for instance, Ward, Planning Diffusion, 76-90.
221 See: https://www.globalurbanhistory.org/
222 Nightingale, 'The Global', 135.
223 Conrad, *What*, 9.
224 Healey, The Universal; Ward, 'Planning Diffusion'.

into a single political, economic, and cultural entity, and where local events are increasingly shaped by the global context.[225]

In the 1970s, awareness of the environmental crisis as a global threat was fostered by the idea of the Earth as a single, interconnected ecological system in need of protective efforts that transcended nation-state sovereignties and their boundaries. The environmental effects of urbanization, the dependence on fossil fuels, material extraction and circulation, and overall ecosystem destruction increasingly and transversally permeated societies, from individuals to institutions. The idea of a sustainable urbanism may thus be seen as the materialization of these global concerns. Conrad writes that

> at its core [of global history] are patterns of exchange that were regular and sustained, and thus able to shape societies in profound ways. There have always been cross-border exchanges, but their operation and impact depend on the degree of systemic integration on a global scale.[226]

The papers included in this thesis show that globally, Sweden is usually praised for its efforts to develop sustainability models for the world to emulate.[227] Swedish contemporary institutions such as SymbioCity – a government initiative aiming to promote public and private expertise in sustainable urbanism – or the Stockholm Resilience Centre – a research centre at Stockholm University focused on sustainable development – show the country's ambition to be at the forefront of sustainability practices. According to SymbioCity's website (as of November 2024):

> Swedish municipalities have a long-standing vision of urban development as more than the sum of its parts. This holistic way of working has resulted in Swedish cities ranking among the most sustainable in the world, with targets and strategies that encourage a green transformation. SymbioCity methods are based on these experiences, as applied and continuously refined in transition and developing countries.[228]

225 Beck, *What is Globalization?*
226 Conrad, *What*, 12.
227 Hult, *Unpacking*, 129.
228 SymbioCity website: https://symbiocity.org/

This shows a clear ambition to position the country as a flagship and reference for best practices of sustainable urban development.

Using historical Swedish-based case studies, the thesis establishes a dialectical thinking between local- and global history to examine the country's role in shaping and contributing to the global sustainable urban development discourse. Paper II situates the exhibition ARARAT in the context of the 1972 UN Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm; with the motto 'Only One Earth', it positioned Sweden at the forefront of environmental diplomacy and showcased the country's ambition to influence global environmental affairs. According to German environmental diplomacy researcher Andreas Grieger, 'it was in the initiative of a small country in Scandinavia that laid the foundation for international cooperation on environmental matters.'[229]

This commitment was further reinforced by the vision of the 'Green Welfare State' introduced in the 1990s under Social Democratic Prime Minister Göran Persson. Building on the momentum of the Brundtland Report (1987) and the Agenda 21 programme (1992), Persson declared in his inaugural speech to Parliament in 1996 that 'Sweden shall be a leading force and an example to other countries in its efforts to create environmentally sustainable development.'[230] The noble cause of protecting the environment through policy also became a way of growing economically.

The development of Understenshöjden in the Gröna HSB strategy described in Paper III shows a mobilization of resources by both public and private institutions to integrate the concept of sustainable development into the built environment. The case of Bo01 housing exhibition in Paper IV demonstrates the ambition to position Sweden as a leading nation in green construction and sustainable urban planning. As stated in preparation materials for the exhibition, 'the Expo will demonstrate the position of the Swedish and European "frontline" with regard to environmental aspects of architecture, design, the knowledge of material, and other fields areas within town planning and building.'[231]

Paper IV also links Malmö's housing exhibition to Swedish new membership in the European Union. The 'European Village' – a part of the development in which all EU members were invited to design and build a house – embodies the idea of the European Union as a networked

229 Grieger, 'Only'.
230 Regeringskansliet 1996, quoted in Lidskog and Elander, 'Ecological Modernization', 416.
231 Bo01, Manual Int. Developers, 9.

force and leader of good practices in sustainability, but also the notion of Europe as a common market for the construction industry. Bo01 and the parallel urban development of Hammarby Sjöstad in Stockholm (from the mid-1990s to the 2010s) positioned Sweden as a host for the best sustainable development practices in an EU-perspective – Stockholm won the first EU Green Capital in 2010 – and globally, as it was included in the World Bank's best sustainability practices in 2010.

In summary, this PhD study has examined how certain Swedish planning practices have responded to environmental challenges, constantly aiming to become a global model. Building on Conrad's notion of global history, I have critically explored how Sweden has consistently sought to position itself as a leader in sustainable urbanism within the global market of planning services and technologies, particularly through its shift toward ecological modernization. This reinforces the idea of sustainability as a transnational and collective project, and it also highlights how global sustainability is increasingly shaped by market logics, competition, and the pursuit of geopolitical influence rather than solely by ecological responsibility.

7.2 Environmentalist Practices vis-à-vis Sustainable Urban Developments

Considered collectively, the practices discussed in the articles reveal a process of territorialization as environmental activism becomes institutionalized; that is, environmentalist actors, spatial interventions, and technological experiments, which initially appeared heterogeneous and disparate, have been integrated and grown into more structured frameworks in planning institutions.[232] Essentially, the papers as a whole demonstrate how certain minor environmentalist practices gradually evolve into major, stabilized, and systematic planning activities, particularly as sustainability began to solidify as a normative standard in institutions around the turn of the millennium.

Following Selznick's cooptation theory (1949), this transformation is disempowering, a political strategy to neutralize opposition by offering it a share in power and thus assimilating dissenting forces within institutions. In the case of environmental activism and the adoption of its ideas, practices, and actors into institutional planning however, the process is more complex. The papers show that there are different degrees of assi-

232 Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand*; De Landa, *Assemblage Theory*; Beauregard, *Advanced*, 19.

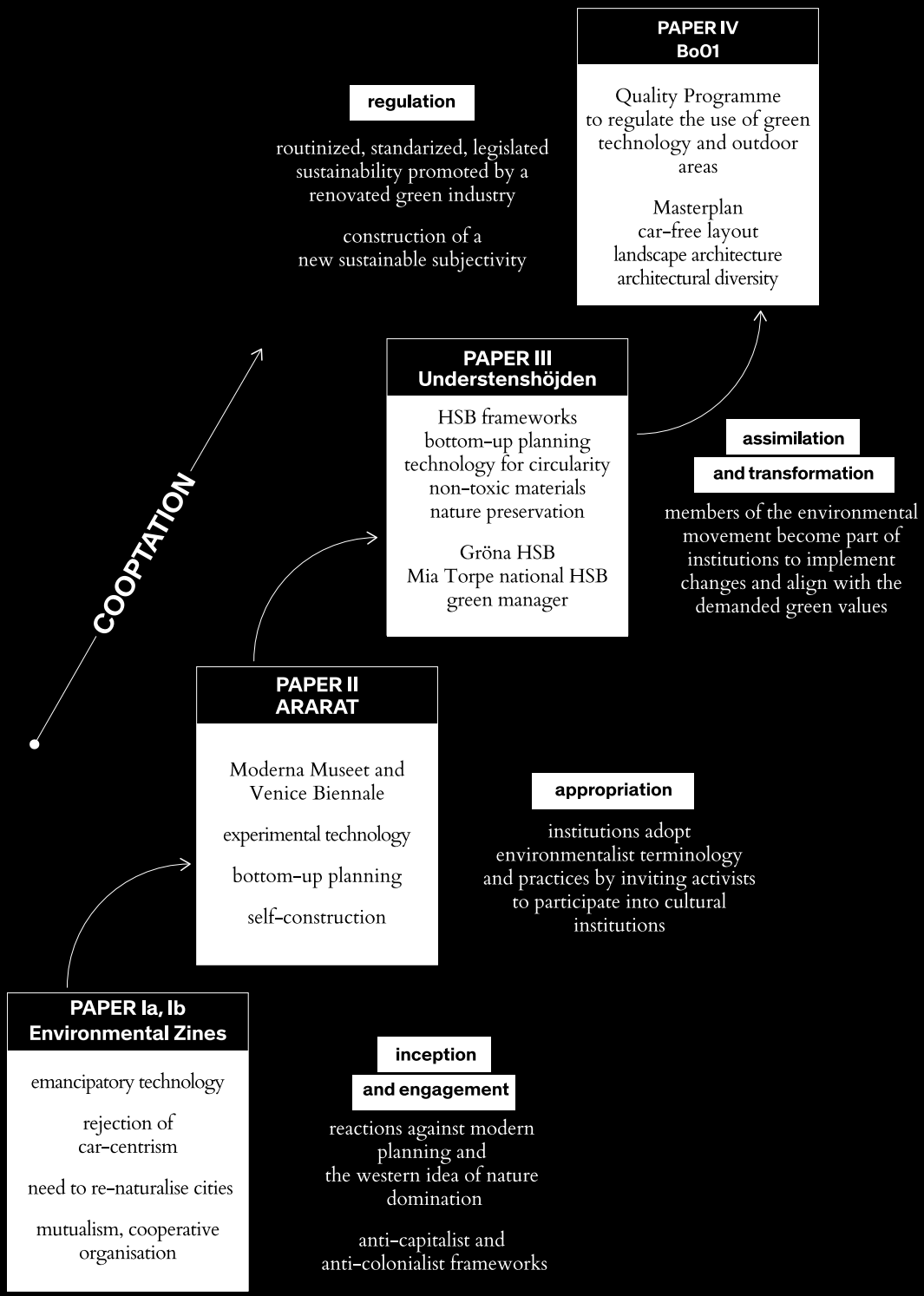

Figure 30. Diagram of the institutionalization of environmentalist ideas, experiments, practices, and actors across the stages of cooptation, connecting the case studies analysed in the thesis.

milation of environmental activism that mostly depend on the capacity of the practices to scale-up and align with market-oriented approaches, often at the expense of more radical or redistributive demands. While the diagram on the previous page [Figure 30] depicts the process as consistent and continuous, it is not without setbacks, mutual or unilateral discards, and periods without significant evolution.

Drawing on Coy and Hedeen's four-stage model of cooptation, this section synthesizes the findings from all of the papers to discuss and unpack this process and responds to RQ3, regarding the legacies – both transformative and compromised – of environmentalist practices in contemporary practices of sustainable urban development.

Papers Ia and Ib illustrate the first phase, 'inception and engagement'. The content of the collected zines shows the response of 1970s' environmental activism to a 'set of grievances or unfulfilled needs'[233] provoked by an alienating, consumerist-oriented, polluting, and car-dominant modern urban planning. Zines thus became a testimony of the 'development of shared consciousness and collective identities'.[234] In them, authors report about local movements, claims, experiments, and technologies, creating a common aesthetic in which bikes substitute cars, cities are re-naturalized, experimental technology facilitates realize self-sufficiency and environmental wellbeing, and communities evolve into small-scale, self-organized cooperatives. Coy and Hedeen argue that in this first phase, the criticism and the alternatives are read as 'political opportunities' by institutions, which begin 'perceiving [their own] need for reform'.[235] The Stockholm Conference (1972) crystalized this moment of institutional recognition of the idea that humans were harming the environment. Environmental protection started to be perceived as a key principle in international governance, and the construction industry and the expansion of cities a significant threat for the environment. It was from this point that environmentalist ideas and experimental practices started to shape the official agenda.

In Paper II, the ARARAT exhibition exemplifies the phase of 'appropriation', where institutions adopt the language and methods of activist movements and integrate their work through invitations to participate in the institutional sphere.[236] ARARAT exhibited cutting-edge green technologies, low-tech devices, and full-scale architectural

233 Coy and Hedeen, 'A Stage Model', 410.
234 Ibid.
235 Ibid., 411.
236 Ibid., 413.

prototypes, openly defining the environmental crisis as a consequence of capitalism and colonialism. ARARAT was on display at Sweden's leading museum of contemporary art and later represented the country at the Venice Art Biennale, and it thus exemplifies the appropriation of environmentalist ideas within both national and international cultural institutions and discourses.

Coy and Hedeen argue that such invitations to participate are often seen as small victories within the movement, and activists may perceive institutional engagement as a form of positive power-sharing, as the prospect of institutionalization confers legitimacy and attracts resources.[237] However, institutions frequently reinterpret the terms of activist efforts and often apply them to practices that are at odds with the original intention.[238] The technologies showcased in ARARAT were initially conceived by ARARAT members as tools for facilitating off-grid community living, with which to disconnect from the polluting, consumerist infrastructure of capitalist modernity. Outside the general press however, the exhibition was primarily discussed in techno-scientific magazines that framed the technologies on show there as promising opportunities for industry-driven green reconversion and largely excluded the exhibition's original anti-capitalist and anti-colonialist criticism.

Paper III explores the third phase, 'assimilation and transformation', through the case of the ecological community Understenshöjden. Developed under the auspices of Sweden's largest housing company HSB, the project (1) engaged in a participative process, (2) experimented with available green technologies and (3) tested solutions for preserving the plot's natural landscape untouched. According to Coy and Hedeen, in this phase institutions try to assimilate key leaders or members of activist movements, effectively reshaping their original goals, priorities, and agendas to fit the institutions' interests.[239] HSB recruited Mia Torpe, initiator of Understenshöjden, as the national environmental manager to lead the Gröna HSB (Green HSB) campaign, seeking to integrate (some of) Understenshöjden's environmental practices into HSB's housing stock. As Alejandra Navarrete ongoing PhD discusses, and drawing on Torpe's experience, the campaign primarily involved educational lectures and workshops that she held about circularity and the use of green technology and targeted local HSB representatives across Sweden.[240] Howe-

237 Ibid.
238 Ibid.
239 Ibid., 420.
240 Navarrete, *Swedish Environmentalisms*, 35-39.

ver, Understenshöjden's core principles, such as community-driven decision-making or preservation of a site's natural conditions, were deprioritized in the campaign, with more importance given to transferable solutions for the construction industry; materials and technologies were prioritized more highly than participatory or place-based approaches.

Paper IV explores the housing exhibition Bo01 in Malmö as a compelling example of the final phase, termed 'regulation', in which institutions 'routinize, standardize, legislate practices'.[241] Bo01 shows a regulatory shift in Swedish urban planning with the implementation of Quality Programmes, a quantitative tool able to formalize sustainability by regulating outdoor spaces and the use of green technology through a system of points, thereby consolidating sustainability into measurable parameters.

According to Coy and Hedeen, this final phase unfolds alongside a process wherein 'customers develop expectations aligned' with these institutionalized practices. The *sustainable citizen* envisioned for Bo01 emerges as an environmentally conscious consumer – a white one, with a high income and a willingness to pay high prices for technologically equipped and architecturally expressive apartments; this ultimately positioned sustainability within a market-driven paradigm. Throughout the articles, the PhD study shows that when environmental ideas become institutionalized and driven by consensus, they also become depoliticized. This final phase is discussed further in the following section.

Two main key questions emerge from this discussion. The first concerns the role of environmental activism in the testing and advancement of technological experiments for circularity and self-sufficiency, even if the underlying purpose undergoes a fundamental shift. The analysed papers demonstrate that technologies were initially conceptualized as emancipatory or 'liberatory' tools, drawing on the work of anarchist thinker Murray Bookchin, who is frequently cited in the environmentalist publications of Paper Ib. Technological innovation was intended to challenge rationalist and capitalist paradigms of environmental domination, facilitate ecological well-being, and promote community autonomy and self-governance. As environmental agendas became institutionalized however, green technologies were developed by research institutions and manufacturing industries, and later adopted by public administrations, and the emphasis on social transformation and the imperative to alter consumption patterns progressively disappeared. Technology became

241 Coy and Hedeen, 'A Stage Model', 424.

the facilitator of a 'hedonistic sustainability'[242] for those who could afford it – upholding consumerist patterns whilst addressing energetic demands and waste management. The articles thus describe a shift in how green technology was perceived, from a vehicle for community emancipation, to an instrument of institutional governance.

This leads to a second, broader question about the role of institutional planning in facilitating decollectivization and in pushing autonomous mutualist or cooperative experiences to subordinate to market forces and state control. The papers in this thesis show that when an environmental agenda is adopted in planning and solutions previously considered experimental are scaled up, the intimate link between environmental and social transformations that environmental activism advocated is broken. Planning scholar Álvaro Sevilla has conducted extensive analysis of how planning has historically functioned as a capitalist tool of territorialization that shapes social order and promotes economic accumulation, facilitating dispossession, decollectivization and subordination to market dynamics.[243] Following this pattern, this thesis implicitly reveals how institutional planning coopted aspects of environmentalist practices, promoting consensus about them and thereby depoliticizing them and deactivating their cooperative and emancipatory ideals to align with the rational logics and ordered frameworks of capitalism [Figure 31].

7.3 Assumptions, Paradoxes, and Ethics of Sustainable Urban Development

This PhD study shows how Bo01's sustainable urban development emerged through the entanglement between the flow of capital from Swedish and European developers, Swedish green industry and research institutes, and the City of Malmö and the materialization of desires for consumption – in this case, of sustainable homes. This reflects a new, intertwined process of morphological urbanization and the emergence of a sustainable way of life.

242 The term *hedonistic sustainability* was first used by a Bo01 resident in an interview for a BBC documentary about Bo01, entitled *Europe's First Carbon Neutral Neighbourhood* (2002), to describe the lifestyle it offered its residents. She explained, 'I call it hedonistic sustainability. It's like you can kind of live a good life and you don't really have to think about it.' https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6yZYXSsWnsg&t=54s [Accessed February 10, 2025] Interestingly, the term has since been popularized by Danish architect Bjarke Ingels to describe his firm's global practice, which frames sustainability as an enjoyable and aspirational way of living rather than a restrictive or burdensome one. Ingels characterizes this approach as 'working with how sustainable life can be more fun than normal life', an alternative to what he describes as 'sad, depressing sustainability'. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ogXT_CI7KRU [Accessed March 20, 2025].

243 Sevilla, *Against*, 15, 20.

This final part of the discussion addresses the overall aim of this thesis, as I identify some of the design and procedural principles and assumptions of early implementations of so-called sustainable urban development, attempting to understand, from a disciplinary point of view, what we mean when we speak about it. I will return to urban political ecology to explore the ethical questions of 'who benefits' and 'for whom' these sustainable developments are designed.

7.3.1 Assumptions and paradoxes

Like modernist developments, Bo01 and other early sustainable urban projects depart from a *tabula rasa*, meaning that no preexisting natural landscapes or existing building structures are retained in the designs. Most of these developments are located in former industrial or military areas: former shipyards became the sites for Bo01 (Malmö) and Nordhavn (Copenhagen); former manufacturing sites became Hammarby Sjöstad (Stockholm); a French military base was developed into Vauban (Freiburg); industrial and military buildings were transformed in Vallastaden

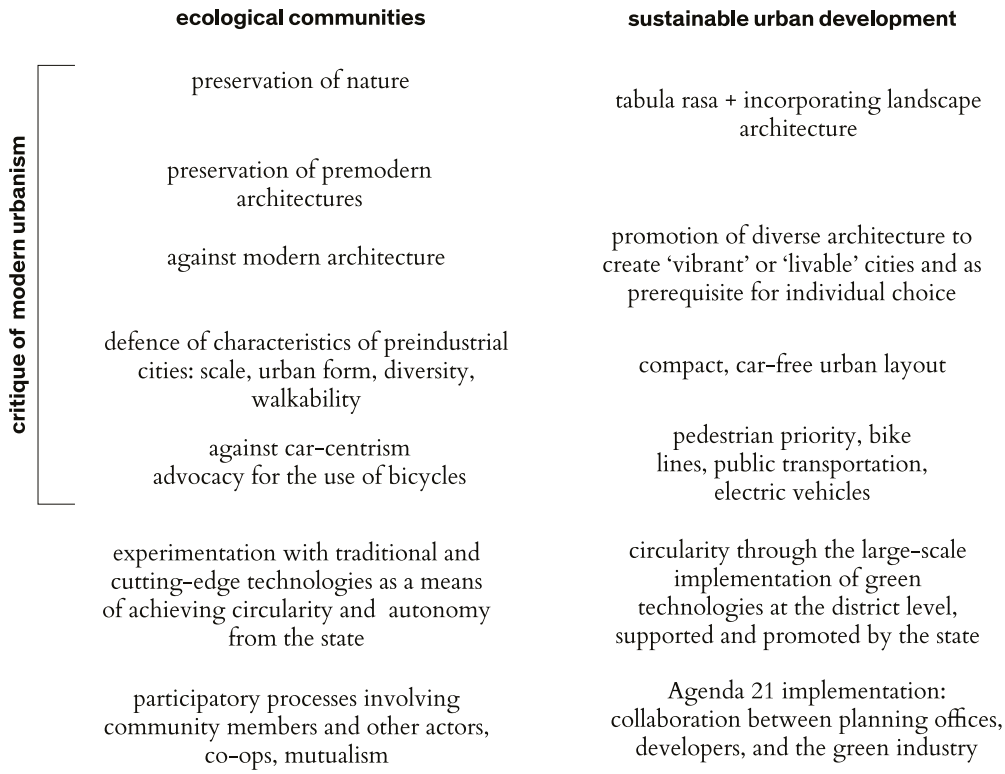

Figure 31. The evolution of ideas, practices, and experiments at the intersection of environmentalism and institutionalized sustainability.

(Linköping). The designs typically feature a compact, car-free layout and incorporate different green spaces with various characteristics and sizes. The architectural expression spans a diverse range of shapes, colours, and materials, and the diversity extends to pedestrian public spaces through an intricate network of streets, squares, corners, and pocket spaces.

Klas Tham, the architect responsible for Bo01's urban design, stated that 'every eighth meter, something will happen in the street',[244] emphasizing the importance of creating a dynamic and eventful urban experience. It is usually argued that this deliberate resistance to repetition – one might call it a 'repetition-phobia' – is an intentional departure from the uniformity of modernist urbanism. It also shows an implicit rejection of the aesthetics of collectivism and equality proposed by architectures of the welfare state. In contrast, early sustainable planning, with its architectural diversity in form and colour, its experiential and event-driven approach to public space, and its reliance on ambiguous Gehlian terms such as 'livability' and 'vibrancy'[245] reflects the aesthetics of materialized neoliberalism: a celebration of individual choice, uniqueness, and personal expression.

When it comes to the planning processes, both Bo01 and its decision-making processes and Understenshöjden and the subsequent 'Green HSB' campaign reflect a shift in urban planning governance strategies. The papers highlight the increasing entanglement of public institutions and private actors and the shift of responsibilities to implement and scale-up an environmental agenda to the private sector. This is a result of two interrelated international phenomena. One is the impact of neoliberalization processes on the profession, what Peter Hall calls 'a moment of self-destruction':

> [From the 1980s], cities, the new message rang loud and clear, were machines for wealth creation; the first and chief aim of planning must be to oil the machinery. The planner increasingly identified with his traditional adversary, the developer; the gamekeeper turned poacher.[246]

Hall's criticism highlights the shift from urban planning as a state-led approach to one increasingly aligned with market forces. Once primarily regulators of development and growth, planners took on roles

244 Tham quoted in Waern, 'Bo01 – Beprövade', 26.
245 Gehl, *Life Between*.
246 Hall, *Cities*, 415.

as facilitators of private-sector interests. At the same time, this shift was reinforced by the implementation of Agenda 21 on the EU-level, which decentralized responsibilities for sustainable development and placed them in municipalities. Yet, Agenda 21 explicitly promoted the inclusion of private actors as essential partners in achieving sustainability goals:

> Governments, business and industry, including transnational corporations, should strengthen partnerships to implement the principles and criteria for sustainable development.[247]

The new public-private alliances became explicit in Bo0's 'creative dialogues', a collaborative planning process in which planners, developers, and representatives from industry and research institutions collectively established and agreed upon a Quality Programme. This was an innovative planning tool that allowed architects to bypass the Building Code. It fixed only maximum building heights and promoted architecture diversity: 'listless, indifferent design and architecture must be banned'.[248] Through the Quality Programme, planners retained control over two aspects: (1) the integration of natural elements in outdoor spaces to promote biological diversity, and (2) the use of technology to create a metabolic district, establishing that renewable energy must be generated locally, and that waste and sewage eco-cycles must operate at the district level.

Achieving circularity and self-sufficiency through the integration of green technology is thus another fundamental principle of sustainable urban planning. Implementing heat pumps, solar collectors, wind turbines, photovoltaic cells, vacuum waste systems, and local waste-to-energy and sewage treatment plants – alongside the provision of efficient public transportation – requires a significant mobilization of public funds.

This reveals two paradoxes in sustainable urban planning. First, while architectural design became less regulated to align with neoliberal aesthetics, landscape design and green technologies became more and more regulated, evolving into 'sustainability fixes' managed by urban planners collaborating with private partners. The term 'sustainability fix', borrowed from planning scholar Aidan While and his colleagues, builds on Harvey's 'spatial fix' and describes how a declining site becomes highly attractive through the unrolling of a detailed programme for

247 Agenda 21, 30.1
248 Bo01, Kvalitetsprogram, 12

sustainable development.[249] Second, achieving sustainability through the implementation of technology requires significant public funding – for installation at the district level, ongoing maintenance, and adequate public transportation – despite the broader trend of privatizing public services and cutting welfare state policies.

7.3.2 Sustainability ethics in pioneering developments

This PhD study has shown that sustainable developments like Bo01 were not merely designed to promote a way of living that protected the environment; they were also constructed as desirable commodities in the European and global property market, securing or extending capitalist accumulation. By situating these projects in former industrial areas, municipalities engaged in a process of spatial revalorization in which expressive architecture, green technological infrastructures, a car-free lifestyle, compact built environment, and pedestrian-friendly design helped brand the city as progressive, dynamic, and attractive to international investors and highly skilled workers.

These characteristics lead to the broader question of *for whom* sustainable developments were built. Paper IV, through the case of Bo01, reveals the envisioned sustainable citizen as a middle-to-upper class European or global citizen, a highly educated and well-paid professional who works in IT or creative industries. It is assumed that this ideal citizen has little reliance on fossil fuel-dependent cars and instead bikes, uses public transport, works from home, or can afford an electric vehicle, which can be charged using the designated infrastructure.

This vision legitimizes and reinforces sustainable urbanism of the kind that planning scholar Anna Hult has described as 'green islands of privilege',[250] spaces that limit working-class or less affluent citizens, or simply lifestyles that do not align with the idealized eco-modern citizen.

Urban political ecology scholar Maria Kaika summarizes these early practices of urban sustainability as 'immunological practices';[251] these are practices that may occasionally aim to counteract some effects of socio-environmental inequalities (fossil-fuel dependence, circular management of domestic waste, etc.), but ultimately create inequalities and exclusion:

> They are the essence of an ecological modernization that has been proven not to work. The pursuit of goals

249 While, Jonas and Gibbs, 'The Environment and the Entrepreneurial City'.
250 Hult, *Unpacking*, 117.
251 Kaika, 'Don't Call Me', 10.

> through indicators and smart technologies might occasionally contribute to counteracting some of the effects of global socio-environmental inequality, but cannot offer long term solutions to local or global socio-environmental problems.[252]

She calls them 'immunological', noting that bringing their failures to light breaks the broad consensus they enjoy and prevents them from being accepted as good practices or models to follow and repeated. Kaika advocates instead for a 'real sustainability'[253] grounded in political struggle and dissensus, arguing that it is the only way to achieve socio-environmental transformation and justice. She urges us to pay attention to 'alternative practices working in common [that] may offer far more efficient, direct and effective ways of addressing access to housing, healthcare, education, water and clean air in urban settlements rather than any set of indicators or tecno-managerial solutions can offer.'

In this regard, the histories examined in this thesis may serve as examples to challenge currently dominant sustainability paradigms by highlighting how environmental activism has historically resisted the technocratic and market-driven approaches that shape urban planning. By making visible some of these histories, this thesis emphasizes the need to move beyond sustainability as a depoliticized, managerial tool, especially in light of the current rise of geoengineering or terraforming proposals grounded in planetary, technocratic, and authoritarian forms of governance to address climate change.[254] Instead, the thesis calls for sustainable urbanism to be recognized as a contested terrain where power, justice, and ecological transformation intersect. The experiments, criticism, and direct actions of environmentalist practices of the 1970s and 1980s promoted a more radical reimagining of other urban futures that prioritized collective well-being, social equity, and ecological integrity over economic accumulation and corporate-driven solutions.

252 Ibid.
253 Ibid.
254 See, for instance: Bratton, *The Terraforming*; Buck, *After Geoengineering*; Morton, *Hyperobjects*; Castillo-Vinuesa and Gankevich, 'Green Military.'

8.
Concluding Reflections

To conclude this cover essay, I briefly summarize the key findings from the previous chapter and underline how this PhD study through the lens of planning history increases our understanding of contemporary sustainable planning. I also suggest potential directions for future study.

The evolving agency of environmentalist practices to normative sustainability practices.

The study has traced a historical trajectory between European environmentalist practices of the 1970s and institutionalized sustainability at the turn of the millennium. Addressing a knowledge gap in planning historiography regarding the agency of European environmental activism, I have demonstrated that environmental ideas and experiments – drawing on anarchist thinkers and initially emerging outside of and in opposition to modernist planning institutions and policies – were increasingly appropriated, assimilated, and transformed, and ultimately became part of the institutional planning framework.

More specifically, in response to RQ1 about the agency of environmentalist practices, the PhD study demonstrates that these practices not only criticized modernist planning and industrial capitalism but also experimented with alternative models that incrementally, subtly, and persistently modified normative planning. They provided early experiments on participatory governance, sustainable mobility campaigns, circular planning innovations, and urban nature preservation that contributed to reshaping the dominant, top-down, resource-consuming planning paradigms of modernism.

Minor narratives to broaden the planning historiography canon.

The concept of minor sources has offered a methodological contribution to planning historiography, challenging the dominant reliance on institutional archives and official policy documents. In addressing RQ2, which explores the methodological implications of incorporating the agency of non-professional actors that has been neglected to date, such as environmental activism, this study illustrates the value of recognizing ephemeral, experimental, and non-professional sources such as environmentalist zines and actors. By legitimizing these alternative narratives, this research complicates and enriches the history of sustainable planning. The minor framework acknowledges historical absences and actively

repositions them as vital agents of change. In doing so, this thesis thus contributes to a more inclusive and multifaceted planning historiography of sustainability.

Institutional planning as a territorialization tool for the cooptation of environmentalist practices into sustainability frameworks.

The PhD study unpacks the process by which environmental practices become normative, revealing how their integration into formal structures involves a cooptation process. By ordering, simplifying, and scaling up environmental initiatives to fit within normative frameworks, the study shows that institutional planning facilitates depoliticization, decollectivization, and market subordination, stripping these initiatives of their cooperative and emancipatory ideals. It also demonstrates that the implementation of Agenda 21 played a key role in this process by consciously encouraging institutions to integrate environmentalist practices to implement strategies of 'sustainable urban development'.

In response to RQ3, on the legacy of environmentalism in institutionalized sustainability, through the cases of ARARAT exhibition and Understenshöjden I show that the process of becoming normative is not linear. It involves varying degrees of assimilation, rejection, and reinterpretation of both environmentalist people and practices, depending on their scalability and alignment with market-driven solutions. The study argues that planning historiography should acknowledge European environmental activism as a driving force behind experimentation with technologies in energy production and waste management. However, it also demonstrates that after having been institutionalized, the technologies have shifted from being tools for environmental protection and autonomy from industrial capitalism to models of consumerist sustainability shaped by institutions and the green industry. It further reveals that long-standing environmentalist demands from the 1970s – such as the promotion of urban walkability, cycling, and public transportation over car dependency, as well as the integration and preservation of nature in urban spaces – should be recognized as contributions to contemporary sustainability agendas, even if their original sociopolitical intentions were diluted following their institutionalization and market-driven adaptation.

The dialectical tension between grassroots environmentalist innovation and institutional cooptation forms the basis for understanding how planning, as a discourse and practice, became a vehicle for reframing ecological demands into manageable, market-aligned urban agendas. This PhD study thus shows that European sustainable urban development did not emerge solely from top-down policies or global institutional

frameworks, but rather evolved through an iterative process in which environmentalist innovations paved the way for market-oriented urban strategies that often toned down ecological and social ambitions in favour of economic competitiveness and city branding.

Understanding sustainability as a neoliberal urban planning practice. The departure point for the PhD study has been an ambition to understand what sustainable urban planning might mean in practice. By bringing the scholarship of urban political ecology to planning history research, it has been argued that the rise of sustainable urban planning cannot be disentangled from the neoliberal transformations in the profession, and that this intersection has left an imprint on both sustainability governance strategies and urban design.

The responsibility for implementing sustainable development was transferred via decentralization to municipalities in the 1990s, and municipalities adopted sustainability as a competitive tool, transforming it into a technocratic practice driven by partnerships between the public- and private sectors. This shift shaped early sustainable developments. Through the case study of Bo01, the thesis discerns common patterns in similar early sustainability projects: former industrial sites using a tabula rasa approach, compact and car-free layouts, technology-driven circular systems, diverse architecture, eventful public spaces, and carefully designed landscapes. The study demonstrates that the aesthetics of early sustainable developments prioritize the image of outdoor spaces as dynamic, experiential environments more highly than a regulated standard dwelling, rejecting the uniformity of welfare-state planning based on equality in favour of individualism and free choice.

The PhD study also reveals that in the context of public provision retrenchment, sustainable planning demands the mobilization of an enormous amount of public resources to equip a neighbourhood with technology and achieve circularity, to provide enough public transport to make cars superfluous, to maintain the landscape architecture, etc., so that the development can be branded as sustainable urbanism.

Answering the question of *for whom* posed by urban political ecology however, the thesis highlights that early sustainability practices prioritized profit-driven urbanization and city branding, rather than ecological balance or social justice. This resulted in 'islands of privilege' for emergent sustainable consumers – the highly educated, well-paid professionals, often from IT or creative industries who fit the bill for the ideal sustainable citizen by walking or cycling daily, living without a car, and investing in green industry goods.

The role of theoretical innovation in making planning history relevant. Building on the 'new planning history' approach outlined in Section 1.1.2, this study develops a robust theoretical framework to examine how environmental ideas have historically evolved into sustainable planning practices. Using Sandercock's insurgent planning histories to identify historiographical gaps; Deleuze and Guattari's minor theory and Selznick's cooptation theory to analyse environmentalism as both a cultural practice and discourse; and urban political ecology to explore sustainability from a materialist perspective, I have demonstrated that theoretical innovation helps reshape planning historiography, unveil important narratives and render the field more critical and analytically relevant.

Directions for Further Research

This PhD study thesis has opened paths for further research into the complex and historically contingent relationships between urban planning, social injustices, and the exploitation of nature. It has pointed to the value of looking back and unveiled latent, fragmented, and often contested histories of sustainability practices in order to stay critically aware of how the term sustainability is used and how its meaning shifts to serve various interests.

Urbanization processes affect multiple scales, from sustainable construction materials to the transformation of entire landscapes into sites of green value, and they have facilitated new forms of nature commodification, especially since the 1990s. Practices such as wetland management, forest exploitation for green-certified construction materials, or the utilization of renewable energy infrastructures to meet circular goals, particularly in peripheral areas, are increasingly legitimized in the name of environmental protection and sustainable urban development. Further critical research is needed on these sustainable-related histories from a planning history point of view. The histories of such practices are often deeply entangled with neoliberal agendas and shaped by a web of global actors, institutional interests, and policy networks, and while they are methodologically challenging to trace, they are analytically rich. Situated case studies could offer a way of developing thicker, more nuanced accounts of how sustainability has been imagined, contested, and implemented in specific planning contexts.

Planning history can play a crucial role here, both in its ability to connect theory and practice, but also in its methodological openness to diverse sources, including archives, planning documents, and oral histories. This is especially true in relation to sustainability, a history that

is, in many ways, a history of the present; oral histories can bring forth lived experiences and non-professionalized and activist knowledge, and more that is often absent from official accounts.

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PAPERS

Paper Ia

A LOOK TO TRANSGRESSIVE PLANNING PRACTICES

Calling for Alternative Sources and Actors

Peer-reviewed book chapter in M Welch-Guerra et al. (eds.), *European Planning History in the 20th Century. A continent of urban planning*, New York and Abingdon: Routledge, 2023.

3.5

A LOOK TO TRANSGRESSIVE PLANNING PRACTICES

Calling for Alternative Sources and Actors

Andrea Gimeno

Published in 1982, this image (Figure 3.5.1) is an advertisement of the 'Alternative Communities Movement' found in *Undercurrents*, a British self-published zine that started precariously as a compilation of leaflets wrapped in a plastic bag and became a bimonthly publication of reference for environmentalists. Intending to persuade new dwellers to join one of the "at least 100 communes" in Britain, the flier uses an empowering language mixed with illustrations of domestic architecture shaped with geodesic domes, truncated pyramids, tepees and devices to produce clean energy. The alternative to the "bored suburbia" was communal living where safety, freedom, company and personal development were guaranteed: "If you wish to grow, find out about community living".

During the long 1970s,[1] all over Western Europe – and beyond – young activists believed that the world they were living in had destroyed their inner harmony. In various contexts – ranging from women's liberation to pop, anticolonialism and counterculture – more or less radical activists responded in various ways to this perception of living in an 'inauthentic' world. For environmentalists, inauthenticity was caused by the disconnection between humanity and nature provoked by the "wasteland urban culture"[2] that postwar urbanism had been largely responsible for creating. The idea of an associative and liberating habitat that will free individuals from the consumption of fossil energy and the alienating environments of modernist planning turned out to be a common demand among environmentalists. Alike *Undercurrents*, many zines with an environmentalist tone flourished all around Western Europe operating as a critique of the resource-consuming policies displayed during postwar years. Yet, beyond the critique, they performed as an arena for experimentation and production of spatial ideas where the formulation and dissemination of alternative habitats and planning ideas occurred through its circulation.

Seeking to create a more complex and polyvocal planning historiography regarding the 1970s emergence of environmentalism, I advocate looking at alternative actors and media in order to fill possible gaps and omissions within planning history regarding sustainability. That means including environmental activists, dilettantes and discipline-outsiders as important actors to be considered, and self-published zines as the primary sources to be contemplated.

The chapter is organized as follows: following this introduction, the next section explains the demand of including alternative planning narratives and enunciates the concept of transgressive planning practices for European environmental activism. Thereafter, an argument about the extent to which environmentalist zines serve appropriately as primary sources to track these practices is

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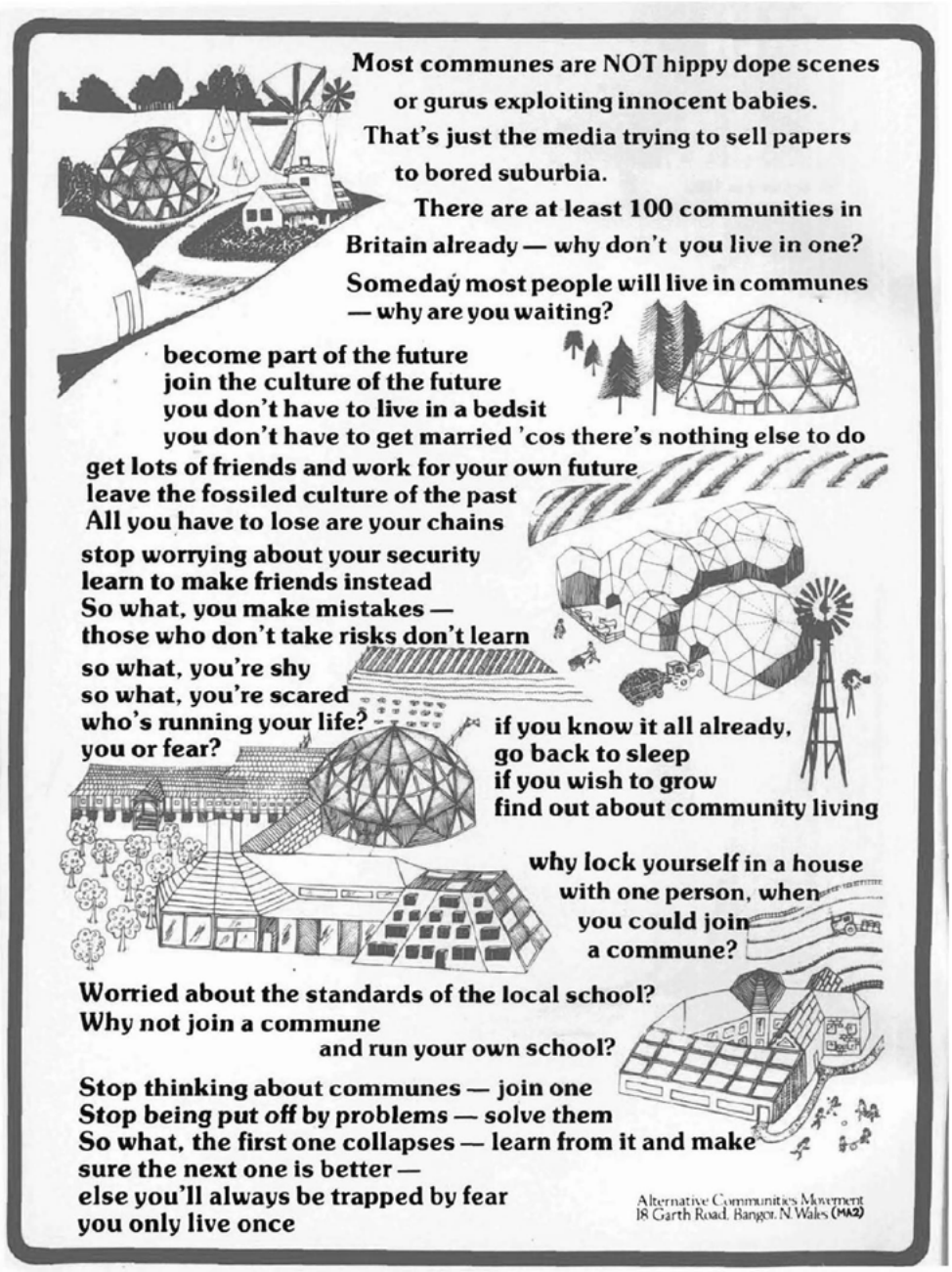

FIGURE 3.5.1 Advertisement of the Alternative Communities Movement published at the inside back cover in Undercurrents issues 55–56, 1982.

Source: Photographic reproduction from the British Library. Courtesy of Undercurrents.

presented. And lastly, a discussion on some of the findings made so far when cross-referencing the networked knowledge contained in the zines is outlined, to be followed by a conclusion.

Definition of 1970s Environmental Transgressive Planning Practices

Over the past two decades, some scholars have been pleading for alternative historiographies in the field of planning history (Llewellyn 2003; Friedmann 2011; Robinson 2011;Avermaete 2017). In *Making the Invisible Visible* (1999), for instance, Leonie Sandercock denounces the heroic and progressive version of the discipline, focused on questions of authorship (key ideas and individuals) and the obsession "to chronicle the rise of the profession, the institutionalization and its achievements". In response to that and under the influence of the 1960s poststructuralism, there has been a rising interest in microhistories, stories of the everyday spaces, and unknown or marginal figures (Stieber 1999) – all of their alternatives that emerged to dismantle architecture and planning's master narratives. In that sense, Dolores Hayden in *The Power of Place* (1995) laments the narrowness of planning history when it fails to encompass the broad spectrum of ordinary places and people. In the search for a more inclusive understanding of planning narratives, therefore, some researchers plead for the inclusion of ethnic communities, migrants and women, as these actors were traditionally "hidden from history" (Rowbothan 1973). Sandercock tags all these latent stories and contrapositions as the "*noir* side of planning".

Concerning the environmental question, the agency of European environmentalist counterculture throughout the long 1970s remains largely unexplored within the planning historiography, unlike its American counterpart, which has been recently studied (Scott 2016). Hence, it can be hitherto situated within the *noir* family. Like Sandercock, James Holston defends the necessity of including within planning history what he calls the "insurgent citizenship", that is, the forms of the social that exist in grassroots mobilization and everyday practices because of their encounter with planning operations (Holston 1999). Interestingly, he proposes considering "insurgent" sites and actors not as mere side-effects but rather as essential elements that challenge the categories and processes of planning (Holston 2008). They are not just passive objects but, rather, active subjects with the agency over planning.

In the case of 1970s environmentalism, the agency goes beyond the opposition to planning operations. Understanding themselves as the dissident counterbalance to mainstream planning, activists practiced proactive criticism, suggesting alternative solutions to many planning conflicts. These practices were considered instruments of liberation but also demonstrations of other ways of living linked to the management of natural resources.

But the rebellious period in the long 1970s was short-lived and is regarded as a utopian phase that was followed by a process of stabilization (Häberlen, Keck-Szajbel and Mahoney 2019). The decline of political radicalism eventually led to its absorption and implementation, thus affecting later policies and planning discourses: activists were invited to participate in governmental agencies and environmental premises were adopted in political agendas.[3] Thus, 1970s environmental activism can be identified as 'transgressive planning practices' and not (just) as 'insurgent citizenship'. "The very moment when their works' own radicality became style, when subversive deconstruction became design, when critical performative gestures became mere theatrical stunt" writes the art historian Benjamin Buchloh about radical artistic practices of that time (Buchloh 2017).

However, as Katka Müller suggests in her book *The Legacy of Transgressive Objects* (2018), if there is something persistent in the process of decline of radical practices during the long 1970s, it is the idea of transgression. Beyond its literal definition (transgression as "an action that breaks the law or the rule" (Cambridge Dictionary)) and borrowing's Müller's theoretical approach, the

term 'transgressive' is introduced here as defined by Foucault in 1963. Prompted from George Bataille's writings on sexuality, Foucault saw transgression as a fundamental operation to reshape our societies in the future. For the French author, the 'transgressive' will trigger a viable space of production once "it can be detached from its questionable association with ethics" and "liberated from the scandalous and the subversive" (Foucault 1993). Thus, the role of transgression is to perform as a spatial-temporal bridge, "to measure the excessive distance that it opens at the heart of the limit" or, in other words, to operate as an anticipation of the future. Transgression, then, appears as a future-oriented utopian space of possibility.

As will be elaborated further below, the production of ideas and experiments implemented by the environmental movements in Western Europe during the long 1970s anticipated many of the planning questions that in the meantime have become the mainstream debate on sustainability. Conceptions of new architectures suggesting a whole new organization of society, the autonomy of dwelling understood as a closed system for energy consumption and waste generation, and the experimentation with the communal organization for inhabiting and land owning, are some of the discussions included in the zines. Hence, this contribution claims to consider (radical) environmental activism as a transgressive planning practice.

A Sample of Zines

For planning historians, both the built space and the archive are traditionally understood as the material requirements from which to build a narrative, considering sources as necessary historical facts to sustain a historical inquiry (Mattson 2018). But sometimes, as is the case for environmental activism, there is (almost) no built form and the material that can be found in archives is not enough. The ephemerality of environmental activism and its intrinsic indisciplinary character made its production difficult to catalog. Yet, its amateurism and antiofficial message contribute to enhancing its absence from the archives. Beyond news about demonstrations and performances published in the press of the time, it is difficult to find sources produced by these 'outsiders' within the traditional planning history archives.[4] As the critic Reyner Banham sharply portrayed in 1966, the long 1970s was an agitated period: "Architecture, staid queen-mother of the arts, is no longer courted by plush glossies and cool scientific journals alone but is having her skirts blown up and her bodice unzipped by irregular newcomers, which are typically rhetorical, with-it moralistic, misspelt, improvisatory, anti-smooth, funny-format, cliquey, art-oriented BUT stoned out of their minds with science-fiction images of an alternative architecture" (Banham 1966).

In a moment in which the planning discipline was shaken by unfamiliar actors and media, the question of which sources to consider is crucial for carrying out historical research, especially when actors are amateurs, activists and thus outside of professional or academic circuits. In an attempt to answer this question, the chapter looks at environmentalist zines as primary sources. The emergence of the environmental wave in the long 1970s runs parallel to the explosion of self-published zines. Therefore, a radical transformation of the production and distribution of knowledge coincides with the rise of the activist movements.

Contrary to professional publications, zines are noncommercial, amateur, small-circulation periodicals, which their creators produce, publish and distribute themselves. As described in the Dutch zine *Provo*, their potential audience was genuinely non-professional: "a monthly sheet for anarchists, provos, beatniks, players, scissors-grinders, jailbirds, "Simple Simon" stylites, magicians, pacifists, potato-chip chaps, charlatans, philosophers, germ-carriers, grandmasters of the queen's horse, happeners, vegetarians, syndicalists, santy clauses, kindergarten teachers, agitators, pyromaniacs, assistant assistants, scratchers and syphilitics, secret police, and other riff-raff"

(Provo 12 1967). An environmentalist zine's reader would find both local and planetary matters, from protests against the approval of a plan for a district to fears about the Vietnam War or the 1973 oil crisis. Yet practical or speculative projects, prototypes for toilets or instructions for growing vegetables in the city, all amalgamated with some advertisements, pieces of advice for mushroom-picking, meditation techniques, hypnotism or homeopathy. The content, as the format of the zine itself, was messy, copy-pasted and collage-like.

Amid the disarray, a constellation of zines published during the long 1970s in Western Europe that mainly focuses on environmental activism is introduced here as the primary source to consider. The collection starts with a 'dynamic sample', a sample of some of the titles that will keep growing while incorporating more publications. So far, it includes the following titles, chronologically classified: *Provo* (The Netherlands, 1966–1971); *ArSe* (United Kingdom, 1969–1972); *Almbladet* (Sweden, 1971–1974); *Street Farm* (United Kingdom, 1971–1972); *Undercurrents* (United Kingdom, 1971–1983); *The Kleine Aarde* (The Netherlands, 1972–1997); *La Gueule Ouverte* (France, 1972–1980); *Le Sauvage* (France, 1973–1991) and *Vannbaereren* (Norway, 1974–1978).

The selection is based on typological (nonprofit, self-published), topic-selected (environmental and spatial planning focus), temporal (published during the long 1970s) and geographical (Western Europe) criteria. Unquestionably, there is a strong predominance of British publications and crucial omissions caused by difficulties in accessing sources remain to be addressed. These imperfections are precisely why the list is called a 'dynamic sample', accepting that it is not finished and should keep growing. Remarkably, when analyzing all the titles one by one, it appears that all the zines on the list refer to each other, functioning within one network, whether this takes the form of a section of recommended publications or just some copy-paste samples or photocopies of one zine into another. Thus, a secondary principle for elaborating the list was tracking all the references that zines themselves suggested. This shows how activists in different countries operated in an informal transnational network where zines were regarded as tools to learn from others' experiences. Yet, it enhances the noncommercial values of zines, working in an alternative logic, out of the market.

Material and Immaterial Production

> *Alternative Everything.*
>
> *We attack the environment to attack the state. The construction of alternatives is both a process and product of the revolution, that by negating the state works to precipitate its inevitable collapse. Every action we take to modify the environment is part of that process. (...)*
>
> *For example:*
>
> *the plan to seed the pavements with grass makes it impossible to walk in the pavements resulting in the use of the street for pedestrians, closing the streets to vehicular traffic.*
>
> *the plan to farm parks is a true realisation of public land resulting in a growing independence from commercial mass production.*
>
> *the plan to plough up the streets is an extension of the park plan manifesting and resulting in the collapse of oppressive urbanism. (...)*
>
> *The nature of the alternative is irrelevant. Any real alternative is an act of rebellion and is subversive. The quasi-alternative will make the alienation of our situation more tolerable: the real alternative changes the situation.*

The cited fragment is part of a text published in 1971 in the first number of the environmental-anarchist zine *Street Farm*. Besides the antistate proclamation and the call for taking action, the lines contain many of the mottos shared by other environmental activism zines. Critical ideas against the lack of nature within cities, against Western consumerist policies, or the dominance of the car in city planning were reiterated within all the publications, portraying a common enemy: 'oppressive' modernist urbanism.

The publications here are considered for their expanded qualities as ephemeral, circulating and utopian objects of the recent past. Instead of reporting the world, zines incubated whole new worlds, offering sights of societies living under completely different physical, social and intellectual rules. As the architectural historian Beatriz Colomina states when referring to architecture magazines in the long 1970s, they functioned as *portable utopias* (Colomina 2018). Topics such as urban farming, the relationship between feminism and ecology, collectivized gardens, cooperative housing, community workshops and the link between anarchism and environmentalism are issues that intermittently appear in most of them. These coincidences allow the researcher to navigate and articulate the collection, elaborating potential routes that, eventually, lead to grasping new narratives.

Zines were the media that transformed the culture of revolts in the long 1970s into an alternative vision of the world (Duncombe 1997). Therefore, a series of the themes discussed served as the basis of a hypothetical improved and new society. But what are the common themes? What is the immaterial production that, eventually, influenced the material world? After the exploration of the sample of zines, five major themes are tentatively highlighted as articulating environmentalist counterproposals.

A critique of modernist top-down planning. The refusal of the modern city is a joint departing point. In all the publications there was a strong rejection of the top-down imposition of design by planners, who, in their view, contribute to the alienation of the residents. These perspectives were often illustrated in an ironic tone *(Almbladet, Provo, Le Sauvage)* or as critical political articles *(ArSe, Undercurrents)*. The development of diverse welfare states and the display of ambitious housing programs giving priority to car traffic found a clear obstacle in the rhetoric of scarcity and the imminent environmental catastrophe articulated by the environmentalist movement (Figure 3.5.2). Straightforward demands such as the stopping of the demolition of buildings in many city centers, for instance, provoked questions, so that the preservation of the city also became an environmental issue(Arrhenius 2010).

The need for reconceptualizing housing. The house and its natural, urban and global ecologies should be part of the "Whole Earth" system. Intended to function self-sufficiently, experiments, speculations and built projects of dwellings were regularly included on many of the zines' title pages (*Street Farmer, Undercurrents, Vannbaereren*). The predominant idea was to build a house that works as a loop system capable of harnessing its waste and generating its own energy (Figure 3.5.3). There was an extraordinary belief in the possibility of gaining autonomy by systematizing the household into a regenerative circuit. The house turned into a political tool that liberates individuals from state mechanisms and contributes to balanced domesticity in terms of natural resource consumption.

Technology as an instrument of liberation. An extended manifestation was to shift the misuse of technology toward something that would serve individual human beings. As written in the manifesto of *Undercurrents*, "we (...) believe that technology can be reoriented to serve not economies and governments but individual human beings – to provide small-scale sources of basics like energy, food, shelter, clothing and tools; to provide unfettered communication between the smaller, more human communities that our world must create if it is to avoid overpopulation, alienation, violence and all the attendant evils of mass society". It is the period of fascination

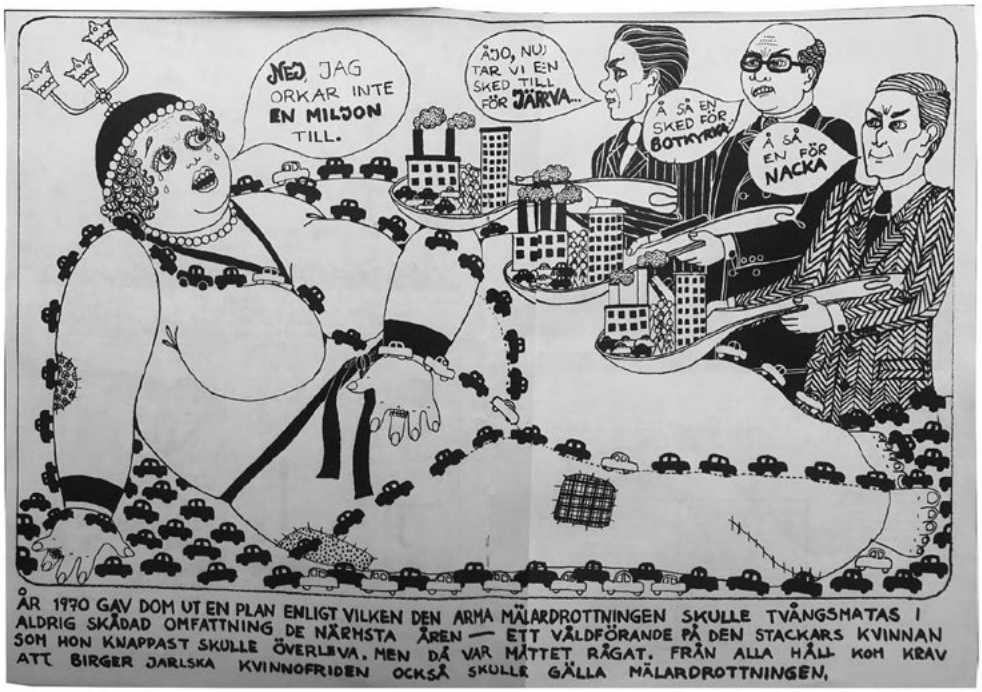

FIGURE 3.5.2 The obese woman in this caricature impersonates the city of Stockholm in the context of the Million Housing Programme (1965–1974). Three developers try to feed her, but she refuses: "No, I can't stand another million". The men try to persuade her with "one spoon for Järva", "another spoon for Botkyrka" and "another for Nacka", three municipalities in Stockholm County they intend to develop. Almbladet issue 2, 1972, pp. 21–22.

Artist: Gunnel Ginsburg. Photographic reproduction from the National Library of Sweden. Courtesy of Alternative Stad.

with cybernetics in communication. For example, discoveries regarding feedback control processes in biological, mechanical and electronic systems provoked experimentation on the built environment, considering information as raw construction material from which to depart when planning. Devices for energy production and waste management, as mentioned above, would contribute to the autonomy of the house and, mixed with traditional construction techniques, dominate the architectural esthetics within the zines.

Ruralising the urban. The dominant idea was to dissolve the dichotomy urban/rural or city/country as an intrinsic characteristic of the capitalist enclosure in order to reconnect mankind with the non-human and natural environment (*Street Farmer*). A feasible path to its achievement, as suggested in the publications, was by taking individual responsibility and action. Therefore, a myriad of do-it-yourself tactics was published: instructions for assembling kitchen gardens, proposals for actions of massive sowing, or a list of steps to create compost among others. Individual engagement would lead to the profusion of organic growth that would replace dominant concrete environments (Figure 3.5.4).

The search for autonomy. Autonomy is probably the inherent strategical condition of all zines. The format itself propagated the culture of Do-It-Yourself not only in terms of technology or architecture but in terms of the dissemination of ideas, facilitating and promoting peer-to-peer

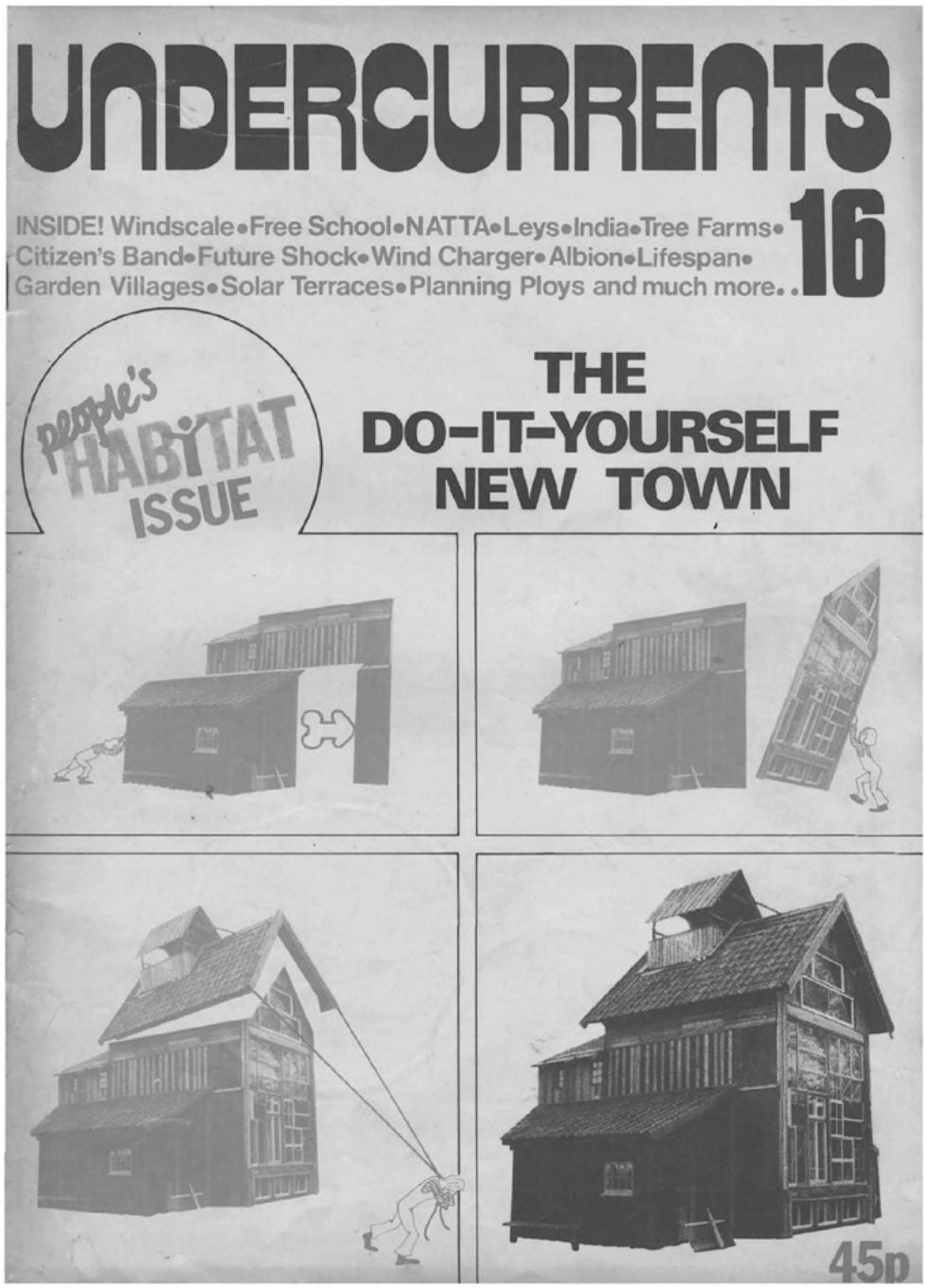

FIGURE 3.5.3 Cover of Undercurrents 16 published in 1976.

Source: Photographic reproduction from the British Library. Courtesy of Undercurrents.

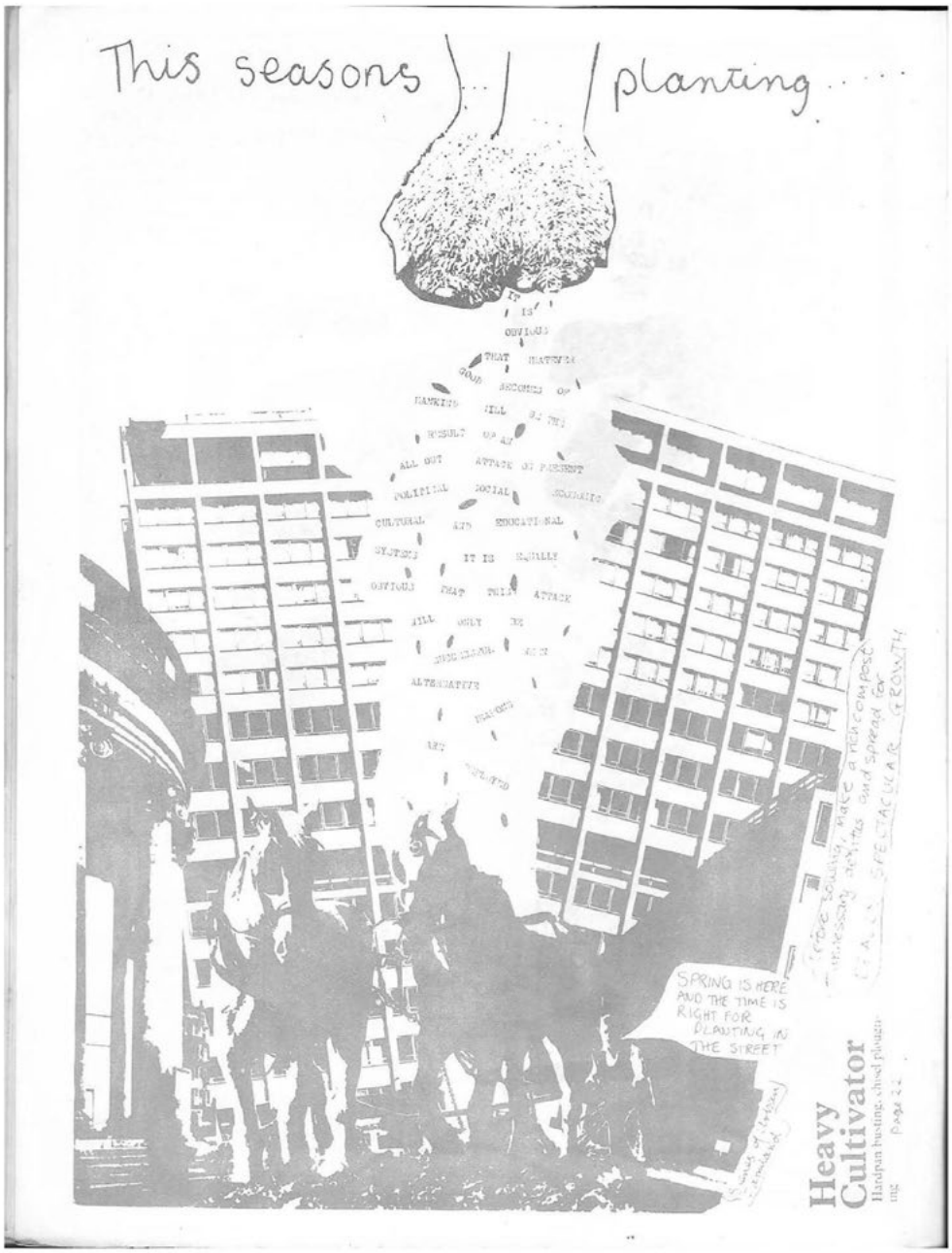

FIGURE 3.5.4 Collage published in *Street Farmer* 2 p. 22. Playing with a double entendre, the text says: "It is obvious that whatever good becomes of mankind will be the result of an all-out attack of present political, social, economic, cultural and educational systems. It is equally obvious that this attack will only be successful when alternative weapons are deployed. Spring is here and the time is right for planting in the street. Before sowing, make a rich compost of unnecessary detritus and spread for REALLY SPECTACULAR GROWTH". online public domain at: www.streetfarm.org.uk/streetfarmer_two.html

exchanges. The pamphlets contained objects, tools and ideas that made possible a new, small-scale conception of the world. Drawings of collectivized gardens, community workshops and autonomous terraces, connected the question of autonomy – and the ideology of many of the zines – to the tradition of anarchist planning.[5] The underlying idea is an alternative organization of society as a whole, distributed in smaller, self-managed groups as the alternative to top-down government by the State.

Today, most of these transgressive visions are reflected in the dominant obsessions in the mass media about sustainability or the formulation of alternatives to the housing crisis. Transgressive proposals that were tagged as radical in the 1970s, now dispossessed of their combative connotations, have become part of the current dominant discourses.

Conclusion

The above-mentioned observation on zines reveals the importance of incorporating overlooked sources and actors in order to create a more polyvocal planning history. The use of zines (and other non-mainstream documents) as primary sources opens a new line of inquiry within planning history that broadens our perspective on the agencies and mechanisms by which the diffusion of planning occurs, its fundamental causation and the role of activism in the development of planning bias.

The cross-analysis between the titles has shown how zines performed as spaces of experimentation and, eventually, spaces of anticipation. The 1970s transgressive environmentalism pointed out a series of preoccupations (recycling, energy production, resource-consumption, global mobility, alternative communities etc.) that are seen today at the center of contemporary planning discourses. As time went by, environmentalism moved from activism to the core of institutions and ideas and actors were co-opted. Therefore, if we are to trace the history of contemporary sustainability, then 1970s environmentalism, alternative sources and actors must be considered.

Notes

1 From here on, I will use the term 'long 1970s' to frame the period between 1968 and the early 1980s. Recent historiography uses this term when referring to the intense international transition period between 1968 and the beginning of the 1980s (sometimes until 1989) during which collective-oriented socio-economic interest and welfare policies were increasingly replaced by the more individually and (neo)liberally oriented policies of the postindustrial epoch. It is also the period of new transnational movements and political forms emerging from civil society such as feminism, post-colonialism, minority interests groups, pacifism and what is pivotal for this paper: environmentalism (Villaume Mariager and Porsdam 2016).

2 Press quotation from an article about on the Londoner zine *Street Farmer*. Leach, Gerlad, "Living off the Sun in South London", *The Observer*, August 27, 1972, 1–2.

3 I refer here to the contrast between a movement concerned with protecting the natural world from the Western extractive culture in the 1970s and what some activists are calling today's conservation-industrial complex (big green organizations, environmental foundations, and some academics) which has co-opted much of the movement into 'sustainability' with the meaning of keeping this culture going as long as possible. There is no room here to go any deeper into the issue without being superficial (Selznick 1949).

4 By traditional archives for planning history I refer to city archives, governmental archives, archives of architecture and design, and even libraries of all types.

5 Historical anarchist planning tradition can be traced back to ideas such as the city-nature fusion formulated by Eliseé Reclus; the city-country integration formulated by Piotr Kropotkin; the regional approaches of Patrick Geddes and Lewis Mumford and the autonomy in construction formulated by John Turner (Hall 1988; Oyón and Kuzmanić 2020).

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Paper Ib

URBANISM OF ZINES

The potential of environmentalist zines as sources for planning history

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Urbanism of zines: the potential of environmentalist zines as sources for planning history

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ABSTRACT

The explosion of youth revolts in the long 1970s, including the emergence of environmental activism in western Europe, coincided with the democratization of printing technologies, and led to radical transformation in the production and distribution of knowledge. Publishing became cheap and easy due to the appearance of portable versions of formerly costly and heavy printing machinery and a myriad of self-published zines with an environmentalist tone flourished, disseminating a firm rejection to the post-war consensus of consumerism and growth, denouncing the overarching planning organizations, policies, and strategies. Besides criticism, they also present ways of thinking, living, cooperating, and building that follow different rules and values than consumer capitalism. This contribution identifies a gap in European planning history related to the agency of 1970s' environmental activism and explores the potential of environmentalist zines as sources to sustain historical inquiry and help to fill that gap. It proposes conceptualizing zines as 'minor' sources, arguing that the Deleuzian-Guattarian category is a useful concept for reframing previously marginalized voices in planning history. Through the analysis of seven transnationally published zines, the paper demonstrates their validity as sources that document contributions of voices that have been neglected so far.

KEYWORDS

Zines; minor sources; environmentalism; noir planning history; activism; historiography; the long 1970s; transnational approach; pan-European perspective

Introduction

The advertisement below for the 'Alternative Communities Movement' appeared in 1982 in the British zine *Undercurrents – The magazine of radical science and alternative technology*, self-published by the authors between 1972–1984 (Figure 1). Aiming to attract new dwellers to the 'at least 100 communes' in Britain, the ad mixes empowering language with illustrations of domestic architecture featuring geodesic domes, truncated pyramids, tepees, and clean energy-producing devices. It proposes an alternative to 'bored suburbia': communal living, and promises safety, freedom, company and personal development: 'if you wish to grow, find out about community living'. *Undercurrents* started precariously as a compilation of leaflets wrapped in a plastic bag and grew to become a bimonthly publication of reference for ecologism unintermittedly published until 1983.

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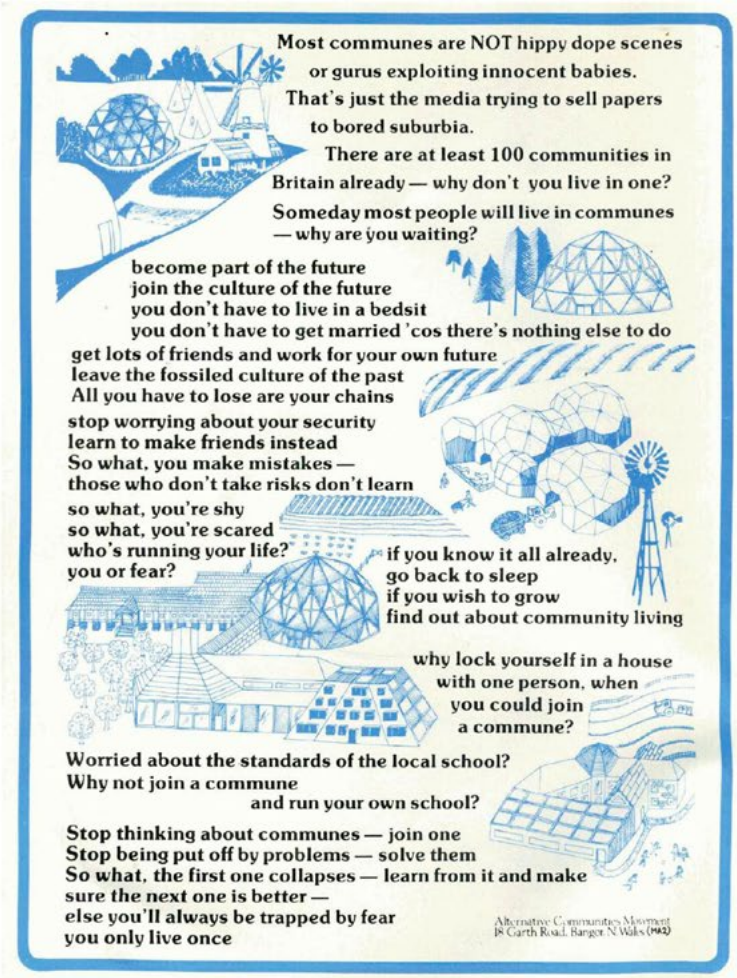


Figure 1. Advertisement of the Alternative Communes Movement.: *Undercurrents* 57, 1982, inner front page.

Countless other zines with an environmentalist tone similar to that of *Undercurrents* flourished throughout western Europe in the long 1970s[1] (from 1968 to early 1980s). The explosion of youth revolts, including the emergence of environmental activism, coincided with the democratization of the access to printing technologies and led to a radical transformation in the production and distribution of knowledge. Publishing became cheap and easy. Anyone with access to a portable mimeograph or a xerographic copy machine could become an amateur editor.[2] Zines thus started to perform as media for 'alternative' voices and as spaces for sharing content that did not seek external validation. Following Duncombe's definition, unlike professional publications, zines are non-

[1]The 'Long 1970s,' 20.
[2]Eichhorn, Adjusted Margin, 6.

commercial, amateur, small-circulation periodicals that are produced, published, and distributed by their creators.[3] They combine qualities of letters, pamphlets, and personal diaries and question conventional narratives and discourses.[4]

The term zine is not to be taken at face value: I consider independent magazines, alternative press, little magazines, or countercultural publications as part of the phenomenon. The origin and history of the zine have been well told and can be traced back to the production of home magazines among science-fiction enthusiasts in the 1930s.[5] Thereafter, non-commercial and non-professional publications emerged across a range of cultural spheres, from cinema to sexuality, sports, or music and, particularly, punk music.[6] The format developed into media for counterhegemonic cultural manifestations, a space for criticism and struggle, and a laboratory for new ideas within the participatory culture. Already in the 1960s, the distinction between fanzines, countercultural publications and political and subversive pamphlets rooted in a radical tradition had become blurred.[7] Hence, many of the publications presented here called themselves magazines and not zines while in this paper are conceptualized as such: they were published by community activists as a way of promoting their causes, in this case, environmentalism.

Environmental activism was a diverse movement, part of the intertwined diversified number of sub- and countercultural scenes from the 1970s and, therefore, difficult to draw boundaries around it.[8] On its entanglement with planning, it endeavoured to preserve and protect the natural and built environment expressing objection and dissent towards the modern project of urbanization and the resource-consuming policies displayed in the post-war years. Moreover, environmentalist struggles and direct actions over urban spaces developed awareness on people's creative and collective involvement in the shaping of the places they live in. Therefore environmentalism, as zines document, advocated for the necessity to involve the public in local decision-making.[9]

As I elaborate further in this paper however, aside from containing criticism, environmentalist zines performed as an arena for experimentation as well, formulating and disseminating alternative household and planning ideas. As early as 1968, Denise Scott-Brown recognized the anticipative power of this minor format when studying post-war European 'little' architecture publications, their discourses, main ideas, and proposals: 'Little magazines are an excellent weathervane for new trends in a profession and an indicator of what may be expected from the rank and file some years' time.'[10]

This paper identifies a gap in European planning history related to the agency of environmental activism and explores the potential of zines as sources to sustain historical inquiry and help to fill that gap. Here, zines are theoretically conceptualized as 'minor' sources. The category draws from Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's study of minor literature as mutually dependent and necessary counterbalance to major literature.[11] In the paper, I discuss the historiographical potential of this understanding of minor sources as a valuable way to reposition official 'major' histories; that is, how zines, considered minor sources, can help reveal new readings of existing narratives of the history of planning regarding the environment and how we situate them in relation to the planning history

[3]Duncombe, Notes, 10.
[4]Ibid., 28.
[5]See, for example, Triggs, Fanzines, p. 18; Duncombe, Notes, pp. 15-17; Atton, Alternative Media.
[6]Worley et al., 'Introduction', p. 22.
[7]Fountain, Nigel, Underground, p. 7.
[8]Häberlen and Keck-Szajbel, 'Introduction', p. 6.
[9]Freestone, and Park, 'A new planning landscape', p. 335.
[10]Scott Brown, 'Little Magazines', 223.
[11]Deleuze, and Guattari, Kafka, 16.

canon. The paper thus also aims to contribute to a broader historical understanding of the environmental challenges faced by the planning discipline today. The idea of entanglement between the history of planning, its engagement with media[12] and the critical practices of 'everyday urbanism'[13] that zines display is a constant throughout the article.

This paper comprises four sections and a conclusion. The first part addresses the absence of 1970s environmental activism from planning history; the second discusses the relevance of zines as the sources for unveiling the contributions of 1970s environmental activism to the formulation of planning ideas; the third theoretically situates the 'minor' concept and its relevance when considering zines as sources, and the fourth part comprises a collection, or a sampler, of zines published in the long 1970s, teasing out their main ideas and spatial proposals and discusses the findings from cross-reference of the sample, suggesting possible themes transversally discussed within all the titles. The conclusion summarizes the article's findings.

Situating 1970s' environmentalism in the *noir* side of planning history

For the past two decades, scholars have been calling for alternative historiographies in the field of planning history.[14] In *Making the Invisible Visible*, Leonie Sandercock denounces the heroic and progressive version of the discipline that focuses on questions of authorship – key ideas and individuals – and the obsession with 'chronicl[ing] the rise of the profession, the institutionalization, and its achievements'.[15] It is argued that planning is portrayed as an 'unproblematic endeavour' and that the focus is on 'the supply side' – the neatness of theories and design intentions – rather than the 'demand side' – the messiness of actual outcomes and lived experiences.[16] Under the influence of the post-structuralism of the 1960s however, interest has grown in microhistories, stories of everyday spaces, and in unknown or marginal figures.[17] All of these alternatives have emerged to reposition the canonical narratives of architecture and planning. In *The Power of Place* (1995), Dolores Hayden laments the narrowness of planning history, as it fails to encompass the broad spectrum of ordinary places and people. Searching for a more inclusive understanding of planning narratives, some researchers have thus called for including the agency of unfamiliar actors traditionally 'hidden from history'.[18] Sandercock calls these latent stories and contrapositions the '*noir* side of planning history'.[19]

While actors such as ethnic communities, migrants, and women have been recently encouraged to take their part within planning history[20], less has been said on the influence of environmental struggles. Like Sandercock, James Holston sees it necessary to include what he calls 'insurgent citizenship'[21] in planning history, i.e. the forms of the social that exist in grassroots mobilisations and everyday practices because of their encounter with planning operations. Interestingly, he calls for 'insurgent' actors to be considered not as merely collateral but rather as essential elements that

[12]See, for example, Colomina, Privacy and Publicity; and Colomina, and Buckley, Clip, Stamp, Fold.
[13]See, for example, Chase, Crawford, and Kaliski, Everyday Urbanism; Lefevre, The Production of Space; and de Certeau, The Practice of Everyday Life.
[14]See, for example, Avermaete, 'Death of the Author'; Lu, 'Entangled Modernities'; Robinson 'Cities'; Friedmann, Insurgencies; and Llewellyn, 'Polyvocalism'.
[15]Sandercock, 'Introduction', 7.
[16]Freestone, 'Learning from Planning Histories', 5.
[17]Stieber, 'Microhistory', 383.
[18]Rowbothan, Hidden from History.
[19]Sandercock, 'Introduction', 2.
[20]Ibid, 1-34; Avermaete, 'Death of the Author', 478-486.
[21]Holston, 'Spaces', 37-56.

challenge the categories and processes of planning.[22] They are not just passive objects but rather active subjects with agency within planning. That agency is also highlighted by Felicity Scott in her investigation of American alternative spatial practices the 1960s and 1970s, which she calls 'architectures of counterinsurgency'.[23]

Unlikely their Australian and North American counterparts, which have been revisited in recent years[24], the agency of European environmentalist counterculture in planning historiography throughout the long 1970s remains largely unexplored. Hence, environmental struggles in western Europe during the long 1970s can be situated within the *noir* family of planning history.

The potential of zines

Planning historians have traditionally understood both the built space and the archive as the material requirement on which a narrative is built, considering these sources to be the primary sources for the historical enquiry.[25] When aiming to excavate the traces of environmental activism however, locating the sources that document their activity becomes a difficult task. Because of the amateurism and anti-establishment nature of these movements, they are largely absent from city archives, except as occasional demonstrations and performances documented in mainstream press. This means that the ephemerality of activism and its intrinsic non-disciplinary character[26] make the production difficult to grasp, let alone to catalogue. The pivotal methodological question thus concerns finding the sources that document the production of these 'outsiders' to fill the gap within planning environmental histories.

The rise of the environmental wave in the long 1970s runs parallel to the appearance and access to low-cost printing technologies such as the portable mimeograph, or the offset lithograph and the affordability of photocopier use by the masses.[27] A radical transformation of the production and the distribution of knowledge coincides with the rise of the activist movements. Publishing became easy and inexpensive, and zines flourished, aiming to perform in the margins of academic journals (which were considered 'snobbish') and to disseminate 'alternative' knowledge parallel to 'official' knowledge. Already in the 1960s, Reyner Banham portrayed the historical moment where new and unfamiliar actors started to take part in architecture as an agitated one: 'Architecture, staid queen-mother of the arts, is no longer courted by plush glossies and cool scientific journals alone but is having her skirts blown up and her bodice unzipped by irregular newcomers'.[28]

Considering zines as sources for the practice of planning history means recognizing the contribution of, in Banham's words, 'irregular newcomers' as coproducers of planning – assuming that there is an embedded knowledge within their practices captured in zines that is relevant for the discipline. As described in the first pages of the Dutch zine *Provo*, both the creators and their potential audience were genuinely amateur: 'a monthly sheet for anarchists, provos, beatniks, players, scissors-grinders, jailbirds, simple Simon Stylites, magicians, pacifists, potato-chip chaps, charlatans, philosophers, germ-carriers, grandmasters of the queen's horse, happeners, vegetarians, syndicalists, santy clauses, kindergarten teachers, agitators, pyromaniacs, assistant assistants, scratchers

[22]Ibid, 39.
[23]Scott, Outlaw Territories, 9-33.
[24]Ibid; see also Stickels, 'Negotiating'; Gordon, Spaced Out.
[25]Mattson, 'A Critical Historiography', 30.
[26]Duncombe, Notes, 20.
[27]Colomina, Clip, Stamp, Fold, 9; Eichhorn, Adjusted Margin, 6.
[28]Banham, 'Zoom Wave', 21.

and syphilitics, secret police, and other riff-raff'.[29] This amateurism implies acceptance of non-professional or academic content as valid for the practice of planning history, with its intrinsic messiness depicting an alternative epistemology.

Positioned in the margins as they were, zines could be the seed for a different possibility, 'a novel form of communication and creation that burst with angry idealism'[30], transforming the culture of revolts in the long 1970s into documented alternative visions of the world.[31] A reader would encounter both local and global matters, from protests against the approval of a plan for a district to statements against the Vietnam War or the 1973 Oil Crisis, but also fragments of Patrick Geddes' writings mixed with reports from everyday life in an 'alternative' community, as well as practical and speculative projects, prototypes, and instructions to build all manner of energy-production devices. These were interspersed with advertisements, mushroom-picking advice, meditation techniques, and information on hypnotism or homoeopathy. Like the zine itself, the content was messy, copy-pasted and collage-like. And, as will be discussed later, the zines were frequently brimming with contradictions and limitations, but also possibilities: zines can perform as the sources from which to grasp the entwined knowledge contained in the mundane life and the environmental activism of the 1970s.

Zines as minor sources

The work and ideas developed by European environmental activism were rarely acknowledged by the discipline of planning historiography as pushing new planning agendas. As a result, zines as a medium for the dissemination of ideas have not been systematically considered as sources on which to build the historiographical narrative. How, then, can historians situate the work and sources in relation to the planning history canon? Here, the theory of the minor – sources, archives, samples – is a valuable lens through which to analyse sources such as the collection of zines in this paper.

The minor concept draws from Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's work on minor literature, in which they argue that the minor condition possesses a latent power in relation to the major: 'A minor literature doesn't come from a minor language', they state, 'it is rather that which a minority constructs within a major language'.[32] That is, the major and the minor are understood as connected rather than opposing; they are integral to each other and co-dependent. As such, the minor becomes the seedbed for subversion and transformation: 'there is nothing major or revolutionary except the minor'.[33]

Several scholars have sought to build the definition of 'minor' as an operative concept. Jennifer Bloomer was the first to use it in reference to architecture, taking Deleuze and Guattari's literary concept to discuss Manfredo Tafuri's major architecture. Bloomer argues that a minor architecture must operate critically, challenging dominant disciplinary debates and addressing matters usually omitted from the field, such as dirt or waste.[34] Similarly, Joan Ockman uses minor architecture as a way to navigate outside the architectural canon as well, including actors that have hitherto been absent: 'Deleuze and Guattari's theory of minor literature can suggest to those who have long been excluded from the major territory of architecture (…) a different strategy'.[35] Ockman also

[29]Provo 12, 1967, 1.
[30]Duncombe, Notes, 8.
[31]Ibid.
[32]Deleuze, and Guattari, Kafka, 16.
[33]Ibid, 26.
[34]Bloomer, 'Minor', 48-66.
[35]Ockman, 'Toward a Theory', 122-152.

highlights the co-dependence of the minor and the major and, interestingly, the historical agency of minor voices as a dynamic force that explains the constant reassessment of the discipline: 'It must be stressed that the relationship between major and minor architectures that is being proposed is to be understood as a historical condition in which that which is major is constantly redefining itself in relation to what is minor, and that which is minor is always potentially challenging or hybridizing that which is major'.[36] Two decades prior to Deleuze and Guattari's writings, Scott-Brown had already highlighted the latent power of minor sources in relation to canonical publications when describing the ability of little magazines to challenge the discipline: 'The little magazine appears when the debate has expanded enough to demand organization of a rudimentary reproduction and mailing system. Then someone asks, "why don't we publish this?" and there is the first issue, with its manifesto and statement of purpose (…) At this point, the attack on the establishment has been made public and the new cards are on the table'.[37] Building on the imbricate and transformative condition of the minor over the canon, Jill Stoner (2012) states that 'minor architectures are, in fact, opportunistic events in response to latent but powerful desires to undo structures of power; and as such, minor architectures are precisely (if perversely) concerned with the privilege and the circumstances of major architecture.'[38]

Minor architectures – or minor planning sources and practices in the case at hand – thus become situated within the minor of planning history. The minor category reframes previously marginalized voices and planning histories in a way that is significant for furthering new discussions on the emergence of environmentalism in Western Europe, and it helps to open up the closed loop in planning history when it comes to the absence/ presence of dismissed narratives. The minor is thus presented as an operative concept that helps to tackle the reciprocal relationship between environmental activism's contributions – situated as minor – and the historiographical canon – situated as major narratives.

The sample

The use of zines as a method for planning history may seem destabilizing. Traditional planning history sources such as planning documents and manuals are generally perceived as stable and as offering certainty to the researcher, whilst zines are amateur sources containing a polyphony of voices and, frequently, a messy content. To construct the historical narrative, it is necessary to address how this seemingly disorganized subject matter should be considered, or, in other words, how to discipline undisciplined sources.

Here, I present a collection of zines published in Western Europe in the long 1970s with a focus on environmental activism as a 'dynamic sample'; that is, an unfinished collection of titles. It is 'dynamic' because it assumes the inevitable omissions that will eventually be remedied as more and more publications are incorporated into the archive.

In chronological order, the current delimited sample contains the following titles: *Provo* (The Netherlands, published between 1966-1971); *Almbladet* (Sweden, 1971-1974); *Street Farm* (United Kingdom, 1971-1972); *Undercurrents* (United Kingdom, 1971-1983); *The Kleine Aarde* (The Netherlands, 1972-1997); *La Gueule Ouverte* (France, 1972-1980); and *Vannbaereren* (Norway, 1974-1978). The selection criteria were typology (magazines self-published by the authors), subject

[36]Ibid, 123.
[37]Scott Brown, 'Little Magazines', 223.
[38]Stoner, Towards a Minor Architecture, 4.

Table 1. Titles included in the sample, location and years of publication, and archive where the material was stored.

Title	Place	Publishing years	Archive
Provo	Amsterdam, The Netherlands	1966–1971	KNAW Internationaal instituut voor sociale geschiedenis
Almbladet	Stockholm, Sweden	1971–1974	KB Sveriges Nationalbiblioteket
Street Farm	London, United Kingdom	1971–1972	Architectural Association Library
Undercurrents	London, United Kingdom	1971–1983	British Library
De Kleine Aarde	Riethoven, The Netherlands	1972–1997	DKA online archive https://dekleineaarde.nl/archief
La Gueulle Ouverte	Paris, France	1972–1980	Biblioteque Nationale de France
Vannbaereren	Karlsøy, Norway	1974–1978	Norges Nasjonalbiblioteket

matter (environmentalism and planning), temporal relevance (published during the long 1970s), and geographical relevance (Western Europe). There is a greater number of titles from some countries – the UK and the Netherlands – whilst other countries remain unrepresented due to difficulties accessing to the material. When examined individually, it becomes apparent that the zines refer to each other continuously –at the subscription form at the end of the issues where the reader would find subscriptions for other zines, in recommended reading sections, in copy-pasted fragments or even as full-page photocopies. Such network operation will be discussed in more detail later in this text, but it is important to highlight it as a secondary criterion for the elaboration of the sample, which entailed tracing all of the references that the zines themselves suggested. I visited online archives and several national and professional archives in order to gather all of the titles (Table 1). After the systematic interpretation of all the titles contained in the sample, the main characteristics, topics, key authors, and action points may be summarized as follows:

Paving the way for European critical environmentalist zines

PROVO is an A4 sheet zine folded lengthwise that was published in Amsterdam by Roel van Duyn, Robert Stolk, Hans Metz, and Jaap Berk from 1966 to 1971. Mixing anarchist, anti-consumerist and antiroyalist political themes together with planning issues, the zine's content includes texts, parodic sketches, collages, newspaper clippings, and pictures. On the black and white pages, readers find heterogeneous material ranging from subversive content, to artistic motives, utopian ideas, and concrete action plans. The cover of most of the issues is a red brick pattern; the wall is used as a symbol of impenetrability and resistance (Figure 2).

The 'provos' believed that anarchist theory – the organization of society in a way that fosters egalitarian forms of association and cooperation and resists all forms of domination – was relevant for contemporary society because of the immediate impact and call-to-action. Pursuing this impact, the group utilized two strategies: 'provocatie' (provocation actions), which were happenings around the city of Amsterdam performed by a self-proclaimed 'provocariat' (Figure 3); and the zine, which would document these actions and reflect on political and artistic issues. Through their provocations and the zine, the 'provos' introduced many of the themes that would be echoed in later zines, such as the criticism of car-centred urbanism, bicycle-use advocacy, and the call for collective appropriation of urban spaces.

One of the provocaties that received more international impact was the 'Witte Fietsenplan' (White Bicycle Plan) initiated in 1965. The group painted a small number of used bikes white and issued a pamphlet stating that 'the white bike symbolizes simplicity and hygiene as opposed

Figure 2. Front and back covers of all issues of *Provo*.

to the gaudiness and filth of the authoritarian car'.[39] The white bicycles were left unlocked around the city, to be used by anyone in need of transport. 'We propose that the municipality buy 20 000 white bikes per year (cost one million) to expand public transport, because these white bikes belong to everyone and nobody'.[40] Exhaustive quantitative research of the traffic impact in Amsterdam was published in Issue 2 and included data on pollution, square meters of parking space, and traffic accidents. It turned out to be an important moment for bicycle advocacy, revealing how activism could politicize the bicycle as a direct response to the material and ideological problems posed by urban automobility. Rather than taking bicycles as nostalgic symbols of a pre-automobile era, the provos used them to reconceptualize the modern city in the forecasts of a post-automobile future.

[39]'Provo fietsenplan', Provo 2, 1965, 4. All English translations by the author unless otherwise specified.
[40]Ibid.

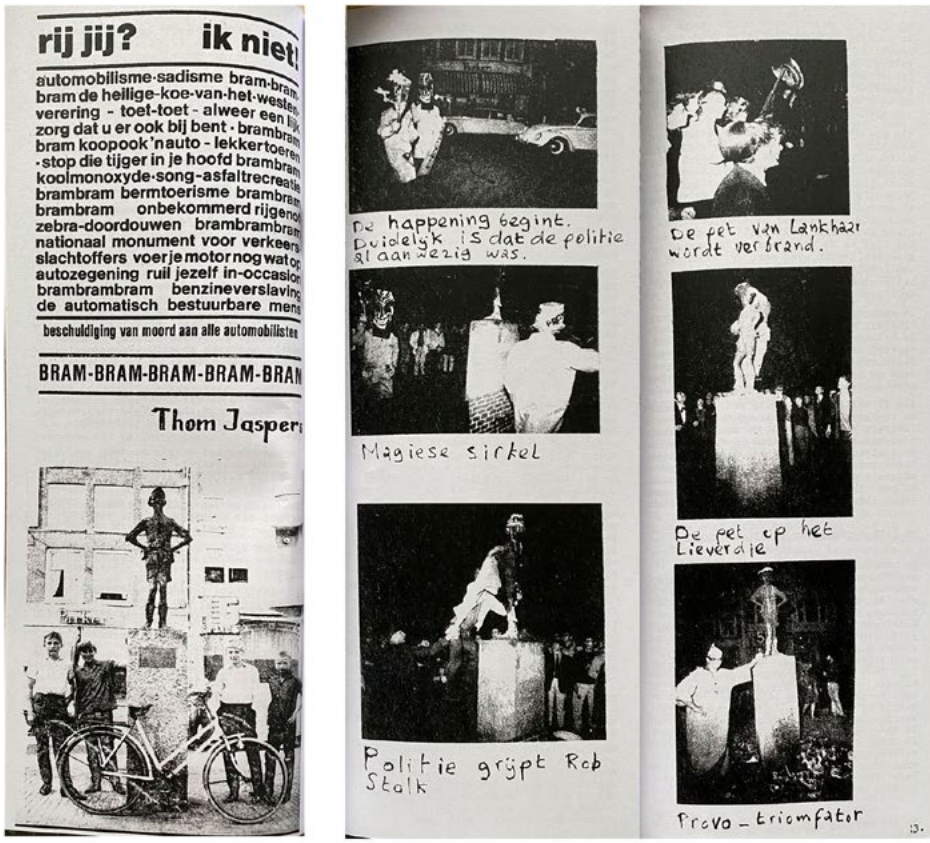


Figure 3. On the left image is a poem written by Thom Jaspers announcing a provocative against car traffic. It reads: [do] you queue? I don't! Motorism·sadism bram·bram·bram the holy-cow·of·the·west·worship – beep·beep – another corpse make sure you're there too·brambrambram buy a car too – nice rides·put that tiger in your head brambram carbon monoxide·song – asphalt recreation brambram roadside tourism brambram brambram carefree driving pleasure zebra-pushing through brambrambram national monument for traffic victims·feed your motor car blessing trade yourself in-occasion brambrambram petrol addiction the automatically controlled human. Charge of murder to all automobilists. On the right are images of the action itself. Provo 2, 1965, 6, 21, 23.

Issue number 4 is devoted to Constant Nieuwenhuys and the New Babylon project. Number 9, entitled 'Niew Urbanisme', features an eleven-point manifesto written by the situationist artist that summarizes Provo's criticism of planning. There is special emphasis against car-driven urbanism, business-driven public space, and the overall crisis of public space. The provos called for a relational understanding of public space: 'Traffic wholesale invasion of social space has led (…) to violation of the most fundamental human rights (…) freedom of movement (…) So much public space is off limits to the pedestrian that he is forced to seek his social contacts either in private areas (houses) or in commercially exploited ones (cafes or rented halls) where he [*sic*] is more or less imprisoned (…) The city has lost its most important function: that of the meeting place.'[41]

[41] Constant, 'Nieuw urbanisme', Provo 9, 1966, 2-6.

The criticism of post-war planning, together with the practice of direct actions as happenings, the use of anarchist ideas, and their overall visual language – mixing proposals, games, criticism and situationist art – was repeated in subsequent publications, as I will show here, thus situating *Provo* as an initiator for many of the European environmentalist zines.

A radical and tactical eco-anarchist urbanism

Only two issues were published of the zine *Street Farmer* between September 1971 and 1972 in London. The A4-pages were printed in blue, green or red ink and filled primarily with graphic content such as comic strips, collages, and elaborate drawings. *Street Farmer* was also influenced by situationism and the idea of social ecology developed by the anarchist thinker Murray Bookchin, where ecological and social problems are intertwined and a result of the power structures of domination. The publication is an example of the intersection between alternative planning and the ecological movement of the 1970s. It was published by the eponymous collective comprising Graham Caine, Peter Crump and Bruce Haggart, all of whom were fifth-year students at the Architectural Association.

Within its pages, the reader encountered the notion of 'revolutionary urbanism', an eco-anarchist vision of green cities controlled by the people. The editors' radical message was that destroying the city/countryside dichotomy would break capitalism: 'if the environment were altered suitably, the state could not function as it does (…) We attack the environment to attack the state'.[42] Theoretical content aside, *Street Farmer* is understood as a toolbox for starting a revolution. As the first issue proclaimed, the zine is a practical device, 'an intermittent continuing manual of alternative urbanism'.[43]

Proto-green guerrilla countertactics such as the 'plan to seed the pavements with grass (…) closing the streets to vehicular traffic'[44] and ideas for 'ruralizing' the cities like a 'plan to farm parks is a true realization of public land resulting in a growing independence from commercial mass production'[45] already feature in the zine's first number (Figure 4). Like the provocaties, Street Farmer also participated in actions and demonstrations and used the zine as a way of documenting them.

An important concept in this context is 'transmogrification', and it is used in *Street Farmer* to describe the process by which the built environment is consumed by natural forces. Represented in different ways (Figure 5), it refers to a total metamorphosis in terms of how cities and their built environments should evolve. It is thus a key idea for *Street Farmer*, which calls for a radical re-naturalization of the urban spaces, and it is a part of the visual imaginary on many pages of the two issues. For the Street Farm members, ecology was an non-dominating relationship between all humans and non-humans, and it was the logical extension of their political grounding in anarchism.

From leaflet to a publication of reference

Undercurrents was published continuously in London for 12 years, between 1971 and 1983. It started as a makeshift self-produced compilation of leaflets and became a bimonthly publication of reference for environmentalists with distribution throughout Europe and the USA. The zine

[42]Street Farmer 2, 1972, 22.
[43]Street Farmer 1, 1971, front cover.
[44]Street Farmer 2, 1972, 23.
[45]Ibid.

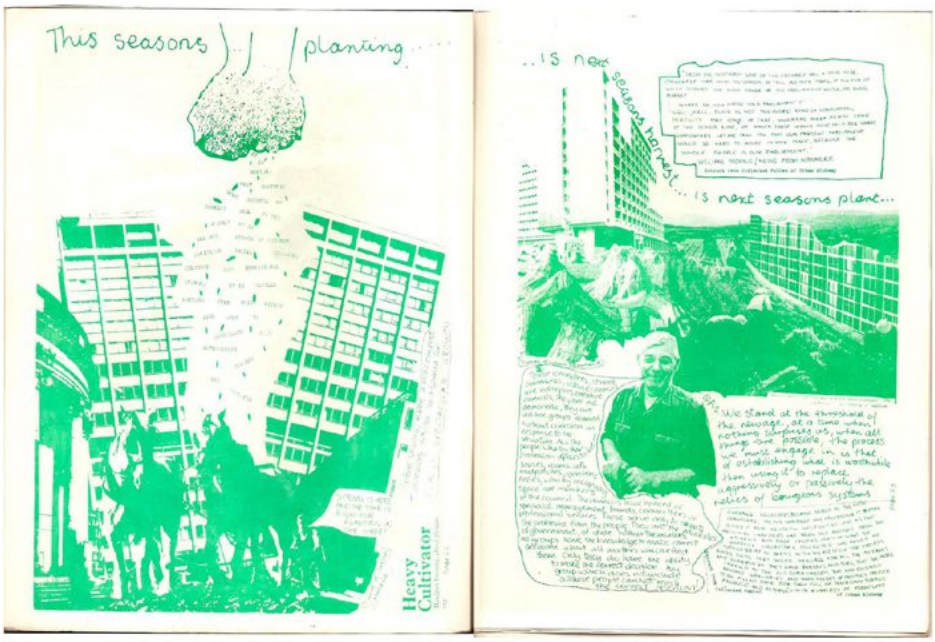


Figure 4. 'This season's planting'. The collage depicts ideas of how urban environments can be 'ruralized'. Letters in the shape of seeds on the left side read: *It is obvious that whatever good becomes of mankind will be the result of an all out attack on present political, social, economic, cultural, and educational systems. It is equally obvious that this attack will only be successful when alternative weapons are deployed. Street Farmer* 2, 1972, 22-23.

was initiated by British engineer Godfrey Boyle, who was inspired by Californian countercultural publications **e. g.** *The Whole Earth Catalogue*, *Earth*, *Dome Cook Book*, and *Farallones* (Boyle, online blog), and other environmentalist enthusiasts such as Peter Harper, Egon Roney, Pat Coney, or Richard Elen, among others.

The first issue opens with the manifesto 'Science with a Human Face', in which the zine's aim is stated: to operate outside academic or scientific validation. '*Undercurrents* has been started by some people who believe that radical views on scientific and technological subjects need a medium in which they can be aired'.[46] It departs from an objection to the capitalist use of technology: 'technology, while still masquerading as mankind's great emancipator, is increasingly becoming the instrument of our enslavement'.[47] Undercurrents believed in the possibility of 'evolving a sadder but wiser science' that would put human beings at the centre, a science able 'to provide small-scale sources of basics like energy, food, shelter, clothing and tools; to provide unfettered communications between the smaller, more human communities that our world must create if it is to avoid overpopulation, alienation, violence and all the attendant evils of the mass society'.[48]

The zine references anarchist theory and environmentalism – texts by William Morris, Pietr Kropotkin, Mijaíl Bakunin, or Bookchin – and combines written and graphic essays with powerful

[46]'Science with a human face', Undercurrents 1, 1972, 3.
[47]Ibid.
[48]Ibid.

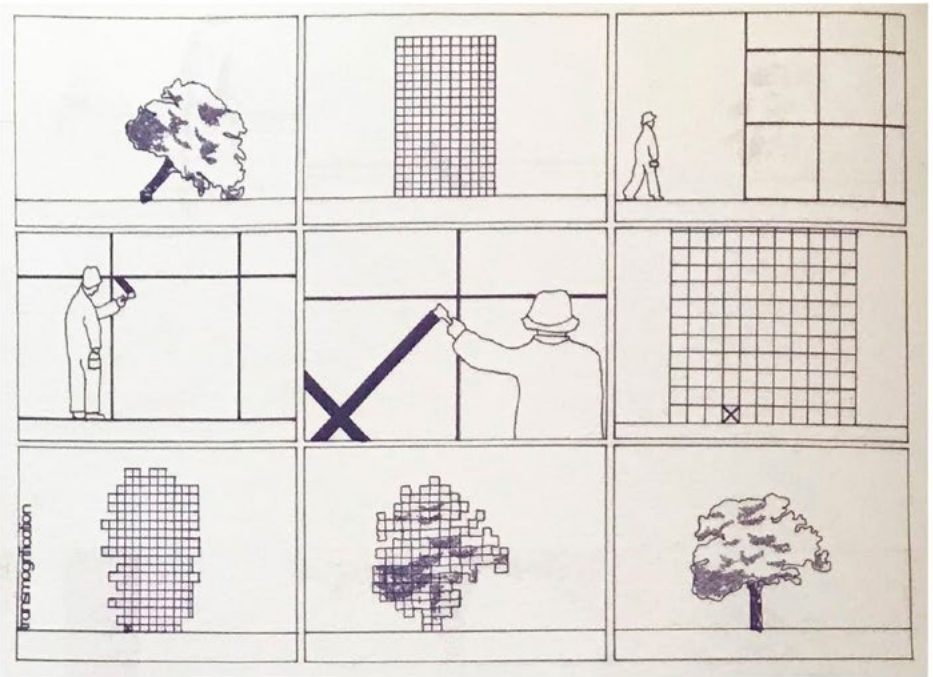


Figure 5. 'Transmogrification'. A comic showing the process of metamorphosis of a building into a tree. *Street Farmer* 1, 1971, 7.

collages, sketches and instructions for DIY alternative technologies such as domestic windmills, anaerobic digestors, and solar panels (Figure 6). Their vision was a decentralized society organized in cooperative, autonomous, and self-managed communities with the help of alternative technology.

After Issue 10, *Undercurrents* began evolving into a more structured publication. Printed on stapled A4 sheets and with recurrent sections – opinion, references, book and zine recommendations – it became a thematic publication, with each issue focusing on a different topic. Most issues were dedicated to planning questions and alternative household design. Issue 16, 'The Do-It-Yourself New Town' (Figure 7) examines Colin Ward's ideas on anarchist cities and speculates on alternative planning procedures for British New Towns where authorities would simply supply sites and essential services and allow people to build their own homes and public spaces. Changing the citizen's role from recipient to participant and allowing citizens 'to take an active part in the great game of town building'[49] would be 'far more satisfactory than the alienating New Towns being built for people by bureaucratic Development Corporations'.[50] Issue 16 also includes articles documenting small autonomous communities' experiences. First-person narratives showcase the successes and failures of an alternative life, documenting and discussing decision-making processes, alternative technology use, and other self-sufficiency strategies.

[49]Girardet, 'New villages now', Undercurrents 10, 1975, 33.
[50]Ibid.

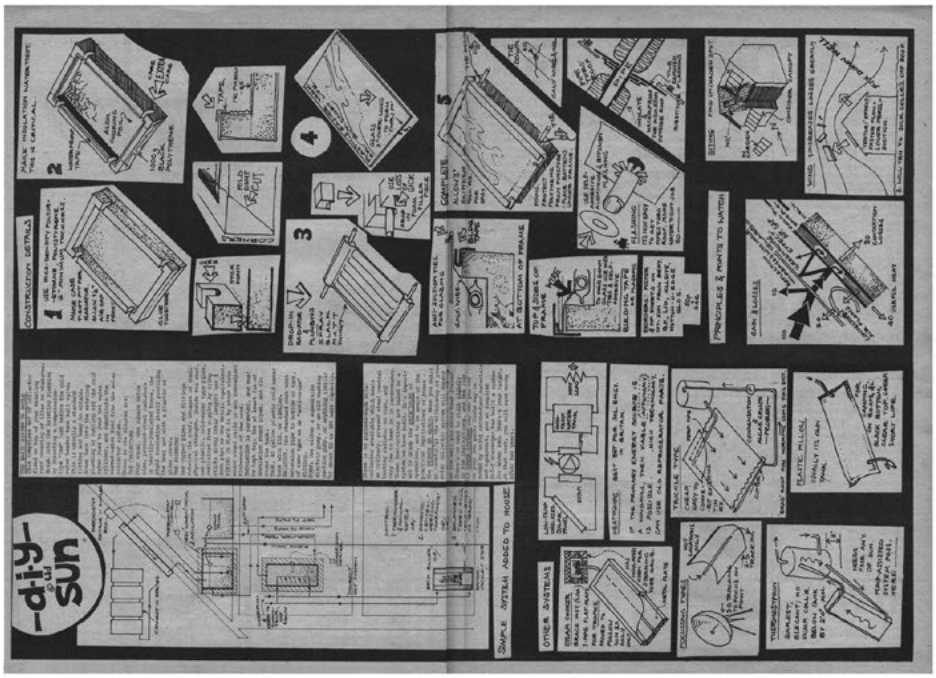


Figure 6. DIY solar panel instructions. *Undercurrents* 10, 1975,.30-31.

Other issues were 'Urban Wastelands' (Undercurrents 28); 'Food Politics' (Undercurrents 31); 'Communes, Work and Anarchy' (Undercurrents 39); and 'Protopia: Blueprint for Greentown?' (Undercurrents 42). They all focused on planning and alternative proposals.

Raising awareness about Swedish top-down planning processes

Almbladet was an A4 zine edited and published in Stockholm by the activist group Alternativ Stad (Alternative City). *Almbladet* (The Elm Gazette) took its name from Almstriden (The Elm Conflict), a public protest in Stockholm in May 1971 against plans to construct a new metro station in the popular park Kungsträdgården. The municipality changed its plans in response to pressure from demonstrations, which were at times violent. The event came to be seen as the triumph of civil society over top-down planning processes. In the first issue, the zine editors describe themselves as regular environmentally concerned citizens, 'the same mixed collection of people as society in general' interested in 'work[ing] for a more humane urban environment and better functioning democracy that provides space for the influence of ordinary people' by 'disseminating information through concrete actions'.[51] There were calls for demonstrations and actions in every issue, and reports of these in the subsequent issue.

The four issues of Almbladet published were intended as a counterpower to the top-down planning processes in 1970s' Stockholm and focused primarily on local questions; each issue is

[51]'Almbladet', Almbladet 1, 1971, 31.

Figure 7. *Undercurrents* 16. The collage of a DIY ecological house based on a picture of a house built for the ARA-RAT exhibition at Stockholm's Moderna Museet in 1976.

dedicated to a planning problem that is discussed with the figure of the planner and the 'undemocratic' procedures of the profession. Planners are portrayed as authoritarian, fraudulent, and at fault for creating unhealthy urban environments.[52] Issue 1, for instance, presents Almstriden and calls

[52]'Allt kan inte mätas I pengar', Almbladet 2, 1972, 8.

for citizens' active participation in planning processes (Figure 8). Issue 2 focuses on the 1970s Regional Plan for Stockholm, which projected that Stockholm's population would increase by one million by the year 2000. The cover is an illustration of the plan in a waste bin. Issue 3, 'Specialnummer om storstad och glesbygd' (Special Issue on Big Cities and Sparsely Populated Areas), discusses the problem of Stockholm's rapid growth, exploring its urban history in comparison to other big cities and emphasizing the dangers of depopulating rural areas. Issue 4, 'ATOMKRAFTVERK i Stockholm? Vad har dom gjort med CITY? Bevare oss för GRÖNA VÅGEN!' [capital letters original] (NUCLEAR POWER in Stockholm? What have they done with the CITY? Faith in the GREEN WAVE!) consists of an anti-nuclear power statement and defends Stockholm's historical urban fabric, some of which building were being demolished. It advocates bicycle use and calls for urgent improvements to public transportation as an alternative to cars.

Avoiding taking a clear political or ideological position, the zine's recurrent topics are quite pragmatic, as e.g. pollution from traffic, bicycle use promotion, opposition to nuclear power, the oppressive dynamics of planning (Figure 9) and advocacy of planning as a participatory process. With a satiric tone, the zine mixes critical texts with a considerable amount of graphic content: collages, comic strips, an ironic horoscope, word games and dramatic images of Stockholm under construction.

Towards technological self-sufficiency

De Kleine Aarde was a A4 zine printed on recycled paper. Each issue used a different colour ink. The zine's name – 'The Little Earth' in English – is a reference to the report 'The Limits to Growth' presented by the Club of Rome. Initiated by a group of independent researchers from an eponymous environmental organization, the zine was published quarterly 50 times, with one issue every season. There were approximately 60 pages per issue of this 'magazine that wants to pay attention to different ways of life based on alternative agricultural and horticultural methods, food technologies, working methods and energy consumption which aim to spare both our living environment and our plundered earth within a few years'.[53] Using mainly text but also illustrations, games, recipes and technical drawings, the publication aims to work like a manual including the latest DIY tips and energy-saving solutions for environmentally-friendly households. The publishers situate the zine as a continuation of the American tradition of publishing manuals of tools for alternative communities and innovators in the fields of technology and design. As stated in the inaugural issue: '[DKA is] by no means isolated; for example at least ten years ago people in America started collecting and writing down recipes, working methods, simple methods for energy production, food preservation and health protection, which have now have been compiled in the famous *The Whole Earth Catalogue*.' Before publishing the zine, the organization *The Kleine Aarde* gained international fame for their experimental farm project in Boxtel municipality, where they developed prototypes and educational programmes about rural housing, energy and food production and waste management; this paved the way for the zine. (Figure 10).

Unlike other publications discussed here, *De Kleine Aarde* strived to be an alternative scientific journal. Aiming for 'scientific neutrality,' it displayed neither ideological content nor critical reflections of any kind. The main concept discussed was 'practical self-sufficiency'[54] used to describe the way to individually engage with an environmentally conscious life. It thus comprised practical

[53]Editorial, 'De Kleine Aarde', DKA 2, 1972, 1.
[54]Swan-Liat, 'Overleven met en zonder blauwdruk', DKA 18, 1976, 10

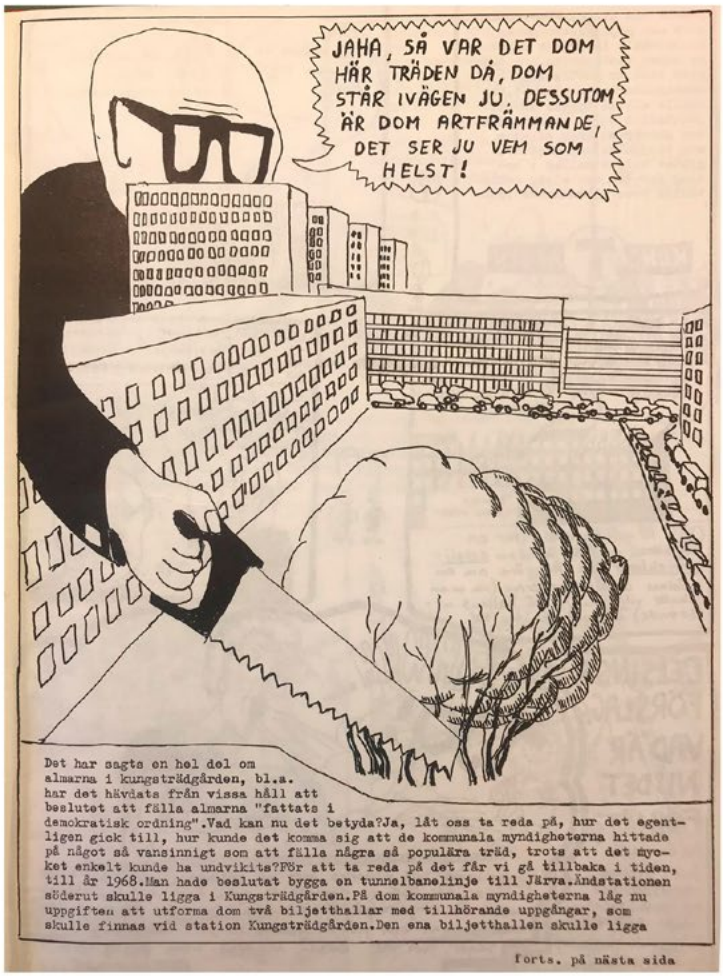


Figure 8. The politician in charge of the planning proposal, Hjalmar Mehr, cutting down the elms obstructing his plans for the square, saying 'Aha, so those were the trees; but they're in the way. And besides, they're not native, anyone can see that!' *Almbladet* 1, 1971, 5.

information about 'human-centered and environmentally responsible technology'.[55] That is, instructions for assembling solar panels or domestic windmills; information on food and nutrition, recipes and preservation techniques, and instructions for getting started with domestic farming: how to grow organic vegetables, build a greenhouse, or install a hydroponic system. *De Kleine Aarde* was an influential publication. Its technical tone and site experiments with soft technologies were reprinted in many of the zines discussed in this paper.

[55]Editorial, 'De Kleine Aarde', DKA 2, 1972, 1.

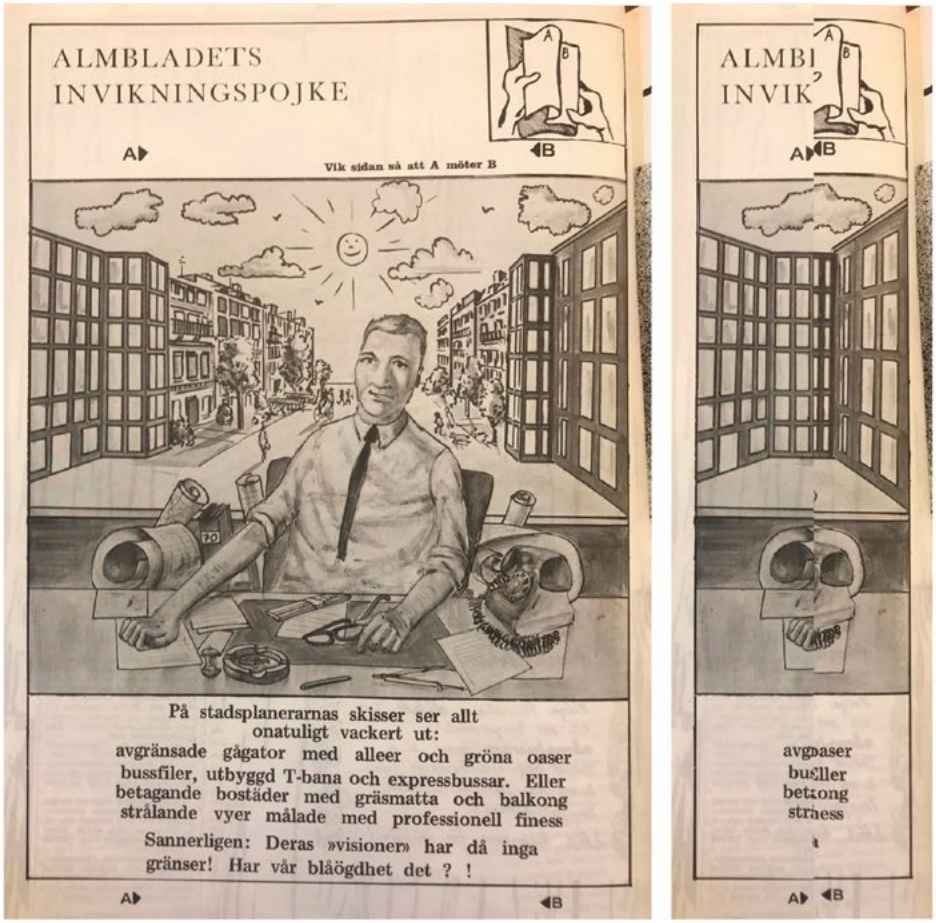
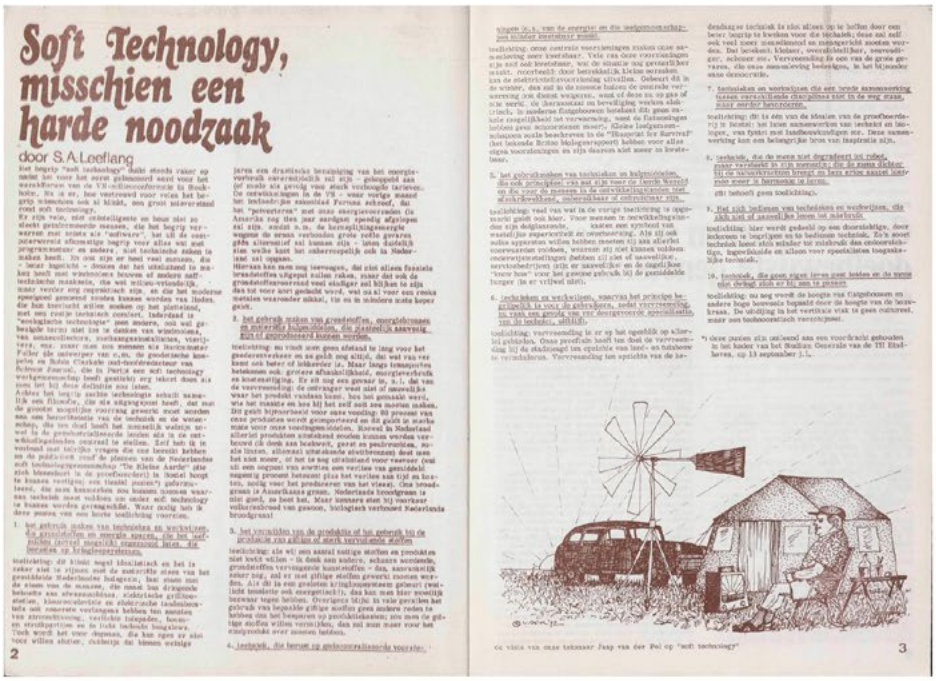


Figure 9. The caption reads: Everything seems unusually beautiful in the city planner's sketches: demarcated pedestrian streets with alleys and green oases, bus lanes, an extensive subway and express busses. Stunning homes with grass and balconies, painted with professional finesse. Truly: There is no limit to their 'visions'! Is there any limit to our naïvety?' When the page is folded according to the instructions, the words 'pollution, noise, concrete, stress' appear under a car-shaped cloud, a skull and a fully built environment. Almbladet 2, 1972, 40. The technique reminds to the Al Jaffee's 'Mad Fold-in' section included from 1964 to 2020 in the back cover of the American humour magazine Mad Magazine (1952 – today).

Eco-anarchist urbanophobia

La Gueule Ouverte ('The Gaping Mouth') was a midi format (31.5 × 47 cm) French zine published in Ugine (a municipality in the Savoie department in the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes region) and Paris between 1972 and 1980. There were a total of 314 issues. Initiated by Pierre Fournier, a former illustrator at Hara-Kiri Hebdo (today's Charlie Hebdo) and a broad group of collaborators, *La Gueule Ouverte* started as a monthly publication and, due to its great success, became a weekly periodical in 1974. With the apocalyptic subtitle 'Journal qui announce le fin du monde' (The Magazine that


Soft Technology, misschien een harde noodzaak

door S.A.Leeflang

2

3

Figure 10. 'Soft Technology, Possibly a Hard Requisite' is a decalogue about the *De Kleine Aarde's* perspective on technology, which they believed should be decentralized, small-scale and accessible for everybody.

Heralds the End of the World), the zine has a combative tone that continues the massive anti-nuclear struggles that took place in France in the early 1970s. According to the first issue, the zine is intended as a successor of the 1968 struggles and 'aims to bring together the marginal'[56]; that is, those concerned about environmental issues who 'didn't group together within a political party' (ibid.): 'a few of us who knew that there was an emergency and that this urgency consisted in the following: to make coincide the instinctive, visceral revolt of the youth (which we interpreted as a revolt of LIFE in the face of the lethal artifices of power-knowledge complicity) with what we thought was THE REALITY OF REAL PROBLEMS' [capitalization original].[57]

Black and white with a different coloured ink for each issue, the zine's content includes various texts, pictures, caricatures, and sketches in the form of gardening tips, recipes or instructions for building energetic devices. Although it became more and more professional and its content developed to become more consistently organized, the first issues were makeshift and messy; as stated in the first issue: 'This journal is nothing more than a journal, neither its form nor its objectives are fixed, that it is a canvas, a pretext, a starting point, and an adventure. We don't know where we are going.'[58]

[56]Swan-Liat, 'Overleven met en zonder blauwdruk', DKA 18, 1976, 10.
[57]Editorial, 'De Kleine Aarde', DKA 2, 1972, 1.
[58]Ibid.

Figure 11. Front page of the issue 21 of *La Gueule Ouverte* entitled 'For Urban Planning with a Human Face'.

Issue 21 was published in May 1974 and thematically dedicated to urbanism and architecture (Figure 11). The issue harshly criticizes planners for their disdain and ignorance regarding ecosystems. Cities are described as inhuman and alienating: 'Western town planning is made for the living dead excluded from any human community and reduced to flight or solitude'.[59] In an article entitled 'l'Ethnocide Urbain' (Urban Ethnocide), the author blames functionalism and city zoning, arguing that the Athens Charter was responsible for 'accelerating processes of specialization privileging transportation (…) Highways cut urban and suburban space into pieces, each of which

[59]Jaulin, 'L'homme sans rederences, l'homme seul, l'homme mort', LGO 21, 1974, 5.

acquires further specialization. The urban fabric is torn. Community life is withering away. Another infernal cycle!'[60] The issue proposes an alternative eco-systemic planning approach through what it's called the 're-ecology filter'[61], a parametric way of assessing urbanization's impact on the environment that considers pollution, energy consumption, raw materials, volumetric impact, or recycling habits.

The anarchist zine *La Gueule Ouverte* presents Bootkin's social ecology or eco-anarchism ideas. It includes, e.g. texts by Ivan Illich (LGO 9 1973), Bootkin (LGO 21 1974), Michel Bosquet (LGO 168 1977), and others. Its core is a criticism of industrial society and a call for a communal return-to-the-land, with special emphasis on criticizing nuclear power, multinationals, and fast-food habits. The article 'Qu'est-ce qu'un journal ecologique? A quoi ça sert?' (What is an Environmentalist Journal? What's the Point?) is written as the transcription of a board meeting where the editors interrogate the publication's nature, 'whether this newspaper was only a consumer product illustrated like any other or if it allowed for moving things forward a little.'[62] The zine is presented as a tool: 'I would like this to be a journal that gives us courage of combat and, perhaps, faith to succeed in this fight'[63], says Delebarre, a regular contributor to LGO.

Revolutionary eco-mysticism

Vannbæreren ('The Water Carrier') was a Norwegian zine published between 1974 and 1977 by Jan Bojer and other communards from Regnbuetrykk, a famous commune in Karlsøy, in northern Norway. An A4 zine with colourful covers and a black and white interior, ten issues of the zine were printed, each with 80–100 pages. The subtitle was 'Tidsskrift for Kulturelle Endringer' (Journal of Cultural Change). According to the first issue, '*Vannbæreren* is the theoretical journal of Norwegian counterculture based on ecology. The journal struggles for a non-authoritarian form of society based on the unity of life. It strives for undogmatic and liberating attitudes towards religiosity (…) It will question all traditions, values, and opinions'.[64] *Vannbæreren* mixes anarcho-communist theory with articles about sexual liberation, spiritualism, and esoterism, and 'revolutionary mysticism' – a concept they introduce as a way of challenging all norms – is discussed in various formats throughout the publication. There are theoretical articles by radical thinkers with an anarchist and eco-feminist approach such as Ivan Illich, Murray Bookchin, E. F. Schumacher, Françoise d'Eaubonne or Monica Sjöö, as well as articles on non-western knowledges and religiosity, the writings of Jiddu Krishnamurti, Buddhism, the benefits of homeopathy, yoga, and meditation. Above all, there are articles and first-person testimonies about the difficulties and challenges of communal life.

A call for autonomy penetrates all of the issues of *Vannbæreren*. Issue 3 discusses energetic autonomy and includes DIY instructions for windmills, solar panels, and biogas methane digesters. Issue 5, 'Utopiene Lever' (Utopias are Alive), elaborates a genealogy of the idea of operational utopia in the search for autonomous life. It opens with an extensive article about Fourier's utopian-socialist ideas, and other essays concern e.g. Herbert Marcuse's opinions about utopia's decay, Bookchin's eco-anarchism, and Kropotkin's anarchist ideas (Figure 13). Issue 7, the double number 'Hus &Klær' (House and Clothing), is a recipe book of sorts for DIY construction solutions,

[60]Samuel, 'L'Ethnocide Urbaine', LGO 21, 1974, 5.
[61]Roucon, and Baluzié, 'Architecture et ecologie: la charrue avant les boeufs', LGO 21, 1974, 12.
[62]Editorial, 'Qu'est-ce qu'un journal ecologique? A quoi ça sert?', LGO 5, 1973, 4.
[63]Ibid, 6.
[64]Editorial, 'Hva er Vannbæreren? Hvorfor Vannbæreren?', Vannbæreren 1, 1974, 2.

Figure 12. Issues 3 ('Counterculture Magazine), 5 ('Utopias are Alive') and 7 ('House and Clothing') of Vannbæreren.

reminiscent in both format and content to *The Whole Earth Catalogue*. Interestingly, the issue refers to tactics developed by anarchist architect John F.C. Turner and Eduardo Neyra for the project 'Barriadas' in Lima (1957–1965).

Like the other zines discussed here, *Vannbæreren* sought to be an experimental arena: 'a tool for Norwegian alternative culture, a forum where people can exchange experiences, discuss theories'. Remarkable is the consistent use of subjective knowledge through texts discussing personal experiences and the use of mysticism and religiosity as part of the environmentally conscious project of living.

Discussion: disciplining undisciplined sources

In addition to expressing a critical point of view of the world, zines perform as portable utopias, incubating entire new worlds by offering sights of people who live by different physical, social and intellectual rules.[65] Each individual zine report on the local emergence of ecologism and is a treasure trove of actions and protests, most frequently against local planning strategies. A comparative study of them reveals a number of common topics, however. This allows the researcher to navigate the sources following different itineraries and thus allow new narratives to be discerned, which in turn broadens the scope of environmental planning history in the long 1970s.

All the zines depart from a rejection of the modern city and modern life, and they frequently defend preservation of the old urban tissue being threatened and demolished around Europe. There is a rejection of top-down planning actions. Most titles depict the planner as an immoral, corrupt figure in the hands of state power, incarnating alienation, pollution, and environmental destruction. This perspective is often illustrated satirically, e.g. in zines such as *Provo*, *Street Farmer*, or *Almbladet*; or in critical political articles such as those in *Undercurrents* or *La Gueule Ouverte*. Departing from this criticism, zines display manifold proposals that are discussed as the basis of a

[65]Colomina, 'Little Magazines', 153-176.

Figure 13. Inside *Vannbæreren* 5 are reflections on the possibilities of utopian living and references to Fourier, Marcuse, Bookchin and Kropotkin

hypothetical improved society. These critical and propositive conditions underline the co-dependence between minor and major planning stories mentioned earlier, and show how zines, as media for the minor, consistently aimed to reassess the discipline and its protocols.

After careful examination of the zines in the sample, four overarching themes are highlighted as the zines' fundamental contributions to planning history here.

Transnational network of publications registering activist and embodied knowledge

Although published in geographically disparate areas, the zines showcased in the sample revolve around common ideas, projects, authors, and claims. In different ways, they refer to each other constantly, prioritizing knowledge dissemination over commercial values. This is evident, for instance, in their reprints from other publications. Zines were also networked via a section, usually located at the end of each issue, with 'information about movements, concepts and publications we collide with'[66] – for example, the section 'Reviews' in *Undercurrents*, '*Let petits echoes de la merde*' (Small Echoes of Shit) in *La Gueule Ouverte*, or '*Varpe Revy*' (Warp Review) in Vannbæreren.

This exemplifies how activists in different countries operated in an informal transnational network and how zines were regarded as tools for learning from others' experiences. They enabled people from all walks of life to identify with people with same interests across borders. Surely, demonstrations for a more participatory planning process in Sweden were drastically different from their counterparts in France or the Netherlands, and the political environments were very diverse. What this paper shows however is that the desires were the same, and that the people making the zines were ordinary individuals imagining and fighting for alternative ways of being, in an environmental wave that crossed traditional nation-state boundaries.

For the planning historian, zines perform as repositories for studying the entanglement of environmental criticism and the everyday life of activism, offering unique insight into the 'demand side' of planning[67]; that is, into citizens' claims and the messiness of the lived experiences, rather than the orderliness of planning ideals.

By navigating them, historians can trace the evolution of theoretical discussions within ecologism and its variegated ideologies, but also its internal contradictions. Zines also offer valuable first-person testimonies on experimental initiatives e.g. dealing with planning processes when starting an 'alternative' project, inside experiences of the communes, or records of the steps for initiating a work cooperative. The zines comment on the process and the difficulties that must be overcome, offering advice and tips for readers who may follow similar processes. In *Vannbæreren* 2, for example, there is a compilation of articles discussing experiences from commune living (Figure 14). Similar testimonies can be found in *La Gueule Ouverte*. This register of experiential knowledge is something that only zines contain.

Remarkably, some issues of *Undercurrents* contain a section entitled 'Communesense – A Guide to Planning'. Aiming to 'provide information to the sublimely ignorant, [the section] gives here a few words of advice on defeating the bureaucracy',[68] it offered practical information on e.g. understanding master plans, legalizing change of use, or bypassing planning offices' aesthetic restrictions (Figures 15 and 16). Another recurrent section, 'Planning Ploys can By-pass the By-laws', offered tricks and tips for countryside living, 'ways to avoid (or win) confrontations with the local planners if you are getting-it-together in the country'.[69]

[66]'Varpe Revy', Vannbæreren 2, 1974, 67.
[67]Freestone, 'Learning from Planning Histories', 5.
[68]Day, 'Communesense', Undercurrents 13, 1975, 29-30.
[69]Burton, 'Planning ploys can by-pass the bylaws', Undercurrents 16, 1976, 38-39.

Figure 14. 'Rotet frikis og jordbruks-collektiv' (The Messy Freaks from the Agricultural Collective) by the Jordbrucks Commune discusses their motivations, projects and the difficulties brought on by their choice to go back-to-the-land and live collectively. *Vannbæreren* 2, 1974, 8-9.

Environmental zines as part of the anarchist planning tradition

Autonomy and self-sufficiency are constantly demanded and discussed throughout all the publications. The two ideas are recognized as contributions of the 'anarchist roots of the planning movement'.[70] As planning historiography shows, anarchist ideals did not propose an alternative built form, but rather envisioned 'an alternative society [...] based on voluntary cooperation among men and women, working and living in small self-governing commonwealths'.[71] Peter Hall identifies the influence of anarchist authors from Piotr Kropotkin and Élisée Reclus to Ebenezer Howard and Patrick Geddes and traces a genealogy through Lewis Mumford's regionalism to Colin Ward and John T. Turner's self-help housing. Recently, some authors have criticized Hall's thesis, calling it overly focused on the Anglo-Saxon world[72] and reductive as it omits the anarchist variegated tradition of concepts and ideas.[73] In this regard, zines are relevant sources for following anarchist traces in planning history: far from simplifying, they mirror a complex heterogeneity of discourses from different western territories. Readers encounter content on proudhonian mutualism, e.g. in *La Gueule Ouverte*, bakunian collectivism, e.g. in *Provo* or *Undercurrents*, and kropotkian anarcho-communism, which was repeatedly discussed in e.g. *Undercurrents* and *Vannbæreren*.

[70]Hall, Cities of Tomorrow, 3.
[71]Ibid.
[72]Oyón, and Kuzmanić, Ciudades del mañana, 18.
[73]Lopes de Souza, 'The City', 11.

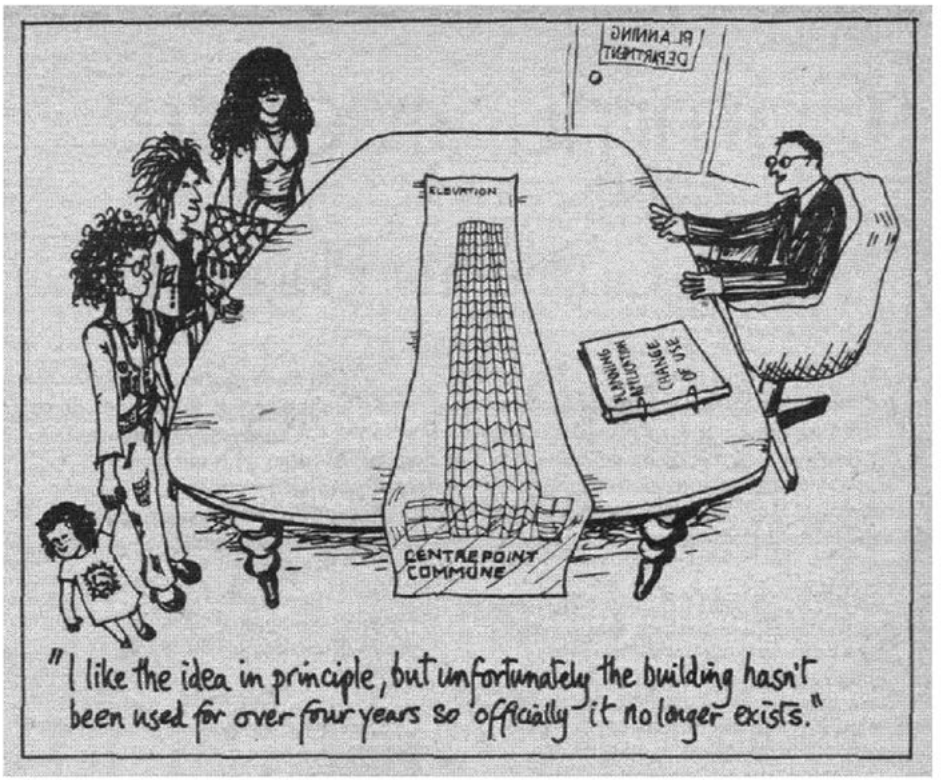


Figure 15. A group of people being denied approval for a commune project because the building is administratively non-existent. The article includes various casuistics that might be encountered in the legalization process. *Undercurrents* 13, 1975, 30.

The aversion to cities and city life has been traditional in anarchist thought – an exception was the nineteenth Century pioneer of critical urban geography Élisée Reclus.[74] However, with the emergence of situationism and the 1968 youth revolts as intrinsic urban phenomena, and the ideas of eco-anarchists and autonomist thinkers such as Bookchin and Castoriadis, respectively (the former is referenced in almost all zines), the focus shifted to the urban realm as a space for which had to be fought. This is easily recognizable within the zines. *Provo*, *Almbladet*, *Street Farm* and *Undercurrents* all call for the transformation of the cities towards a less hierarchical relationship with nature, whilst zines such as *Der Kleine Aarde* and *Vannbæreren* believed that cities were the origin of alienation and that a true autonomous life could only be lived in rural environments, in connection with nature.

The focus on direct democracy and the decentralization of decision-making processes, the defence of co-op work, and the inclusion of DIY-instructions for many energetic devices and structures are demands and visions that continue the 'anarchist roots' of planning within planning

[74]Lopes de Souza, 'The City', 6.

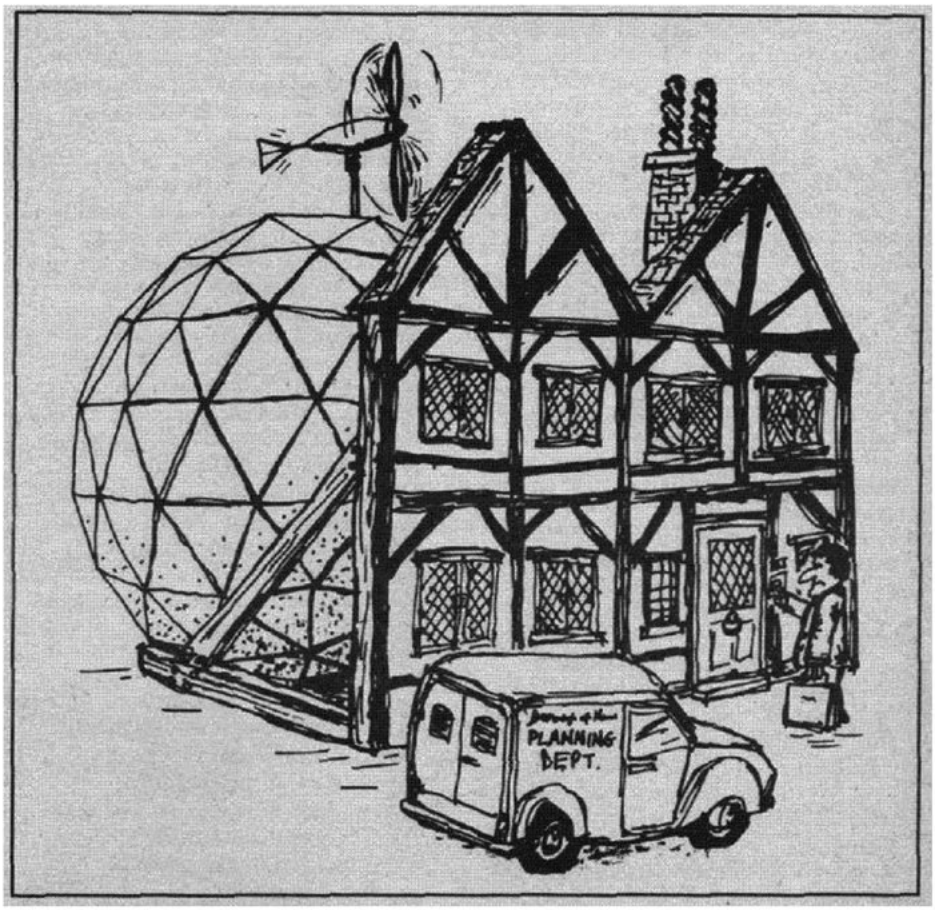


Figure 16. A satirical illustration of how to by-pass 'aesthetic requirements'. *Undercurrents* 13, 1975, 29.

historiography.[75] This explicit – though diverse – ideological positioning of most of the zines is a fundamental difference between the environmental counterculture of North America and that of Europe. While the former was explicitly apolitical upon emerging[76], the latter, in a context of the decline of the welfare state, arose as a politicized phenomenon; this is demonstrated by the zines.

A critical view of technology

In all the publications discussed in this paper, technology is more or less openly inspired by Bookchin's idea of 'liberatory technology'[77]; that is, a critical use of technology that rejects the rationalist

[75]Hall, Cities of Tomorrow, 3.
[76]Scott, Outlaw Territories, 115-166.
[77]Bookchin, Towards a Liberatory Technology.

and capitalist idea of 'dominating nature' and instead advocates 'diversification'[78]: 'When one talks about alternative sources of energy, for example, the real problem is to find a diversified mosaic of energy resources. Solar energy alone is not a solution, nor wind power alone. But utilizing solar energy with wind power, say, together with geothermal energy and hydroelectricity, we have now diversified the sources of energy for a community'.[79] Rejecting top-down domination of nature and the 'biological engineering' that Bookchin saw as being defended by environmentalism, liberatory technology fosters equilibrium between the technological, the natural, and the social world, without coercion, hierarchy, or domination.[80] An ecological life will therefore be attained through the distribution of a series of medium-scale technologies displayed and controlled by the communities and cohabiting with the natural world.

As mentioned earlier, the zines offer a multitude of DIY instructions for assembling all manner of devices. A recurrent idea is to build a series of devices that will allow the house to work as a loop-system that harnesses its own waste and generates its own energy (Figure 17); The zines demonstrate an extraordinary belief in the possibility of gaining autonomy by systematizing the household into a regenerative circuit. The house is thus situated as the site for individual action. It was somehow transformed into a political tool that liberates conscious individuals from resource-consuming state mechanisms. And anyone could break free – one just had to follow the instructions.

Ecofeminism

The relevance of the production and distribution of women's zines for the circulation of feminist ideas, especially in the 1990s and the third wave of feminism, has been recently studied from a historical perspective.[81] The entanglement of ecologism and feminism, the so-called ecofeminism, its origins and main initial ideas is a recurrent topic displayed in the 1970s environmentalist zines. Coined by Françoise d'Eaubonne in 1974, the term was employed to explain the necessary convergence between feminism and ecologism as alternatives to the world crisis. She argued that patriarchal dominance intrinsically linked the degradation of the natural world to the disempowerment and oppression of women, people of colour, and the poor. Like Bookchin's concept of 'social ecology', formulated in the 1960s, this situated nature with other minorities as a marginalized actor. Unlike Bookchin's approach however, which argues that the uneven organization is a result of the dominance of the State, according to ecofeminism the dominant hierarchical organization is reproduced due to historical masculine dominance.

The main revindication evident in the publications concerned women's control over their own bodies and sexuality. In an interview published in Vannbæreren, d'Eaubonne discusses how this control will necessarily positively impact issues of overpopulation and the scarcity of natural resources: 'We believe there is a point where ecology and feminism meet: the population question'.[82] Other questions such as personal experiences in self-managed support- and care groups, decentralized education, and the inclusion of children in planning processes from an ecofeminist position also featured in many of the zines. In the editorial of *Undercurrents* 29, 'Why a Women's Issue of Undercurrents?', the team states that the feminist struggle revolves around questions such as: 'The concept of control over our own bodies, the right to define our own sexuality, self-help

[78]Ibid.
[79]Bookchin, 'Environmentalists vs. ecologists. Interview with Murray Boolchin', Undercurrents 4, 1973, 13.
[80]Ibid.
[81]See, for example, Piepmeier, Girl Zines; Robinson, 'Zines and history'.
[82]d'Eaubonne, 'Økologi og feminism', Vannbæreren 10, 1977, 40.

Figure 17. 'Diagram of Basic Interdependencies' in *Street Farm* 2 shows how the Street Farmhouse works as a closed system thanks to several small devices.

health groups, support and education groups, the concept of sharing, child-care, and an anarchic structure which works. Perhaps most important of all is the concept that the personal is political.'[83] Interestingly, *Undercurrents* published three thematic issues about the connection between feminism and ecologism (Figure 18) and an issue on children and the environment that includes emergent discussions on contemporary questions such as the right of children to be involved in planning, the agency of communities, and creating a better urban environment.

Perspectives from other disciplines, e.g. Swedish artist Monica Sjöö's spiritual view of women, or explorations of sexuality, are also included in many of the titles, further demonstrating that zines are valuable sources from which to learn about the historical entanglement between feminism and ecology.

[83]Editorial, 'Women hold up half the sky', Undercurrents 29, 1978, 1.

Figure 18. Front pages of issues 29 (1978); 36 (1979); 46 (1981); and 55/56 (1982).

Conclusion

This paper has aimed to demonstrate that zines record the history of environmental struggles ignored by the mainstream and that they can be sources from which to glean valuable knowledge for planning history when pursuing other narratives of environmental planning history. The zine exemplifies a way of understanding and acting in the world that follows different rules and values than consumer capitalism and the framed disciplinary norms. Zines convey a knowledge inherent in the mundane environmentalist struggles of the 1970s, portraying anti-heroic and critical practices of the everyday that engage with the lived experience.

The narratives and the transnational exchanges affirm that the ecologist counterculture was more deeply interconnected than previously recognized. Understanding environmentalist zines as a transnational network of publications rather than simply as testimonies of local situations and struggles allows planning historians to broaden the narratives of European environmental planning history in the long 1970s. As the paper has shown, topics such as the anarchist tradition of environmentalist planning, the critical use of technology for a better balance between human habitats and nature, or the early nexus between ecologism and feminism can be further investigated through these alternative sources.

Moreover, the paper has shown that the use of the category of 'minor' sources opens up a range of possibilities for working with historiographical gaps in planning history. The minor conceptualization creates a space in which these minor histories can co-exist with major narratives, allowing histories outside of the canon the potential to revise, shift, and even reposition mainstream planning histories.

Finally, and amid the contemporary environmental crisis and the intense discussions it prompts within the planning discipline, zines contain early discussions and experiences relating to many of the questions being discussed today – community participation in planning, urban farming, technology and sustainability, and more – situating this media as a powerful source that contributes to broadening understanding of the current debate.

Notes on contributor

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Paper II

ENVIRONMENTAL IDEAS COOPTED

ARARAT Exhibition, Stockholm, 1976

Research article published in A&U Journal or Architectural and Planning Theory, Vol. LIV, Number 3–4, 2020.

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Environmental Ideas Coopted: ARARAT Exhibition, Stockholm, 1976

Kooptácia environmentálnych ideí: výstava ARARAT, Štokholm, 1976

Andrea Gimeno Sánchez

Dňa 2. apríla 1976 bola v najvýznamnejšom múzeu súčasného umenia v Štokholme, v Moderna Museet, otvorená výstava ARARAT. Nejednoznačný biblický názov je akronymom pre *Alternatívny výskum v architektúre, zdrojoch, umení a technológii*, teda pre interdisciplinárnu výskumnú skupinu pozostávajúcu z architektov a architektiek, projektantov a projektantiek, inžinierov a inžinierok, biológov a biologičiek a umelcov a umelkýň. Štyri roky predtým sa v Štokholme konali oslavy Konferencie OSN o ľudskom prostredí. Paralelne s nimi prebiehali tiež alternatívne podujatia, ktoré poukázali na architektúru ako na hlavnú politickú technológiu v rámci globálnej krízy životného prostredia a ľudského habitatu.

Toto medzinárodné podujatie, ako sa v príspevku pokúsim argumentovať, malo dlhodobý vplyv pri formovaní švédskeho zeleného aktivizmu, vnášajúci túžbu po environmentálne uvedomelom prostredí do spoločnosti, ktorá napokon prijala východiská výstavy za svoje. Pracujúc s modelmi bývania realizovanými v skutočnej mierke, obytnými sochami, workshopmi a prednáškami, ARARAT prezentovala životné prostredie a prírodné zdroje ako materiálnu, intelektuálnu, a dokonca spirituálnu hnaciu silu možnej zmeny v plánovaní a architektúre. Výstava predviedla silnú kritiku konzumnej spoločnosti a obhajovala nové prístupy v plánovaní. Nadväzujúc na viaceré myšlienky formulované na podujatiach proti konferencii OSN, výstava navrhovala, že plánovanie by malo byť viac činnosťou zmocnenej (empowered) a participatívnej komunity, než zhora riadeným procesom. Malo by si však osvojiť nové využitie technológií na formovanie alternatívnych spôsobov života v rovnováhe s prírodou.

Výstava ARARATU-u je kľúčovým, no nedostatočne preskúmaným príkladom toho, ako medzinárodné kolovanie ideí a taktík ohľadne riešenia environmentálnych otázok pôsobilo ako alternatíva k lokálnej a už vyčerpanej švédskej funkcionalistickej architektúre. Tento príspevok sa zameriava na zložitý kontext sedemdesiatych rokov 20. storočia poznačený postmodernou a environmentálnymi obavami. Príspevok popri analýze kritického obsahu ARARAT-u a jeho alternatívnych návrhov nazerá na výstavu aj ako na prípadovú štúdiu, prostredníctvom ktorej skúma cestu environmentálnych ideí z okraja do centra inštitúcií. Sleduje to, ako boli jej naratívy aj súčasťou vzmáhajúceho sa globálneho diskurzu spájaného s environmentálnym aktivizmom, ako boli tieto naratívy prevzaté a začlenené do výstavy, i to, ako boli neskôr eventuálne pozmenené a opätovne prezentované medzinárodnému publiku v rámci výstavy na 36. benátskom bienále, kde ARARAT reprezentoval Švédsko.

Pri formulovaní tohto posunu sa príspevok teoreticky opiera o koncept kooptácie. Ide o pojem, ktorý v roku 1949 navrhol sociológ Philip Selznick, ako vysvetlenie procesu riadenia opozičného hnutia a zachovania stability tým, že sa opozícii poskytne formálna alebo neformálna moc. Demonštranti a ich myšlienky sú kooptovaní a tak inštitucionalizovaní bez toho, aby sa udiali, až na pár povrchných úprav, rozhodujúce zmeny. Tejto „moci zbavujúcej kooptácií" (disempowering cooptation) sa podrobnejšie venovalo viacero štúdií zameriavajúcich sa na sociálne hnutia. Otázka spolupráce tu býva interpretovaná ako oslabenie a odpolitizovanie predtým silného a emancipačného kolektívneho zápasu. Iní autori však zdôrazňujú, že kooptácia môže priniesť pozitívny výsledok pre obe strany, ako pre vyzývajúce hnutie, tak aj pre inštitucionálnu moc. Environmentalizmus tiež podlieha procesu kooptácie, od definovania hnutia v sedemdesiatych rokoch ako reakcie na moderný a technokratický progresivizmu po prijatie zelených hodnôt na mezo úrovni po roku 2000. Osvojenie si jeho jazyka, estetiky a postupov oficiálnymi inštitúciami je to, čo Selznick definuje ako neformálnu kooptáciu. Nastáva vtedy, keď tí, ktorí kontrolujú kultúru a masmédiá, kooptujú kritické myšlienky tým, že zverejnia ich neutralizovanú verziu a získavajú výhody ich asimiláciou. V nadväznosti na Selznickovu teóriu vypracovali sociológovia Coy & Hedeen štvorfázový model, ktorým kooptáciu opísali a vniesli ním do procesu istú koncepčnú koherenciu. Tento príspevok využíva ich model ako rámec a opisuje ARARAT v troch fázach.

Prvá fáza – vznik a zapojenie sa – sa zameriava na oslavy konferencie OSN v roku 1972 a reflektuje vplyv tohto medzinárodného podujatia na formovanie a podobu švédskej environmentálnej scény. Podľa modelu prvá fáza popisuje stav, keď opozičné hnutie heterogénne reaguje na nespravodlivosti alebo nenaplnené potreby a keď je dosiahnuté spoločné vedomie a kolektívna identita. Analýza oficiálnych, polooficiálnych a neoficiálnych udalostí konajúcich sa počas samitu dokladá, že boli verejnosti prezentované všeobecné medzinárodné obavy (ako hroziaci kolaps životného prostredia), požiadavky (ako hľadanie životného štýlu menej náročného na zdroje) a hlasy (ako Constantinos Dioxiadis, Paolo Soleri, Buckminster Fuller, Steward Brand alebo komúna Hog Farm). Environmentálny aktivizmus

v zásade spochybňoval plánovanie veľkých celkov a urbanizáciu, dominanciu automobilizmu v mestách, konzumnú kultúru utvárajúcu sa okolo domácností a zhora riadené procesy plánovania. Myšlienky rezonujúce v Štokholme roku 1972 tak mali na ARARAT veľký vplyv.

Druhá fáza – apropriácia – je venovaná samotnému ARARAT-u a prostredníctvom výstavy analyzuje ohlas a interpretáciu globálnych alternatívnych environmentálnych ideí vo švédskej kultúrnej sfére. ARARAT je tu skúmaný dvoma spôsobmi: jednak fyzický návrh výstav, teda realizovaná architektúra a skulptúry, ktoré demonštrujú možnosti environmentálnejšieho domova, a jednak jeho nemateriálna časť venovaná zdieľaniu vedomostí, ako spoločné tvorivé aktivity, workshopy, semináre a prednášky konajúce sa v priebehu výstavy či DIY katalóg. Fáza apropriácie je definovaná ako dvojaký proces, v ktorom je na jednej strane osvojený jazyk hnutia (požiadavky, estetika, taktiky) a na druhej strane sa aktivistickí aktéri a aktérky sami apropriovali prostredníctvom pozvania participovať na oficiálnych podujatiach či organizáciách.

Tretia fáza – asimilácia a transformácia – je venovaná skúmaniu internacionalizácie tohto „švédskeho ekologického prístupu" prostredníctvom účasti ARARAT-u na Benátskom bienále, kde škandinávska krajina exportovala a prezentovala medzinárodnému publiku obnovený národný ekologický záujem. Štvrtá fáza štvorfázového modelu – regulácia a odozva – tu nie je zahrnutá vzhľadom na to, že nie je pre formát výstavy relevantná, no bude čiastočne analyzovaná v závere príspevku.

Tento príspevok nie je o kooptácii ako takej. Pracuje s týmto konceptom a vychádza z neho pre lepšie porozumenie a organizáciu procesu transformácie a adaptácie environmentálnych ideí na príklade ARARAT-u, od mimovládneho aktivizmu po začlenenie sa do jadra kultúrnych inštitúcií. Príspevok po prvýkrát predstavuje výstavu v jednotnom analytickom rámci prostredníctvom výskumu množstva primárnych zdrojov, predovšetkým materiálov z archívu ARARAT-u nachádzajúcich sa v Moderna Museet v Štokholme, ako sú prípravné materiály, návrhy, korešpondencia, skice, fotokópie, fanziny, obrazový materiál a podobne. Ako sekundárne zdroje boli použité časopisy o architektúre a umení, ale aj články z dobovej bežnej i odbornej tlače.

On 2 April 1976, the ARARAT exhibition opened at the main museum of contemporary art in Stockholm, the Moderna Museet. Its ambiguous biblical name was taken from the acronym for *Alternative Research in Architecture, Resources, Art and Technology*, an interdisciplinary research group formed by architects, planners, engineers, biologists and artists. Four years previously, the celebration of the UN Conference on Human Environment in Stockholm, and the alternative events performed in parallel, had revealed architecture as a central political technology within the global crisis of the natural environment and human habitat.[1] The international event, as I argue here, later resonated in the articulation of Swedish green activism, installing the desire for an environmentally sustainable habitat among society and, eventually, informing the exhibition's standpoint. Deploying full-scale housing models, inhabited sculptures, workshops and lectures, ARARAT positioned environment and natural resources as the material, intellectual and even spiritual driving forces for a possible shift in planning and architecture. It wielded a strong critique against consumerist societies and advocated for a new approach in planning. Following many of the ideas voiced at the UN counter-events, the exhibition proposed that in place of a top-down process, planning should be exercised by an empowered and participative community. Nonetheless, it should embrace a reformulated use of technology to shape alternative ways of living in balance with the elements of nature.

The display of ARARAT is a central but understudied example of how international circulation of spatial ideas and tactics regarding environmental issues served as an alternative to the local and already-exhausted Swedish functionalist architecture.[2] This contribution is situated within the intricate context of postmodernity and environmental concern of the 1970s. Besides unpacking ARARAT's critical content and alternative proposals, the paper investigates the journey of ecological ideas from the margins to the core of institutions using the exhibition as the case-study: I will follow how its narratives were also part of an emerging global discourse connected to environmental activism; how these narratives were assumed and incorporated to the exhibition; and how eventually they were transformed and conveyed to the international audience again when ARARAT represented Sweden at the 36th Biennale di Venezia.

To articulate this displacement, the paper relies theoretically on the concept of cooptation: a term devised in 1949 by the sociologist Philip Selznick to explain the process of managing an oppositional movement by granting it formal or informal power and thus preserving stability.[3] Protesters and their ideas are co-opted and hence institutionalized without provoking crucial changes beyond superficial modifications. This 'disempowering cooption'[4] has been extensively considered within social movement studies, where the question of cooptation is interpreted as the degradation and depoliticization of a previously vigorous and emancipatory collective struggle.[5] However, other

authors emphasize that cooptation may bring a positive outcome for both the challenging movement and the extant institutional power.[6]

Environmentalism has itself undergone a process of cooptation, starting from the definition of the movement in the 1970s as a reaction against modern and technocratic progressivism up to the adoption of green values on the meso-level in the 2000s.[7] The appropriation of its language, aesthetics and procedures by official institutions is what Selznick defines as informal cooptation: when those who control culture and mass media coopt critical ideas by publicizing a neutralized version of them and obtaining a benefit from its assimilation.

Following Selznick's theory, the sociologists Coy & Hedeen elaborated a four-stage model to depict cooptation and bring some conceptual coherence to the process.[8] Using their model as a framework, ARARAT is narrated here in three stages. The first part – inception and engagement – looks at the celebration of the United Nations Conference in 1972 and reflects upon the influence of international alternative events in shaping and informing the Swedish environmental scene. The second, – appropriation – is dedicated to ARARAT itself and analyses the repercussion and interpretation of global alternative environmental ideas into the Swedish cultural realm. And the third part – assimilation and transformation – focuses on to the internationalization of this now 'Swedish ecological approach' via the participation of ARARAT in the Venice Biennale, where the Scandinavian country exported a revamped national green concern to an international audience. The fourth step of the stage model – regulation and response –is not included here since it is not relevant for the exhibition, although it will be partially discussed at the conclusion. This is not an article about cooptation, but instead relies on the concept to understand and organize the process of transformation and adaptation of environmentalist ideas from non-governmental activism to the core of cultural institutions through the case of ARARAT.

The paper is the first to address the exhibition under a single analytical framework through consulting a wide array of primary sources, most prominently material from the archive of ARARAT stored at the Moderna Museet in Stockholm. Language has been the biggest struggle since the author is not a native speaker of Swedish. Nevertheless, a considerable part of ARARAT's archive – essentially the preparation material such as drafts, post, sketches, photocopies and fanzines, and the material related to the Biennale – were found in English. The rest of the material, in Swedish, has been translated by the author. Architecture and art journals and magazines, and articles from both the mainstream and specialized press of the time have been included as secondary sources.

Inception and Engagement: Stockholm, Summer 1972

The "alternative sightseeing" flyer is part of a communication strategy to invite UN attendants to become aware of the 'manipulated' version they were receiving about the kindnesses of Stockholm's urban environment. Through the text, the pamphlet offered information on how the Stockholm population had mobilized itself toward environmental challenges and against the top-down planning processes. The invitation was addressed to journalists for a three-hour "special press tour by a 'shit powered bus' around Stockholm's nightmare suburbs". It was signed by the *Alternative Stad*[9], a local group that participated actively in performing critical actions during the UN week. "Shit", in this case, was a literal power resource and not a metaphor for pollution, as the bus ran on methane gas obtained from chicken excretions.

Although not as radicalized as in other European cities, the youth of Sweden was also mobilized in the 1970s. Considered – one of if not – the most equal and progressive countries in the world, the Scandinavian country had built the paternalistic – and for some authors also authoritarian– apparatus known as the 'Swedish Model', achieving world-leading levels of development and equality.[10] Some authors have asserted that this comfortable situation provoked a sedative effect on the population's fighting impulses in comparison to other western countries.[11] However, the rise of environmentalism became a desire that gathered general resentment among society and triggered a critique against the technocratic progressivism of the social-democratic period, based on consumerist culture, the dominance of the car, and high living standards.[12]

The celebration of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm between the 5th and the 11th of June 1972 broadened the scope of the green movement among the wider levels of Swedish society and made Stockholm the place to be during the summer of 1972. The mega-event attracted a myriad of people from all around the globe with diverse aims and backgrounds: official governmental delegates, NGOs, bankers, hippies, politicians, scientists, radical

ecologists, activists of all range and distinguished architects such as Buckminster Fuller or Paolo Soleri. Nonetheless, this bizarre mix between official and bureaucratic activities astonished the press who documented this dichotomy asserting that "the United Nations Conference on Human Environment has two voices – an official one and an unofficial one. The latter may have proved to have had more impact in the long run, establishing some kind of environmental world order than formal pronouncements of official delegates". These words disclose, on the one hand, the overall feeling of skepticism toward the UN event itself, and on the other hand, the relevance of the counter-events displayed: "history may not find it clear which was the main event and which the sideshow".[13]

In the spectacle of Stockholm, architecture and planning found their role in both, official, semi-official and unofficial events, highlighted as a fundamental negative within the prophecies of uncontrolled city growth.[14]

Official

In the official realm, the UN report for the conference's preparation anticipated a horrifying scenario of imminent "major collapse in many of the larger cities of the world" that "will further endanger the precarious existence of human settlements". Furthermore, it stated that this prospective uncontrolled growth "will require building in one generation more structures than have been built in the whole human history"[15] thus drastically modifying the surface of the entire globe. The question of the rapid growth of human settlements was added to the Conference's initial agenda to highlight the transnational relevance of the problem and its spatial implications. The idea of humanity in harmony was no longer based on the postwar cosmopolitan dream of "One World"[16] pushing every nation into a race for the exploitation of resources but contrastingly the biophysical reality of "Only One Earth"[17] which carried with it a menacing fate.[18] This overturning of the traditional conceptions of space and the new understanding of borderless territory entailed an ontological shift for space makers, architects and planners. As Felicity Scott states, in this global imaginary "architecture's client becom[es] 'humanity' as such".[19] The archetype of this new global arena in architecture was, perhaps, the Ekistics Group led by the Greek architect Constantinos A. Doxiadis. Although Dioxiadis himself did not attend the Conference, the Ekistics Group was strongly represented in the official events of Stockholm through the figures of Barbara Ward or Buckminster Fuller, among others. In an optimistic-managerial tone, the Ekistics Group believed in a post-political global society where social, economic, racial, and ethnic inequalities would be managed by benevolent technocrats.[20] In Doxiadis's words: "Our task is to define our life expressed by human settlements so clearly that it can contain every part, aspect, expression or opinion, known or unknown, foreseen or unforeseen. Once defined, our task is then to learn to control this system wisely for the sake of all mankind".[21]

Semi-official

This techno-managerial understanding of the world as an object of control was forcefully questioned at the semi-official events displayed in the Environmental Forum. Located at the National School of Arts, the forum was dedicated to debates among NGOs, representatives from developing countries and human-rights activists with a focus on issues like population control and the role of technology. Still, architecture and planning were also hot topics in the discussions. For instance, the architect Paolo Soleri delivered a lecture entitled "Alternative Futures" in which he introduced the term 'arcology' (architecture + ecology) to the general public, presenting his vision for a new kind of urban living based on an organic understanding of architecture.[22] These tensions between the 'environment' and the 'right to develop' were the driving ideas in "For a Technology in People's Service!" *(For en Teknik i Folkets Tjänst!)*, an exhibition under the Environmental Forum umbrella, but displayed at the experimental space 'Filialen' at the Moderna Museet.[23] Organized by the local activist group Pow-wow together with Peter Harper, editor of the British environmental zine Undercurrents[24], the show aimed to critique the use of technology in the service of capitalist market benefits. Covering the fields of planning, construction techniques, and cutting-edge or traditional technology, the exhibition consisted of the display of alternative domestic appliances in combination with architectural models where technology was the solution to an environmentally friendly habitat. There was a 'workshop space' and a 'space for contributions' for the visitor's participation. "For a Technology in People's Service!" was outlined as a collective process, envisioned to be permanently transformed by visitors and guests – a condition that would be reflected in ARARAT for years after.

TENT CAMP IN SKARPNACK, STOCKHOLM, JUNE 1972

TÁBOR V SKARPNACKU, ŠTOKHOLM, JÚN 1972

Source Zdroj: Gun Zacharias, *Skarpnäck, USA: En Bok om Droger och Politik*

Unofficial

On the margins of the Summit, there was another pole of discussion, the self-proclaimed Life Forum. There, the possibility of tangible alternative lifestyles provoked broad interest within the general public and especially among environmental activists and the youth. In a former glider airport in the south of Stockholm, a tent city was installed for those who could not afford other accommodation. The Hog Farm, a famous Californian back-to-the-land hippie commune, settled down there too. Led by Steward Brand, editor of the influential *One Earth Catalogue*, the commune assembled all their paraphernalia brought from the USA: teepees, decorated buses, geodesic domes, collective kitchens and open scenarios where unofficial presentations, concerts or just talks took place during the conference's days.[25] By exhibiting their own lifestyle, domestic eco-tactics and counter-architectures, they showed in real scale that an alternative and more environmentally friendly life was possible. The "vernacular revival, simplified self-build, and low-gain energy systems"[26] that travelled from the States became an important pole of attraction within the UN Summit. The spatial solutions, together with the ideas of alternative communities and the Whole Earth Catalogue's knowledge organization, made a considerable impact on ARARAT both formally and intellectually, as it will be elaborated later.

In brief, the official, semi-official, and unofficial events, demonstrations, performances and conferences helped to articulate and inform the Swedish 'green wave' and contributed to install the desire for an environmentally sustainable habitat among society. According to the first step of the cooptation stage model, 'inception and engagement' describes when an oppositional movement becomes heterogeneously configured around injustices or unfulfilled needs, and a shared consciousness and collective identities emerge. The media platform of the Summit allowed environmental activism to reach a global audience. Ideas of anti-capitalism, anti-consumerism, and anti-colonialism articulated in their protests resonated with a large part of the population, especially the youth. Concerning planning and architecture, environmental activism questioned the large-scale planning and urbanization, the dominance of the car in cities, and the consumerist culture constructed around the household. They claimed for a less resource-consuming life, questioning the top-down planning processes, and envisioning a collectively organized habitat in harmony with natural resources. All these proposals, both in terms of organization and aesthetics, would help to develop new visions of what an alternative environment could look like. Therefore, the ideas circulating in Stockholm 1972 turned to be highly influential for ARARAT.

Appropriation: ARARAT 1976, Moderna Museet

The ARARAT exhibition opened at the Moderna Museet four years after the occurrence of the UN Summit. Following the stage model of cooptation, after 'inception and engagement', the next step is 'appropriation', described as a dual process where first the language of the movement is incorporated (claims, aesthetics, tactics) and second, activist actors are themselves appropriated through invitations to participate in official events or organisations.[27] If the alternative and environmentalist spatial ideas were displayed during the UN counter-events in peripheral sites like the tent camp in Skarpnack, four years after, they travelled to the main museum at the island of Skeppholmen: a journey from the margins to the cultural core of the city. The language of the movement, or the funk aesthetic[28] in words of the architecture theorist William Chaitkin describing the American counterculture, pierced the walls of the museum with, an exhibition described as messy, fragmentary and clashing. As the journalist Stig Johansson from the *Svenska Dagbladet* newspaper wrote: "from my part, I have to admit that I have rarely seen a more confused, untidy, excessive exposition (...) There is a slightly confused anarchist mood all over the place, including a banner that spells out that solar technology powers the people".[29]

ARARAT's journey had been launched two years after the UN events, in 1974,[30] when the core of the group consisting of architects (Hans Nordenström and Valdemar Axelsson), artists (Lennart Mörk, Kerstin Abram-Nilsson and Sivert Lindblom) scientists (Bo Hall) and humanists (Monica Nordenström), proposed to the Moderna Museet a research project about the implementation of alternative energy on dwellings.[31] By then, the Moderna Museet was already part of an international circuit of museums that perceived the cultural institutions as open sites of critical experimentation.[32] Therefore, an installation based on life-scale models where visitors create meaning when moving through the museum's space was aligned with the institution's interest. The agreement with the Moderna Museet in 1974 and the grant conceived by the Swedish Research Council allowed the group to conduct research beforehand, including two field trips to the USA and England to visit prototypes, institutions and experts, and starting the production of the exhibition from the summer of 1975.[33] Thus, as the second step of the cooptation model suggests, the group of environmentalists was formally invited to participate within the institution.

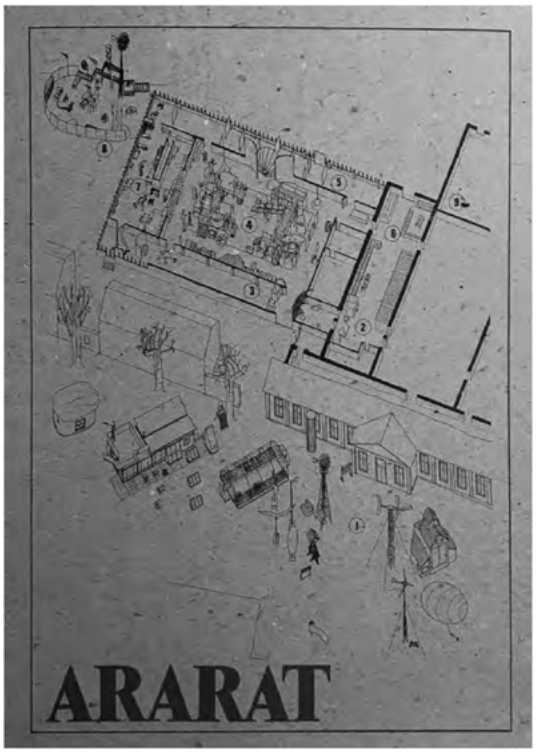
The title of the first draft submitted to the Moderna Museet was "Ecological Building and Living". Although the heading would be missing in the final version, it evidences its architectonic foundations. Yet it underlies a demand for shifting the methods for human habitation, not only regarding the physical environment but altering the social sphere too. In essence, new architectures ('Building') would be expected to enact alternative lifestyles and environmental domestic paradigms ('Living'). Autonomy in housing, a community-oriented habitat and processes of co-creation are the main ideas that articulate the whole exhibition. As stated in its submission file, ARARAT "aims to gather together and widen knowledge on resource-saving techniques which involve a high degree of self-sufficiency and conversion techniques as well as providing an opportunity for extensive working participation".

In trying to give order to the exhibition, one could say that among the mentioned mess and the accumulation of activities and displayed gadgets, two strategies can be differentiated: one is the physical proposal of the exhibition, i.e. the built architectures and sculptures that demonstrate the possibility of more environmental domesticity; and the other, the part dedicated to knowledge dissemination: co-creation activities, workshops, seminars and lectures scheduled during the exhibition, and the DIY catalogue.

The Exhibition

Following the itinerary proposed by ARARAT, the first stop was outside the museum where a collection of 1:1 prototypes was displayed in the courtyard. Visitors could pass through the houses, cabins and greenhouses, spending a brief period inside, and trying the displayed devices for energy production, such as windmills or solar panels. Moreover, they could even build them. ARARAT encouraged participation in the construction of the houses, evidence of an emphasis on the process rather than on the final object. Consequently, the appearance of the first part of the exhibition in the opening in April 1976 was completely different from that of its closing, four months later.

Among other devices, three experimental houses and a greenhouse were built in the courtyard of the museum as a result of collaborative work between ARARAT members and the civil society. The first was the 'Sun House' (*Solhusläangan*), a test station house for solar heating and insulation



COVER OF THE CATALOGUE'S FOLDER. THE ORDER OF THE NUMBERS FOLLOWS THE EXHIBITION'S ITINERARY:
1. MUSEUM COURTYARD: ECOLOGICAL BUILDINGS AND CONSTRUCTIONS
2. EKOTEKET
3. CONTEMPORARY GALLERY
4. MAIN EXHIBITION ROOM: THE FUTURE ECOLOGICAL SOCIETY
5. FUTURE GALLERY
6. STUDY ROOM
7. WORKSHOP SPACE
8. EXTERIOR WORKSHOP SPACE
9. MUSEUM AUDITORIUM: SEMINAR SERIES

PREBAL OBÁLKY KATALÓGU. ČÍSLOVANIE OZNAČUJE PLÁN VÝSTAVY:
1. NÁDVORIE MÚZEA: EKOLOGICKÉ BUDOVY A STAVBY
2. EKOTEKET
3. SÚČASNÁ GALÉRIA
4. HLAVNÁ VÝSTAVNÁ MIESTNOSŤ: EKOLOGICKÁ SPOLOČNOSŤ BUDÚCNOSTI
5. BUDÚCA GALÉRIA
6. ŠTUDOVŇA
7. PRIESTOR PRE WORKSHOPY
8. EXTERIÉROVÝ PRIESTOR PRE WORKSHOPY
9. AUDITÓRIUM MÚZEA: SÉRIA SEMINÁROV

Source Zdroj: Moderna Museet Archive

AERIAL VIEW OF THE COURTYARD WITH THE 1:1 PROTOTYPES UNDER CONSTRUCTION. ON THE LEFT IS THE SUN HOUSE; IN THE MIDDLE, IN FRONT OF THE GREENHOUSE, THE STRAW HOUSE; AND ON THE RIGHT, THE FORM HOUSE

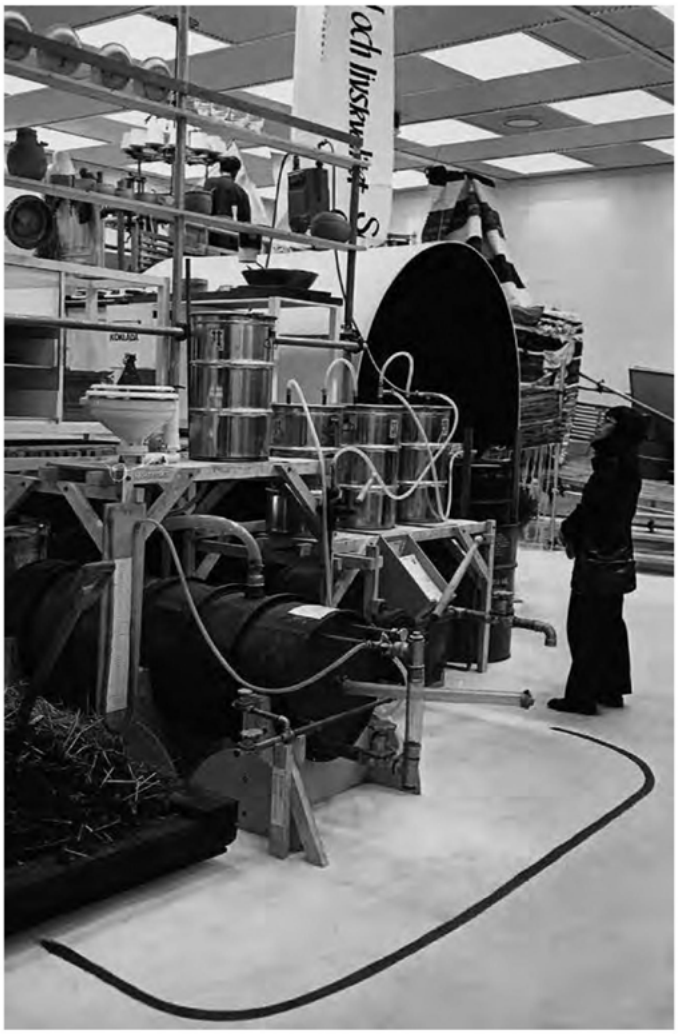
LETECKÁ SNÍMKA NÁDVORIA, KTORÁ ZACHYTÁVA STAVBU PROTOTYPOV V ŽIVOTNEJ VEĽKOSTI. NAĽAVO SA NACHÁDZA SLNEČNÝ DOM, UPROSTRED OPROTI SKLENÍKU JE SITUOVANÝ SLAMENÝ DOM A NAPRAVO DOM – FORMA

Source Zdroj: Moderna Museet Archive
Photo Foto: Karl Kylberg

methods. Perceived as a plain box from the outside, the building was divided in five testing spaces for different technologies (air-filler systems with heat bearing, passive systems with innovative insulating materials, experimentations for window's insulation, solar panels, geothermal technologies). The aim was to make a step towards creating collaborative active and passive energy systems to cover the whole energetic demand of a house. Contrastingly, the 'Straw House' (*Halmhuset*) was a simple and primitive prototype built with straw walls outlining an elliptical plan covered with a slightly sloping metallic sheet. And finally, the third, the 'Form House' (*Aterbrugshuset*), was entirely built with recycled materials and developed collectively by the group 'Form Verkstan' formed by KTH students.[34]

The DIY aesthetics, the use of recycled construction materials and the emphasis on the process of co-creation can be interpreted as, on the one hand, demonstrations of alternative possibilities for housing models and, on the other hand, an aesthetic provocation that shows the rejection of the industrial cannon found on the assemblage of prefabricated construction elements. This way of combining high and low technologies, the *bricoleurism* and the vernacular revival, resonate with images of the tent city in Skarpnack and the architectures published in the Whole Earth Catalogue. The language of the Tent City was, now, displayed directly beside the main national museum of contemporary art.

The second part of the itinerary was inside the museum and divided into three exhibition rooms. The first, the 'Modern Gallery', a corridor demarcated by shop windows with mannequins and images of non-developed countries, offered a denunciation of the inequalities that the first world causes – one of the star topics at the UN Conference in 1972. It aimed to show the negative effects of industrial production and the "the dark side of consumer society".[35] After walking through it, the visitor would enter to the main room: 'The Future Ecological Society'. A 1:1 inhabited structure on display represented the urban society with its complex circuits and flows in contact with the surrounding nature. It depicted the "society and nature breakdown in long term ecological



MAIN EXHIBITION ROOM, A CORNER OF THE FUTURE ECOLOGICAL SOCIETY IS SHOWN
HLAVNÁ VÝSTAVNÁ MIESTNOSŤ, INŠTALÁCIA EKOLOGICKEJ SPOLOČNOSTI BUDÚCNOSTI
Source Zdroj: Moderna Museet Archive
Photo Foto: Karl Kylberg

balance"[36] as defined in the exhibition's flyer. Each of the room's walls represented one of the four classical elements (air, water, earth, sun) and their inextricable link between them and the "human community"[37] embodied by the sculpture itself. The visitor could walk from one element to the other across the structure placed at the center, uncovering the associations between the parts: planification of the cities, domestic lifestyles and the four elements of nature.

Finally, the last exhibition room was the 'Future Gallery', which operated in a more optimistic tone and presented ethnographic works – such as models from an Indian eco village, traditional building methods from Africa or Vietnamese traditional transportation – mixed with examples of good practices in ecological architecture. Through pictures, plans and models, cottages and neighborhoods from the USA, UK or Sweden, it showed what ARARAT considered as good examples. This approach provoked critiques of the group, which was accused of snobbery: their solutions, it was argued, did not address the ecological problem of large-scale housing, suggesting solutions for cottages, typologies for a privileged class of society, while solutions for multi-story dwellings where the majority lives, remained ignored.

PRESS CUTTING PUBLISHED IN AFTONBLADET WITH THE TEXT: – BROTHER, HAVE YOU BEEN TO SEE ARARAT? – YES BROTHER. IT WAS A MESSY AND ANARCHISTIC AND NASTY EXHIBITION. BUT THIS SUNSHINE VILLAS, SOLAR RESIDENCE, I LIKED THEM

NOVINOVÁ KARIKATÚRA PUBLIKOVANÁ V AFTONBLADET, ZNENIE TEXTU: – KAMARÁT, VIDEL SI UŽ ARARAT? – ÁNO, VIDEL. SAMÝ NEPORIADOK, ANARCHISTICKÁ A NESLUŠNÁ VÝSTAVA. ALE POVIEM TI, TIE SLNEČNÉ VILY, SOLÁRNE REZIDENCIE, TIE SA MI PÁČIA

Source Zdroj: Aftonbladet

Knowledge Dissemination

Beyond its formulation as an exhibition, ARARAT claimed to be a toolbox for knowledge transmission. Thus, a set of practical resources about ecology, technology and alternative lifestyles was set for the public. "We want to present constructively critical material that contributes to an in-depth and broader discussion of future production and social forms"[38] stated the exhibition's flyer. This critical material was presented in different formats: a library, a catalogue, lectures and seminars, and workshops.

The 'Ekoteket' was an important item, forming a library or an archive containing writings about ecology. There, the visitor could get information, look up literature or ask for advice regarding technical issues. A series of eight booklets was published for the occasion and distributed in theoretical categories with essays written by experts: n. 1 and 2 'Human Ecology', n. 3 'The Sun', n. 4 'The Earth', n. 5 'The Water', n. 6 'The Air', n. 7 Why ARARAT? and n. 8 'Some sources and a literature list'.

In a remarkable way, the catalogue showed the ethos of ARARAT. The visitor would receive an A4 folder made from recycled paper with a critical statement on the back cover entitled "A Matter of Survival" and, on the other side, the credits of the more than a hundred people involved in the exhibition. But the folder itself would be empty. The visitor was supposed to create the content by taking the leaflets that were distributed along with the exhibition. There were more than sixty different flyers[39] with diverse contents: from the explanation of the rooms in the museum to descriptions of technologies on display, or do-it-yourself guides for building certain architectures – geodesic domes, tensegrity structures, solar kitchens –, information papers of alternative lifestyles and even commercial information of manufactured products, like solar panels, hydraulic cartridges, or low-energy kitchens. At the end of the exhibition, the visitor would have created a personal catalogue. Both the content and the catalogue's format resonate with the alternative zines published along the 1970s. And the parallels to the famous 'Whole Earth Catalogue seem especially noteworthy.

Another format for knowledge dissemination was the series of ten lectures and seminars scheduled simultaneously with the exhibition. As found in the preparation works on the archives, the group initially considered including international architects such as the British anarchist John Turner, the French situationist Yona Friedman or the American Steve Bear. All of them were figures with a critical approach toward top-down and resource-consuming processes and very influential for a generation of young and politically engaged architects. Turner's community organization and self-help housing, Friedman's self-construction housing and mobile cities, and Bear's solar houses were usual references in environmental zines too. However, the international figures were finally not invited. Although more Scandinavian-oriented than originally planned, the lectures proved to be a success in terms of attendance and engagement. Significant titles were 'Social Order and Social Control: working environment, production conditions, mass communication, biotechnology, computer development, school/education, work/leisure time, etc.' or 'Socialist Planning for Housing: economic and political views on one realization on resource conservation'.[40]

The closing seminar was a debate between the ARARAT group and political parties' representatives. Under the title "About the ecological community", the politicians and the environmentalists

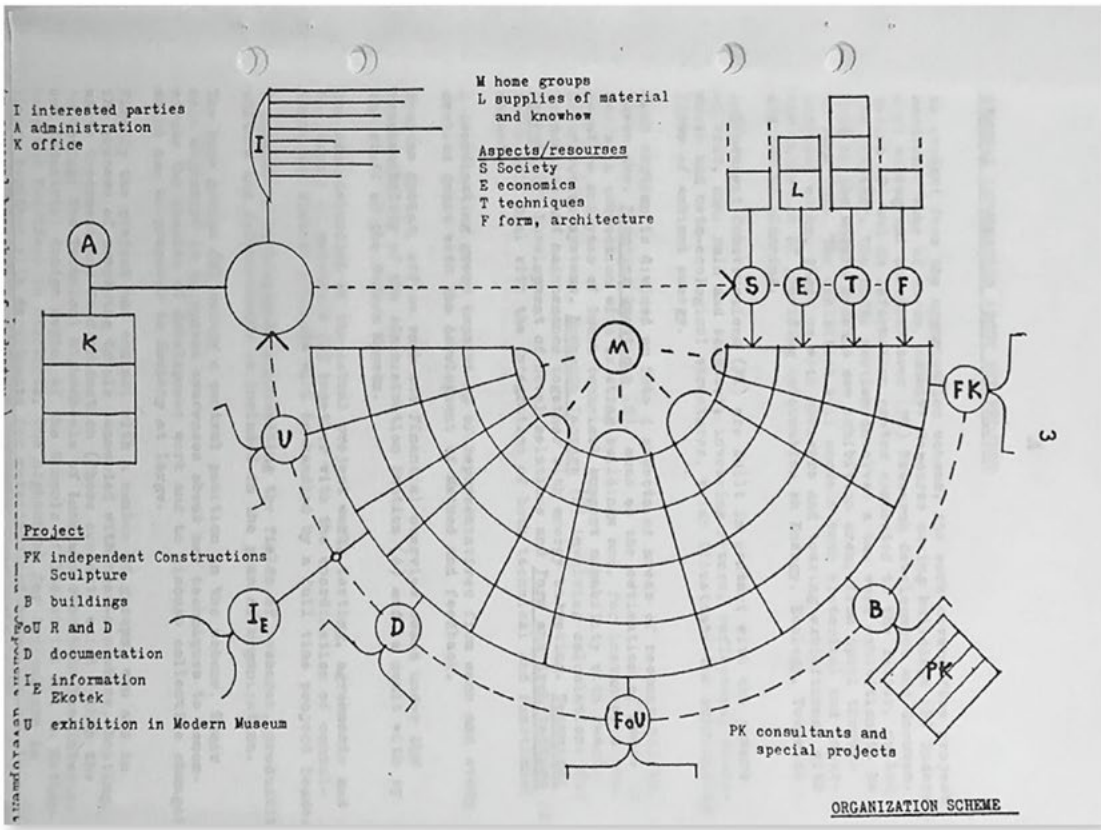
CATALOGUE: FOLDER AND SOME FLYERS
KATALÓG: SKLADAČKA A LETÁKY
Source Zdroj: Moderna Museet Archive

discussed "the exhibition and the conclusions that can be drawn from it". This interest on collaborating with institutional actors was a way of broadening the scope of their message. As can be seen already in the preparation work, they compare ARARAT's scope with the arch-famous 1930 Stockholm Exhibition: "The 1930 World Fair in Stockholm marked Sweden as the country where modern architecture broke through earlier than elsewhere. We hope that the Skeppsholm exhibition will contribute to the development of alternative technology all over the world."[41]

ARARAT wanted to change the construction industry and the procedures of planning processes. For achieving it, they collaborated with a complex network of actors: "We will consequently work across disciplinary boundaries in contact with several fields of knowledge. We intend to work with several media forms and attempt to introduce new techniques in Art and Technology. We shall work democratically, utilizing practical experience".[42] The complex network of actors ranged from politicians to industrialists who started to share interests with formerly alternative environmental ideas and appropriated their language and tactics, inevitably redefining them in a more institutional sphere. This shows the ongoing process of cooptation.

Assimilation and Transformation: XVI Venice Biennale, Nordic Pavilion

"Sweden shows the most environmentally conscious exhibitions; for example, the eastern states have completely disregarded the unpleasantness of the common theme, like Japan, the most environmentally destructive country..." With these words, the art critic Bengt Lärkner headed an extended article about the 1976 Biennale at *Dagens Nyheter*, one of the most widely circulated Swedish newspapers. His words show the geopolitical dimension of the Venetian art fair, where national pavilions function as embassies, where each country showcases the art it believes best represents



ORGANIZATIONAL SCHEME INCLUDED IN THE APPLICATION THAT ARARAT SUBMITTED TO THE MODERNA MUSEET. IT SHOWS THE EXTENSIVE NETWORK OF ACTORS AND ACTIVITIES DISPLAYED

ORGANIZAČNÁ SCHÉMA, KTORÁ BOLA SÚČASŤOU PRIHLÁŠKY ARARAT-U DO MODERNA MUSEET. ZOBRAZUJE ROZSIAHLU SIEŤ PREZENTOVANÝCH AKTÉROV A AKTIVÍT

Source Zdroj: Moderna Museet Archive

the national state-of-art.[43] At the cooptation stage in our model, the third step is described as when the institutions assimilate both the individuals and goals of the challenging movement. States and vested interests develop or sponsor reform programs for attracting movement leaders to participate at the new institutional initiatives.[44] After the success in terms of participation at the Moderna Museet, Sweden chose ARARAT to represent the country at the most important international-political-cultural art event, as a way of revealing the environmental concerns of the nation.

The Venice Biennale had been a showcase for the arts since the end of the nineteenth century, but it was only after 1968 that it began to include architecture, first among the visual arts and later as an autonomous discipline in 1980, when the First International Architecture Biennale started.[45] The 1976 exhibition is considered a shifting point within the biennale's history,[46] when the influential architect and theorist Vittorio Gregotti was appointed as director of visual arts with the aim of turning the Biennale into an international platform for critical debate.[47] Pontus Hulén, whom had been the director of the Moderna Museet until the 1973, together with Eduardo Arroyo, Maurizio Calvesi, De Grada, and Silvano Giannelli completed the Visual Arts Commission. They introduced two major changes: the biennale would be organized around a general theme to which participants and countries should react (unlike the previous laissez-faire approach), and the spatial condition of art would be encouraged. The latter condition allowed architecture as a discipline to be included in parallel to visual arts for the first time.[48] 'Environment, Participation, Cultural Structures' – *'Ambiente, Partecipazione, Strutture Culturali'* in Italian – was the theme chosen for setting a common ground for the conversation. All activities, national pavilions and participants were addressed to consider it as the basis for their proposals. Here, 'environment' was intended as a notion purely related to the link between space and social context (*ambiente* in italian)[49] and aligned with the

ONE OF THE ARARAT COLLABORATORS 'TESTING' THE GADGETS OF THE FUTURE ECOLOGICAL SOCIETY SCULPTURE AT THE NORDIC PAVILION. PHOTOGRAPHER: OLOF ANTELL

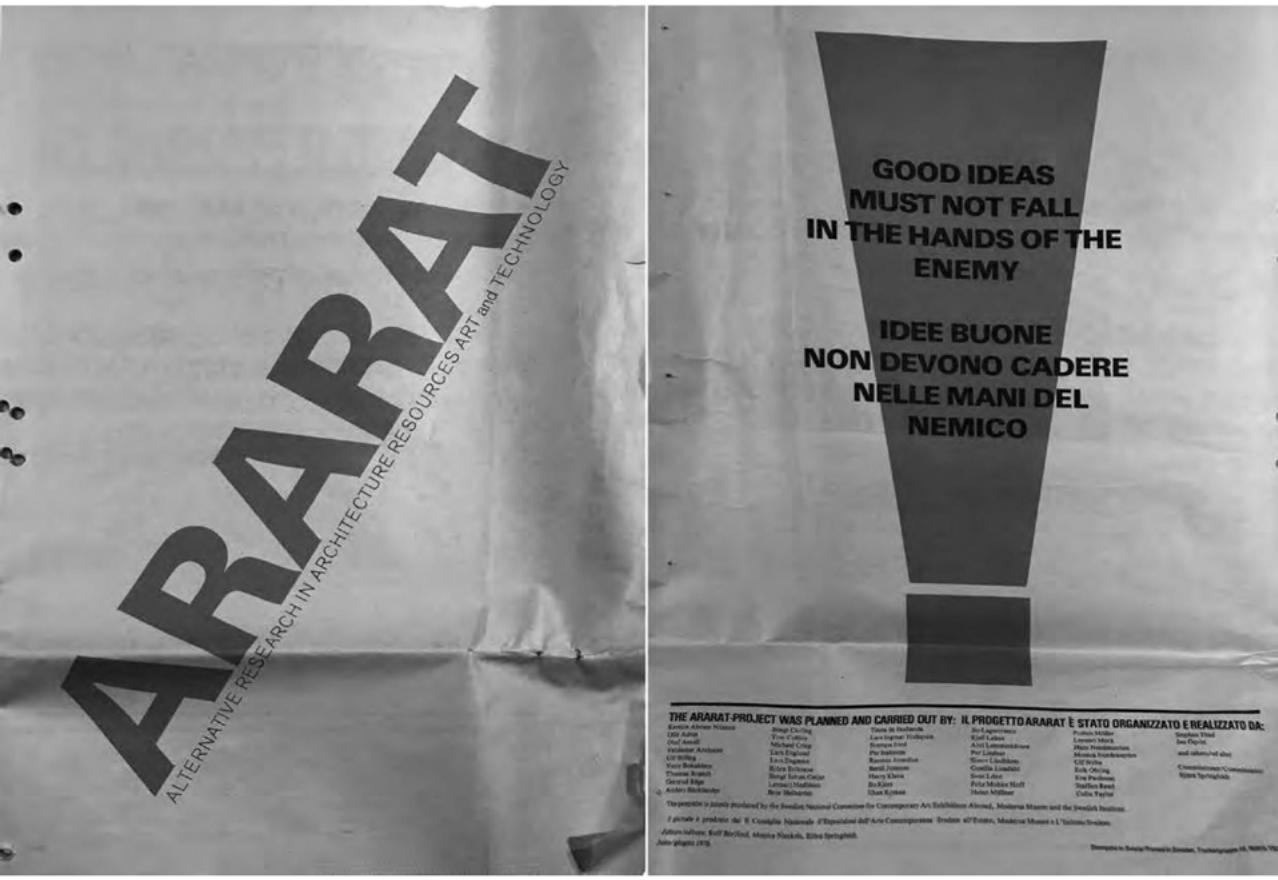
JEDEN ZO SPOLUPRACOVNÍKOV ARARAT-U PRI TESTOVANÍ ZARIADENÍ INŠTALÁCIE EKOLOGICKEJ SPOLOČNOSTI BUDÚCNOSTI V SEVERSKOM PAVILÓNE

Source Zdroj: Moderna Museet Archive

emergence of participative art, but not directly related to nature. Therefore, although the environmentalist approach of ARARAT was not inevitably connected to the topic, its spatial proposal and the active participation of the visitor turned out to match the proposed framework.

Consequently, ARARAT was selected with the Finish and Norwegian proposals to display their 'artistic pieces' at the iconic Nordic pavilion designed by Sverre Fehr. By then, the three countries no longer shared a common exhibition but had independent curators. While the other two Scandinavian countries had chosen a selection of paintings and sculptures exhibited as a classic 'stand-and-look' show, Sweden filled the space with the 1:1 sculpture depicting 'The Future Ecological Society' built by ARARAT. Both, the format and the content were a statement *per se*. As the group declared on the Biennale's catalogue, the main purpose was to "demonstrate things"[50] rather than exhibiting objects.

Nothing special was produced for Venice: the exhibition offered just a sample of what happened in Stockholm. The inhabited sculpture was disassembled from the Moderna Museet and reassembled with adaptations to the new spatial conditions. The visitor could move through the different levels and experience the many interconnected devises displayed along the self-proclaimed "ecological carnival".[51] The sculpture linked domestic routines to alternative technologies. A pile of artistic objects and practical machinery was exhibited: from an aga-oven cooking organic food through a thermal process, and connected to a gas installation whose power came from a domestic methane gas station fed with compost; to a toilet that separates urine from recycled water for field irrigation; or samples of sand and stones from the Natural History Museum. The scaffolding



COVER AND BACK-COVER OF THE CATALOGUE

OBÁLKA A ZADNÁ STRANA KATALÓGU

Source Zdroj: Moderna Museet Archive

holding the monument, the D-I-Y aesthetics and the mix of raw tradition and advanced technology contrasted with the clean, ordered and museum-like of the rest of the exhibitions, enhancing the radicality of the proposal: "Ararat would like to be the clenched first that knocks some sense into us. It has collected enough revolutionary material to do it."[52]

The catalogue was the only *ad hoc* production for Venice. It was styled as a newspaper and entitled *A Question of Survival!* containing a much more provocative content than the one for Stockholm. As manifested in the title, they stressed the urgency of environmental protection and launched a call to act fast: "how is the environmentalist to live while he waits?" In the publication, ARARAT openly showed its anti-capitalist foundations and a clear refusal towards authoritarianism: "We must support the people who are fighting against oppression by a ruling upper class. We must come out openly against fascism, even at close quarters, both neonazism in Germany as well as the exercise of power by transnational companies in our country. We must choose our enemies!"[53]

In general terms, the newspaper was a synopsis that explained, part by part, the material exhibited in Stockholm, "one of the most important of Sweden's exhibitions ever"[54] they stated.

Interestingly, it contained an extended text about their participatory experience. Formulated as an interview, the interviewee (Hans Nordemström) highlights the processes and the obstacles found through their co-creation process. The text mainly focuses on describing the problems of communication between the extensive network of actors, and the solutions for overcoming them. The overall idea was to display the great achievement made by the group and stress the relevance

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of participatory processes for the future: "The ARARAT project was the first large manifestation in our country of participatory research. A self-evident work method which in the long run serves as the only feasible direction towards a tolerable future."

One could say that, beyond the anti-capitalist rhetoric and the *bricolage* aesthetics, ARARAT's aim for the Biennale was to demonstrate that participative (co-creation) processes and the environmentally friendly household were leading paths for future developments. In that sense, through exhibiting ARARAT, Sweden had placed itself as an environmentally concerned country, indeed a country that had already started taking actions towards mitigating the environmental collapse.

Conclusion

Today Sweden is considered one of the most sustainable countries in the world with strong environmental policies in terms of urban development and architecture. This paper has contributed to unravelling one part of its environmental history by analysing the ARARAT exhibition. Besides casting light on the exhibition itself, the paper has situated ARARAT in a broader international context, scrutinising its content as the result of a process of cooptation.

Considering the flow of environmental ideas and spatial practices in the 1970s, two deductions can be extracted from this research.

The first is the cooptation process itself: in the 1970s, environmental ideas travelled from the margins to the core of the cultural institutions. This analysis has demonstrated that ARARAT aimed to bring environmentalist claims inside the museum using the cultural institution as a vehicle for influencing the socio-economic powers. The journey of the ideas has been tracked using Coy & Hedden's step model for cooptation: starting with the UN Summit in 1972 as a 'moment of inception and engagement' of global environmental ideas, following with the 'appropriation' of its meaning and objectives at the exhibition itself, and concluding with its 'assimilation', when Sweden showed up as the most environmentally concerned nation at the Biennale. The paper has not included the last step of the model called 'regulation and response', because it was not considered relevant for the exhibition. Nonetheless, it would be pertinent if I were to extend the analysis up to the current state of sustainability and participation policies for urban planning in Sweden, and thus describe when actors from the protest movements are incorporated to institutions, gaining power for decision-making and thus influencing laws and regulations.

The second deduction regards the journey of environmental ideas across national borders. As the paper has demonstrated, first the ideas were imported from an international alternative scene, predominantly the American counterculture; then they were digested and reinterpreted for the national realm through the ARARAT exhibition; and finally exported again to the international audience labelling Sweden as an environmentally concerned country at the Venice Biennale.

In conclusion, two questions that animate planning and architecture today can be traced back to the alternative ideas displayed at the messy tent city in the outskirts of Stockholm and the ARARAT exhibition: the question of participative planning and the broad question of sustainability.

1 SCOTT, Felicity, 2016. *Outlaw Territories: Environments of Insecurity/Architectures of Counterinsurgency.* Cambridge: The MIT Press, pp. 115 – 166.

2 MATTSON, Helena, 2016. Revisiting Swedish Postmodernism: Gendered Architecture and Other Stories. *Konsthistorisk tidskrift/Journal of Art History.* **(85)**1, pp. 109 – 125.

3 SELZNICK, Philip, 1949. *TVA and the Grassroots. A Study in the Sociology of Formal Organisation.* Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 3 – 16.

4 MONTAMBEAULT, Françoise, 2016. *The Politics of Local Participatory Democracy in Latin America: Institutions, Actors, and Interactions.* Palo Alto: Stanford University Press.

5 See: EISENSTEIN, Hester, 2009. *Feminism Seduced: How Global Elites Use Women's Labor and Ideas to Exploit the World.* Boulder CO: Paradigm; FRASER, Nancy, 2009. Feminism, Capitalism and the Cunning of History. *New Left Review.* **56**, pp. 97 – 117; McROBBIE, Angela, 2009. *The Aftermath of Feminism: Gender, Culture and Social Change.* London: Sage.

6 KRIESBERG, Louis, 2003. *Constructive Conflicts: From Escalation to Resolution.* Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield.

7 FORBES, Linda C. and JERMIER, John M., 2002. The Institutionalization of Voluntary Organizational Greening and the Ideals of Environmentalism: Lessons About Official Culture From Symbolic Organizational Theory. In: Hoffman, A. J. and Ventresca, M. J. (eds.). *Organizations, Policy and the Natural Environment, Institutional and Strategic Perspectives.* Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, pp. 194 – 213.

8 COY, Patrick G. and HEDEEN, Tim, 2005. A Stage Model of Social Movement Cooptation: Community Mediation in the United States. *The Sociological Quarterly.* **46**(3), pp. 405 – 435.

9 The action was organized by Alternative Stad in cooperation with Powwow, a group created in the circles of the event called *Almbråket* or 'The Battle of Elms', an important episode of protests in Stockholm in 1971 against the construction of a metro stop. Actions such as the exhibition 'For Technology in People's Service' in the Moderna Museet; or 'Olympics of Pollution' where companies as Toyota, Saab and General Motors received the lead, mercury and cadmium medals respectively for their 'pollutant contributions', were displayed in parallel with the 'official' UN programme. 'Alternative Stad' was a group of activists based in Stockholm, a "non-party political movement working for a better environment" as they described themselves in 1972.

10 ESPIN-ANDERSEN, Gosta, 1990. *The Three Words of Welfare Capitalism.* Cambridge: Polity Press. For information about the Swedish welfare state and its intimate connection to the built environment see MATTSON, Helena

and WALLENSTEIN, Sven-Olov, 2010. *Swedish Modernism. Architecture, Consumption and the Welfare State*. London: Black Dog Publishing Limited.

11 KUMBLIN, Staffan, 2004. *The Personal and the Political: How Personal Welfare State Experiences Affect Political Trust and Ideology*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

12 ARRHENIUS, Thordis, 2010. Preservation and Protest. Counterculture and Protest in 1970s Sweden. *Future Anterior*. **(7)**2, p. 106 – 123.

13 BERRY, Stephen, 1972. A Special Report – What happened in Stockholm. Voices from the Gallery. *Science and Public Affairs. Butlletin of Atomic Scientists*. September pp. 26 – 29.

14 Four years later, the first UN Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat I) took place in Vancouver 1976. It was dedicated to housing, shelter and other infrastructures for life. The Stockholm conference paved the way for this thematic Conference.

15 The UN Report for preparing the conference was: WARD, Barbara and DUBOS, René, 1973. *Only One Earth. The Care and Maintenance of a Small Planet*. London: Penguin Books. Words quoted on: GOLDSMITH, Edward, 1972. The Ecologist looks at Stockholm. *The Ecologist*. **(2)**6, pp. 5 – 9.

16 SACHS, Wolfgang, 1992. One World. In: Sachs, W. (ed.). *The Development Dictionary: A Guide to Knowledge as Power*. London: Zed Books, 1992, p. *108*.

17 WARD, Barbara and DUBOS, René, 1973. *Only One Earth. The Care and Maintenance of a Small Planet*. London: Penguin Books.

18 PYLA, Panayiota, 2002. *Ekistics, Architecture and Environmental Politics 1945 – 1976*. Doctoral dissertation. MIT, p. 133.

19 Scott, F., 2016, pp. 115 – 166.

20 PYLA, Panayiota, Summer 2009. Planetary Home and Garden: Ekistics and Environmental-Developmental Politics. *Grey Room Inc. and MIT*. (36), pp. 6 – 35.

21 DIOXIADIS, C. A., 1972. Order in our thinking: the need for a total approach to the anthropocosmos. *Ekistics*. **(34)**200, pp. 43 – 46.

22 SOLERI, Paolo, 1969. Arcology: The City in the Image of Man. Cambridge: The MIT Press.

23 Filialen, a space annexed to the Moderna Museet, was used for experimental activities, critical exhibitions and new forms of communication. Moderna Museet Archive, *Filialen Rapporten vid Moderna Museet i Stockholm* 1/3 1971-1/7 1973. Chapter 5, summary: *Filialen som provokation i museivärlden*.

24 *Undercurrents* was a British zine with focus on environmentalism and technology published between 1972 and 1983 and edited by Godfrey Boyle, Chris Squire and Peter Harper.

25 SCOTT, Felicity D., 2012. Woodstockholm. In: McLagan, M. and McKee, Y. *Sensible Politics: the Visual Culture of Nongovernmental Activism*. Cambridge: Zone Books, pp. 396 – 427.

26 CHAITKIN, William, 1982. The Alternatives. In: Jencks, Ch. (ed.). *Architecture Today*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, pp. 220 – 283.

27 COY, Patrick G. and HEDEEN, Tim, 2005. A Stage Model of Social Movement Cooptation: Community Mediation in the United States. *Sociol Q*. **46**, pp. 405 – 435.

28 Chaitkin, W., 1982, pp. 222 – 223.

29 JOHANSSON, Stig, 1976. *Svenska Dagbladet*. 17. 4. 1976.

30 Already in 1972, Hans Nordenström, an architect and lecturer at Lund University, had applied for a similar project to the Swedish Research Council but it was rejected. For more detailed ARARAT members' biographies, see: PECH, Christina, 2011. *Arkitektur & motstånd: Om sökandet efter alternativ i svensk arkitektur 1970 – 1980*. Stockholm: Makadam Förla.

31 Lennart Mörk was already a rising scenographer and artist. He became the most prominent figure from the ARARAT group. Some of his most prominent works were his collaborations with director Ingmar Bergman or the design of Stockholm's Technical University metro station.

32 Pontus Hultén is considered the initiator of this strategy for the Moderna Museet. He was appointed as director from 1968 to 1973, when Philip von Schantz took over. For more details about the critical shift within the museum, see: MATTSON, Helena. *Demonstrations as a curatorial practice: The Swedish exhibition scene from She to ARARAT, 1966 – 1977*.

33 ARARAT, 1975. *Byggande energi och ekologi. Rapport från en resa i USA*. Stockholm, p. 10.

34 Pech, Ch., 2011.

35 ARARAT, 1976. *Flyer for the Exhibition Catalogue*. Stockholm: Moderna Museet.

36 ARARAT, 1976.

37 ARARAT, 1976.

38 ARARAT, 1976.

39 Probably there were more than sixty. I found precisely fifty-seven from different sources: Moderna Museet archives, ArkDes Library Archive and the personal archive of Christina Pech.

40 Ararat Archives. Skeppsholm Exhibition 1976. Current State of the Project. September 10, 1975. Preparatory material for the exhibition.

41 Ararat Archives, 1976.

42 Ararat Archives, 1976.

43 STAAL, Jonas, 2014. Art Democratism Propaganda. *e-flux journal*. **(52)** february 2014. [Accessed 21. 04. 2020]. Available at: https://www.e-flux.com/journal/52/59931/art-democratism-propaganda/

44 Coy, P. G. and Hedeen, T., 2005, pp. 405 – 435.

45 MARTINI, Vittoria, 2014. The Space of the Exhibition: the Multi – Cellular Structure of the Venice Biennale. In: *Pavilions. Art in Architecture*. Brussels: La Muelle, pp. 145 – 167.

46 CATENACCI, Sara, 2015. L'ambiente come sociale alla Biennale di Venezia 1976»: note da un libro mai realizzato. In: Nicolaci, M. et al. (eds.). *In corso d'opera. Ricerche dei dottorandi di Storia dell'Arte della Sapienza*. Roma: Campisano Editore, pp. 317 – 324.

47 Catenacci, S., 2015, pp. 317 – 324.

48 Architecture assumed a predominant role, and three architecture exhibitions were displayed during the event. Two of them focused on a critical perspective on historical and ideological origins of modern architecture: *Werkbund 1907. Alle origine del design and il razionalismo* and *l'architettura in Italia durante il fascismo*; and a third one, reflected about contemporary architecture and the dialectical relationship between Europe and America, urban centers and peripheries, and theory and practice: *Europa-America. Centro storico-suburbio. 25 architetti contemporanei*. For further detail on these three exhibitions see: SZACKA-MARIER, Lea Catherine, 2014. Debates on Display: EA at the 1976 Biennale. In: Lending, M. et al. (eds.). *Place and Displacement: Exhibiting Architecture*. Zürich: Lars Müller Publishers, pp. 97 – 112.

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50 ARARAT, 2016. *Exhibition Catalogue for the Venice Biennale*. Stockholm: Moderna Museet.

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54 ARARAT, 2016.

Paper III

GREEN HOUSING DREAM

From welfare equality to deregulation and desire: Understenhöjden, 1989

Peer-reviewed paper published in the proceedings of the *II International Congress Cultura y Ciudad*, organised by AhAU (Asociación de Historiadores de la Arquitectura y el Urbanismo [Spanish Association of Historians of Architecture and Urbanism]), Madrid: Abada Eds., 2018.

Green Housing Dream. De la igualdad social a la liberalización y el deseo: Understenhöjden, 1989

Green housing dream. From welfare equality to deregulation and desire: Understenshöjden, 1989

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Resumen

Tomando el primer desarrollo urbano ecológico construído en Estocolmo como caso de estudio, la comunicación expone cómo el colapso y transformación del estado del bienestar sueco así como la posterior liberalización de la vivienda, dio lugar al sugimiento de modelos de habitación alternativos que, independientes del mercado y de la protección pública, actúan como herramientas de emancipación Se centra inicialmente en el estudio de la red de actores involucrados en el proceso cooperativo de Understenshöjden así como su estilo de vida colectiva y ecológica, para después analizar el objeto arquitectónico producido.

Palabras clave: habitar ecológico, emancipación, Understenshöjden, posmodernidad, cooperativa

Bloque temático: La casa: mitos, arquetipos, modos de habitar

Abstract

Taking the first ecological urban development built in Stockholm as case study, the comunication exposes how the collapse and transformation on the Swedish welfare state period with its following housing deregulation allowed the appareance of an alternative and emancipative inhabitation model, independent both from the market and the public protection. It is focused first on the production process of the district by analizying the network of actors involved on Understenshöjden cooperative and secondly, it analyzes the produced architectonic object.

Keywords: *ecovillage, emancipation, Understenshöjden, postmodernity, cooperative*

Topic: *The house: myths, archetypes, forms of inhabitation*

Figure 1: Image opening's event of Understenshöjden, May 1995
Font: Living Dreams. Om ekobyggande. En hållbar livstill

In May 1995, Anna Lindh, the well-known Swedish politician[1], Minister for the Environmental Affairs at the time, attended the opening party of Understenshöjden's new district. Together with the director of HSB —the biggest cooperative association in Sweden— in Stockholm Ulrik Fällman and the whole community of EBBA —the Housing Association for Organic Living in Björkhagen[2] —celebrated the culmination of a long process of housing production after six years from its beginning in 1989. Understenshöjden (literally translated as Under the height of the stone) was about to be labelled as the first eco-district in Stockholm. With 44 terraced homes distributed in 14 buildings, a common house for parties and meetings, a shared kitchen, a laundry, an office, a playroom, a wood workshop space and a second hand shared warehouse, the new neighborhood was a built as a manifesto of a community-based way of living and the possibility of an ecological habitat in balance with environment.

Although one could think that the opening's image shows nothing but a quotidian scene with regular people holding flowers attending an inauguration speech, it can also be interpreted as a glimpse to the state of art of the housing question during that time in Sweden. Politicians, representatives of housing companies and inhabitants as developers represent on the one hand, the shift towards private ownership after a massive privatization of housing companies; and, on the other hand, the opening to a new planning era in Sweden focused on environmental strategies.

After a decade of agitation of the so-called 'Swedish model' initiated at the end of the 70s, a systemic shift took place in the early 90s announced by the center-right government rising to power. A new and very revolutionary era for housing commended through a series of deregulations by changing its previous condition of basic 'human right' to an 'object of desire' by commodificating them. As the researcher Helena Mattsson has recently pointed out, this shift is remarkably clear by contrasting two governmental reports: Solidarity housing policy from 1974 and A deregulated market from 1992. This communication examines Understenshöjden from its starting point in 1989 to disclose intricated links between 'domestic emancipation' and the 'market economy', and how a bottom up planning environment can be understood as a result of the new deregulated housing policy scenario.

Understenshöjden was understood at the time as an experiment of ecological urban development, therefore the media put the focus on technical issues as energy consumption, recycling

[1] Anna Lindh was a social-democratic politician assassinated in a shopping mall in Stockholm in September 2003. Her controversial murderer has been compared to Olof Palmer's crime in 1986 put her name into the international media.

[2] EBBAS: *Boendeföreningen Ekologiskt Boende i Björkhagen*, is the acronym cooperative of inhabitants that started and developed Understenshöjden's district.

techniques and the use of construction materials ignoring the strong importance of its approach based on the commons within a context of housing deregulation. Using representations of ecovillage in the media, including newspapers, architectural journals and books, information collected after conducting interviews with inhabitants and conversations with the architect, Beng Bilén, the communication explores the relationship between the ecological and the domestic question in a wider perspective focusing on the link to a communal way of living. As David Harvey states, «the question of what kind of city we want cannot be divorced from that of what kind of social ties, relationship to nature, lifestyles, technologies and aesthetic values we desire»[3]. According to this, the communication is divided in three reflections: collective desire, ecology and the paradox of bottom-up planning.

1. Collective desire

> «when dwellers control the major decisions and are free to make their own contributions in the design, construction or management of their housing, both this process and the environment produced stimulate individual and social well-being. When people have no control over nor responsibility for key decisions in the housing process, on the other hand, dwelling environment may instead become a barrier to personal fulfilment and a burden to economy»[4]

The start of Understenshöjden «begins in 1989 when an architecture student (…) heard a lecture on ecological living and understood that the dreams she had long harbored could become reality». Interestingly, these idealistic lines are written on a pamphlet published by the HBS Stockholm about Understenshöjden's history. It explains the construction process —in its broadest way— as a fight-for-your-dream process started and pushed by a newly KTH graduated architect. The initiator of the 'green housing dream' was Mia Torpe, daughter of Ulla Torpe —Swedish writer, debater and teacher, important to the Swedish feminist spheres— and sister of Tjia Torpe —environmentalist politician involved in the Social Democratic party during the 80s and the Green Party afterwards[5]. She initiated the process and, by word of mouth, people started to get involved.

In May 1990, the Housing Association for Organic Living in Björkhagen (EBBA) was founded as a non-profit housing cooperative. When the association applied for permits, it was advised by local political authorities to cooperate with HBS (Tenants Savings and Building Society[6]), Sweden's largest 'housing cooperative' and SMÅA (Small Houses for Self-Building[7]), a building commissioner and association that supports collective efforts for independent house builders. All together formed the cooperating committee, where future users were represented as full members and right-to-vote with evidently more power on the voting. Therefore, the aggrupation had a stronger level of autonomy than regular cooperatives in the country. Although Sweden has a long history of housing cooperatives which starts on the 19th century, some of the initial objectives[8]

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[3] David Harvey, "The Right to the City", *The New Left Review*, nº53 (2008): 23.

[4] Definition of 'autonomy' on: John Turner and Robert Fichter, ed. *Freedom to build* (London: The Mc Milan Company, 1972).

[5] This information was obtained on an interview to Nils Soderlund, resident and architect, conducted and recorded in March 2018 in his own house in Understenshöjden.

[6] In Swedish: Hyresgästernas Sparkasse- och byggnadsförening.

[7] In Swedish: Småhus för Sjölvbyggeri.

[8] According to the International Cooperative Alliance, funded in 1895, the cooperative principles are the following: voluntary and open membership; democratic member control; member economic participation; autonomy and independence; education training

were distorted since the postwar period and the strong housing deregulation shift on the 80s9. The cooperative option represented at that time, one sixth of the housing stock and was based on "tenant ownership" (bostadrätt) indicating that the control over the property is something between tenancy and ownership. Two big corporativists/tenants association manage most of the of the offer –HBS10 and Riksbyggen– where the users pay their cooperative lease and the operating expenses in the form of an annual fee and wait until a house unit is offered. The holder of a cooperative lease has the right to use the dwelling while also a democratic share in the management of the housing cooperative. But the initial social compromise of this major cooperative model disappears here because the user has the right to sell its participation when desired, and at market prices, something that does not make a substantial difference to the private option.

In such a way EBBA was a special case, although the anti-speculative condition is not completely implemented and they act as an 'attachment' to HBS, this small-scale community benefited from an ample and strong autonomy already from its very starting point. Thus, inhabiting in a cooperative as Understenshöjden is understood as a political action of emancipation. Is the future community who instigated the real estate development outside any municipal or state planning as a search for a more ecological, democratic and affordable housing option. These 'autonomous habitable action(s)', as the British architect John Turner would define them, allow interesting innovations and produces impact both in the process and the final object.

Figure 2: Colective celebration in Understenshöjden
Font: The Story of Understenshöjden

The process of autonomy started by designing every organizational and management structures by the future inhabitants. Common to all EBBA member was that they were generally

and information; cooperation among cooperatives and concern for community. Consulted on https://www.ica.coop/en/history-alliance

[9] For a deeper understanding of the cooperative system and its history in Sweden consult Bo Bengtsson "Not the Middle Way But Both Ways—Cooperative Housing in Sweden", *Scandinavian Housing and Planning Research*, nº9:sup2 (1992): 87-104.

environmentally concerned and cared persons, but not extreme at any case[11]. Remarkably, a large number of persons who joined the association were professionals connected with the construction world —architects, urban designers, engineers. This fact apparently made the decision-making easier.[12] In order to facilitate the process, in February 1991, the commission divided the research and practical work in three 'working groups': health and home, finances and ecological living. Fourteen months after, in April 1992, the first draft for Understenshöjden's 'detailed plan' was presented to the municipality of Stockholm. Between these dates, a string of assemblies, meetings, research trips and expert interviews took place for the EBBA group. The design process with the architect will be discussed further on the epigraph 3. Explorations made by the working groups would be taken into consideration on the group's assemblies and decisions over design and ecological strategies would be taken. After that, on the cooperative committee with HBS and SMÅA —called SAK— choices were audited and, in the best case-scenario, approved. If not[13], the process would start again. And again. All the process was, of course, not the easiest nor the most optimal. But that is precisely the point of this kind of collective processes that, placed outside of the market logic, their central point is the creation of a strong connection between involved agents: communities, individuals and their actions and achievements.

2. Ecology

> «Yes, the Architecture of civilization bears upon it the impress of the selfishness, vice, poverty and discord of that society. (…) Could the social subversion which now reigns, be reflected more faithfully than it is in present constructions? Association will have ITS ARCHITECTURE, and it will be an architecture of combination and unity. When men are associated and united, one vast and elegant edifice will replace hundreds of the isolated und miserable constructions of civilization.»[14]

At the end of the 19th Century, these words written by the Fourierist Albert Brisbane[15] advocated to reshape the way of living from the 'miserable' industrial city to a more collective and self-sufficient scenario within the natural environment. Fourierists understood that form is a consequence to the society that inhabits it and therefore a different architecture shape must be created for diverse lifestyles. Understenshöjden's main goal was an ecological and collective lifestyle as an alternative to the consumer society and the top-down housing policies developed during the welfare state period. Following the Fourierist logic, we will question if the alternative ecovillage has differentiating aesthetics and reflects a new lifestyle. How to make ecologic cities for and with citizens?

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[11] From the conducted interviews.

[12] At the beginning, the EBBA group was more heterogeneous and involved people from different background. But while the process of decision making, some abandoned the project and were replaced from users on the queue list. The reasons were on the one the one hand, that the work required enormous time sacrifices and, on the other hand, the difficulty of predicting the final costs was high at that time because of the Sweden's monetary crisis on the '91-'92. A group of 75 householders formed this list and took part, together with the 44 members of the cooperative, to the cooperative committee.

[13] Most of the cases would be denied because of budget reasons. EBBA group was very ambitious on their designing and technical decisions.

[14] Albert Brisbane, *Social Destiny of Man: or,. Association and Reorganization of Industry*. (Philadelphia: C. F. Stollmeyer, 1840), 363. Cited on O. M. Ungers, *Comunas en el Nuevo Mundo 1740-1971* (Barcelona: Gustavo Gili, 1978).

[15] Brisbane was a north American philosopher that studied in Europe and imported Fourier's ideas to the USA. We could start a genealogy of emancipative housing communities with the theories of Thomas More and 'Utopia' (1515) or Campanela and 'The City of the Sun'. But it is two centuries later in the USA, when the utopic socialists put it into practice what authors as Owen or Fourier advocated.

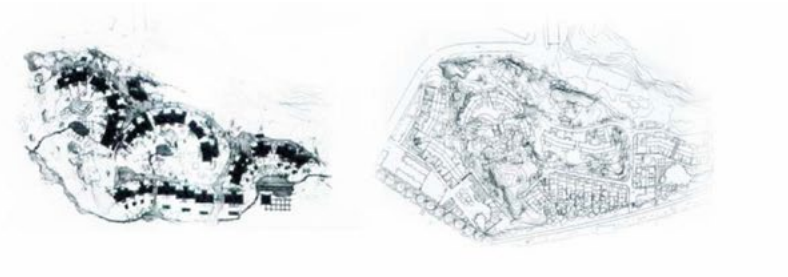

Figure 3: Sketches of the urban design process
Font: Beng Bilén, architect

As response to the collective managerial model that the EBBA cooperative stated from the beginning, Understenshöjden was understood not as an isolated community but as part of the city's infrastructure and completely open to the public. This is particularly clear from the landscaping point of view, where the new ecovillage acts as a filter between the consolidated district of Björkhomen and the natural reserve of Nacka. The so-called 'Ecological Path', surrounded by fruit trees and in parallel to a stream, crosses the plot and makes an entrance to Nacka to the city, performing at the same time as a buffer and a windbreak to the adjacent sport facility.

Within the process of planning, the first steps taken by the architect Bengt Bilén together with the EBBA group were towards the natural soil plan and how to maintain of the previous natural resources as much as possible. After cataloguing existing threes and natural conditions of the plot –topography– some discussions were ensued between the group. Early they agreed on avoiding traffic in the area partly for reducing emissions and partly for children's security. This meant also that there won't be any space for private cars next to the houses and that the parking space would be concentrated on the western outskirts of the plot. The space was decided to be very limited, considering a future common car pool. A second consensus was about maintaining natural resources founded on the plot avoiding flattening the ground or cutting down trees. This decision was radically incorporated[16] resulting an enormous constrain for the urban design. It was the level and nature of the soil what gave prerequisites for the location of the houses and paths within the area. Wiring and water supplies were laid out under the paths to prevent destroying the soil. As consequence of the oblige, the terraced housing buildings and the paths were inevitably disposed conforming five different 'sub-communities' named as the natural inhabitants on the context: Björklunden, Tallhöjden, Dammen, Odlingen and Gården (Pine, Heights, The Dam, Cultivation and the Farm)[17].

[16] Only in unavoidable cases threes would be moved from its original location, but never cut down. In case of damaging threes, a fine was determined by the group. This self-insistence made that the built houses that took place was lower than planned.

[17] These divisions are still active today and serve as decentralized neighborhood in terms of taking responsibilities within the community such as repairing and cleaning tasks but also organizational issues.

Figure 4: Final urban design plan
Font: Beng Bilén, architect

Energy-saving was another big consensus between the group. For achieving the energetic demand goal, devices were incorporated to the dwellings: the roofs were covered with solar panels –at least 7,5 square meters–, the central heating was supplied with a furnace that burns waste-wood pellets, and the domestic hot water was fueled individually though accumulation tanks. Domestic water treatment was the biggest issue in Understenshöjden because innovative solutions appeared in order to perform it on site. Toilets were specially designed to separate solid and liquid waste. It allows gray and black water flowing separately by gravity to a biological plant treatment. Once there, they are treated in a sludge separator with UV filters to remove bacteria and afterwards stored in two different tanks. This recycled water is used in farms outside Stockholm. Waster waste is recycled on site too by pumping it to an upper dam. The water runs along the property though the stream placed next to the 'ecological path' and eventually emptied into the Baltic sea. The infrastructure allows, on the one hand, the oxygenation of the water and, on the other hand, performs as a communicative tool: the more water on the stream, the more the waste level is. Recycling and re-using were, of course, taken into consideration too. Warm composters are placed along the site, there is a room for gathering other wastes that will be picked up by the municipality and a common storage room is available for leaving items to other families to re-use or transform.

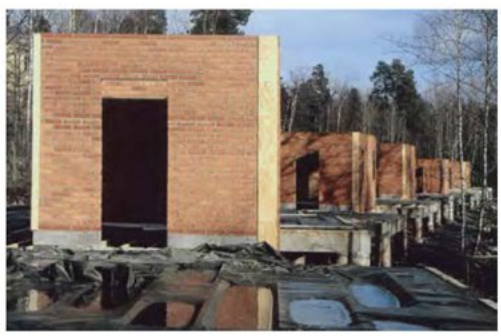

Figure 5: Bathroom nucleus built with brick walls
Font: Mia Torpe

Building materials were also carefully selected taking special attention to the ones aging gracefully: wooden façades and floors, terra-cota roofing tiles, cellulose insulation, brick walls solving the humidity barrier, linsed oils, etc. Shaped in a neo-regionalist style, the houses are undoubtedly influenced by certain aesthetic nostalgia. Something characteristic of the times, with the boom of postmodernist style that shows up in the common facilities with symmetrical compositions on the façade, frontis, oculus, etc. Furthermore, this nostalgia can be read as a link back to the traditional Swedish cottages and cabinets both in form and materials, in opposition to the 'rational' modern blocks that dominated the construction landscaped since afterwar period.

We can still question if there is actually an aesthetic of ecology or we must just speak about ecological approaches. In the experimental case of Understenshöjden tree strategies were deployed: the first one regarding the preservation of natural means of the plot, questioning the asymmetric relationships between humans and non-humans and incorporating biologic wealth to the housing question; secondly, displaying self-energetic devices and infrastructures, mixing natural resources and technological progress to archive a sustainable lifestyle in terms of energetic demand; and lastly, incorporating recycling and re-using to everyday life.

3. The paradox of bottom-up planning

One of the most substantial challenges accomplished in Understenshöjden was questioning the traditional work of the planner and the architect. Although some of the future inhabitants of Understenshöjden were architects or urban designers, the commission was made to Bengt Bilén, an outsider architect employed by HBS. His professional responsibility was completely subverted here, shifting from the classical role of 'genius' that plans and envisions the future city to a new role as 'facilitator and mediator' in the context of participative planning. A displacement that resulted much more complicated than the previous top-down workstyle. Based on direct democracy principles, assemblies, discussions and meetings took place between the group allowing to get agreements on some topics. These agreements would be used afterwards as raw material for the architect and the process of decision-making.

Remarkably, EBBA group created a horizontal system that on the one hand, allowed user's participation within the design process and, on the other hand, included self-construction as a financial possibility replacing construction costs.

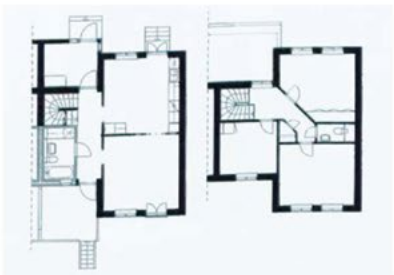

Figure 6: Basic two-stories typology
Font: Beng Bilén, architect

User's design. For simplifying the process, a basic terraced-house typology was projected as starting point. It was composed of two connected gabled volumes: a smaller one for the domestic equipment —such as access hall, stairs and bathroom— and a larger one with the living spaces — living room, kitchen and bedrooms. Taking the basic typology as basis, every user would tailor

their own home by adding extensions. A list of modifications was created by the architect to make it easier: from extra bathrooms or rooms, verandas and porches to window's sizes, kitchen's layouts etc. This strategy resulted into a final vibrating volume of terraced houses, equal and different at the same time, containing a diverse range of typologies. None of the apartments was similar to the other in appearance and surface, varying from 100 sqm to 150 sqm. In order to make the 'customization' act possible, Bilén and the EBBA group decided to organize system of individual meetings. Every user or family would have an hour with the architect to modify, add or remove anything from the 100 sqm basic typology and depending on the changes the final cost would be higher.

Self-construction. To suit different financial situations, residents were given the option of 'buying' their house at three different levels of completion. The first one would be the 'turn-key stage' where the house is completely finished and the users just jumped when the construction work is done. The second is 'medium stage' where the constructor leaves the house with the structure, roofs and walls. The construction work is finished by the users by fitting kitchens, electrical and water facilities and performing all internal surface treatments: painting walls and ceilings, moldings, lining and installing doors and windows. The third stage is the 'framed and covered' where only the structure and the roof is completed, and the rest of the construction work would be self-constructed.

This new role for the architect, dealing with so many factors and the contingency produced by the users implies a radical change on the planning paradigm.

Figure 7: View of housing from the 'Ecological Path'
Font: author

Once the ecovillage opened in 1995 and the families started to inhabit their houses, Understenshöjden was showed in the media just as an environmentally friendly way of living. But, as we have demonstrated here, the district symbolizes a collective determination, a history of powerful and persistent implementation of community belonging to the city. Assemblies happen, maintenance working groups meet once per month, carpentry workshops, yoga classes, dancing afternoons and other activities for the community take place on a regular basis. Understenshöjden teaches us how experimental models of community managed to give real meaning to the mistreated right to housing. As I said, they perform as emancipation tools because they don't depend form private developers or institutional protection but on its own initiative and capacity for self-organization.

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Paper IV

THE CITY OF TOMORROW?

On Bo01 Housing Exhibition in Malmö, Sweden, 2001, as a Role Model of Sustainable Urban Development

Research article published in Architectural Histories, Volume 13(1), 2025.

Architectural Histories

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The City of Tomorrow? The *Bo01* Housing Exhibition in Malmö, Sweden (2001), as a Model of Sustainable Urban Development

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The housing exhibition *Bo01*, also known as the *City of Tomorrow*, was held in Västra Hamnen in Malmö, Sweden, from May to August 2001. Aiming to be a model for an ecologically sustainable urban development, the exhibition mobilized an unprecedented number of public resources and initiated a series of collaborations between Swedish research and manufacturing industries to design experimental solutions for 'future' sustainable dwellings. A completely new district with 800 apartments, a landscape display, and an art exhibition was built for *Bo01* within two years. A few days before closing, Bo01 AB, a subsidiary of the City of Malmö, filed for bankruptcy. Drawing on the critical approach to sustainability developed by urban political ecology, this paper examines the housing exhibition itself, the ethics suggested by techno-managerial sustainability practices, and the shift towards municipal entrepreneurialism in the late 1990s.

Keywords: sustainable urban development; bankruptcy; informational economy; big event; green technology

Introduction

In November 2003, with the headline 'Lägenhet för nio miljoner' (A Flat for Nine Million), the Swedish daily *Sydsvenska Dagbladet* announced the sale of developer NCC Bostad AB's most expensive flat in the recently developed Västra Hamnen (Western Harbour) district in Malmö, Sweden, after two years of practically frozen sales:

> WESTERN HARBOUR. Soon moving vans will pull up outside one of the most renowned flats from the housing fair Bo01. NCC has sold the top floor on the upper corner of the Ralph Erskine house, where housing exposition visitors strolled around on the rooftop terrace in the summer of 2001, contemplating the view from inside transparent windbreaks. The 190m²-apartment cost nearly nine million SEK in investment, with monthly fees of over 9000 SEK.[1] (Bergström 2003)

The flat is a two-storey apartment located at the top of the building locally known as the Erskine Huset (Erskine House), completed in 2001 as part of the *Bo01* housing exhibition, which involved the construction of an entirely new district in Malmö's Västra Hamnen. The building is one of the last works by the Swedish-British architect Ralph Erskine. With generous windows and private rooftop terraces, the six-storey building facing the Öresund Strait hosts fifteen luxury flats **(Figure 1)**. The building's outline, the colourful, diverse window types and the mix of materials in the façade are reminiscent of Erskine's earlier housing projects. But the exclusiveness and dimensions of the flats and their lack of collective spaces do not represent the legacy of Erskine, who is known in Swedish architecture historiography as the 'community architect' who worked 'against profit interests' (Egelius 1981: 6). On the contrary, according to the description of the building in the catalogue for Sweden's contribution to the 2000 Biennale di Venezia, the building in Västra Hamnen, 'offers housing that meets the highest standards of comfort, individuality and space' (Brejner 2000: 16). The apartments were designed for a wealthy population, a promotional pamphlet said, with a focus on 'state-of-art technology' to solve 'environmental requirements' and the construction of 'intelligent living' (Bo01 Information Pamphlet [2001]: 14).

The City of Malmö hosted the housing exhibition *Bo01*, also entitled the *City of Tomorrow*, from May to September 2001. Within two years, an entirely new district, comprising 800 apartments, a landscape display, and an art exhibition, was constructed on a former shipyard site in Västra Hamnen, overlooking the recently completed Öresund Bridge **(Figure 2)**. According to Agneta Persson, the site manager, the development was to become a bright, post-industrial district that would forge a model for a future 'ecologically sustainable information society' (Friberg 2001: 125).

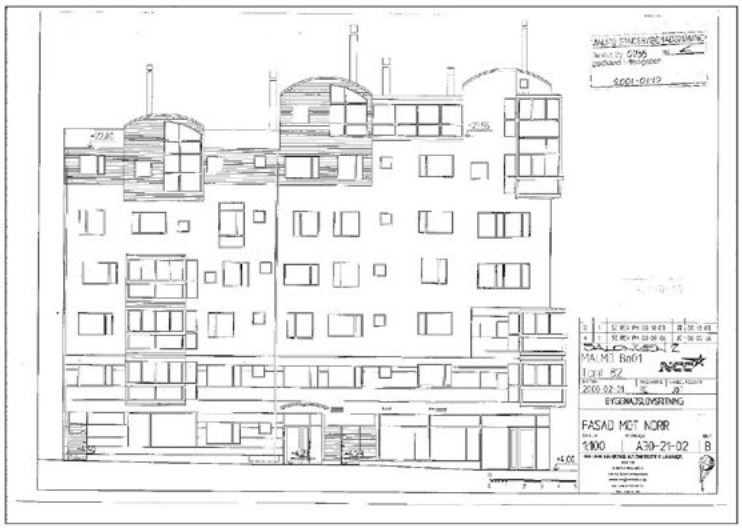

Figure 1: Document for planning permission showing the façade of the Erskine Huset, submitted in 2000 by Ralph Erskine, approved in 2001 by Malmö's planning office.Stadsbyggnadsnämnden, Malmö. Available at https://digitaltritningsarkiv.malmo.se/C3WebExtern/DocumentList.aspx.

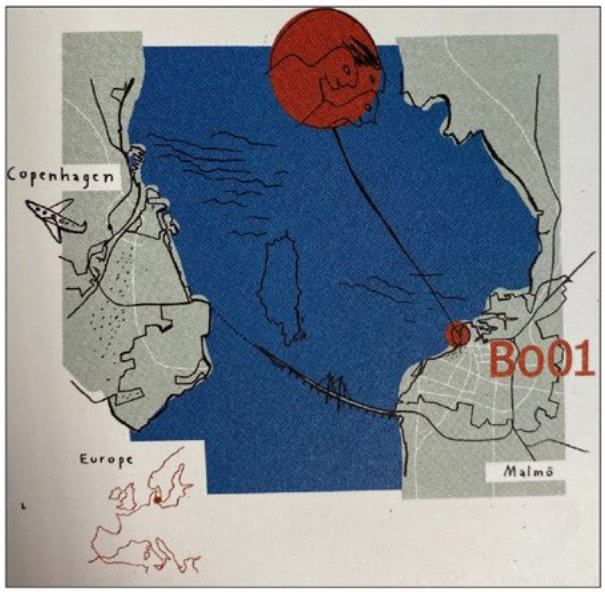

Figure 2: Illustration of *Bo01* from an information brochure for visitors (Bo01 Information Brochure [2001]). The map shows *Bo01* in relation to Malmö, the Öresund Bridge, Copenhagen Airport, and continental Europe. Stadsbyggnadsnämnden, Malmö.

The name *Boo1* combines the Swedish word *bo*, to dwell, with '01', signifying the year 2001. It was set to be one of the greatest events ever held in the city.

Despite good intentions, economic and political scandals emerged around the exhibition. Deadlines were not met, and buildings were still under construction at the opening, including Santiago Calatrava's landmark *Turning Torso* **(Figure 3)**. More than half of the plots remained empty, and visitor numbers were far lower than expected. Eventually, the housing fair itself went bankrupt. Its spectacular profile came to be a negative symbol of both the *new economy*, characterized by risk-taking, financial speculation, and imaginary values, and of *sustainable living*, associated with high prices and spatially privileged areas. Flats like those in the Erskine Huset stood empty for years after *Boo1* closed.

Figure 3: View from Daniaparken, with the big, seafront *Bo01* park under construction. The photograph is from April 11, a month before the exhibition opened. Note that the Erskine Huset is still behind scaffolding. Malmö Stadsarkiv, box F12: 45–50.

The story of the *City of Tomorrow* has been largely overlooked in planning and architecture historiography. The first aim in this paper is to reclaim *Boo1* as a pioneer experience of so-called sustainable urban development; the second is to retrace and understand the event's history, including its main ideas and their implementation, in

order to comprehend its ultimate failure; and the final goal to scrutinize the ways in which the inclusion of the concept of sustainable urban development became a tool to legitimize such a development in Västra Hamnen. The analysis contributes to the field of planning history of post-industrialization in cities by providing a critical perspective on the role of sustainability in legitimising urban redevelopment strategies. By looking back at the *City of Tomorrow*, we can also extract important ideas that can help promote contemporary discussions on sustainability and so-called sustainable development practices.

The first part of the paper analyses the *City of Tomorrow* from a historical perspective, with attention to power dynamics. To do so, it explores the field of urban political ecology as theoretical framework, characterizing sustainable urban development as a neoliberal model of urbanization. The second part retraces the event from its inception, studying its design and construction phases, as well as the opening event and its aftermath. The third part discusses sustainability as a marketing strategy, the techno-managerial approach to planning, and the design strategies tested to shape a sustainable life in the district. Finally, the fourth part summarizes the discursive and regulatory ways in which sustainability was implemented in the *City of Tomorrow*.

Sustainable Urban Development and Urban Political Ecology

The concept 'ecological modernization' was established in the mid-1990s to endorse that idea that environmental protection and economic growth are not mutually exclusive but rather comprise a solid foundation for sustainable development. Originally formulated in the 1980s by the German sociologist Joseph Huber, the concept provided specific strategies for achieving sustainable development goals in many Western European countries (Mol et al. 2000: 42). In Sweden, this concept was embodied in Social Democratic leader Göran Persson's vision of the 'Green Welfare State'. In his first speech as prime minister in 1996, he posed the following objective: 'Sweden shall be a leading force and an example to other countries in its efforts to create environmentally sustainable development. Prosperity shall be built on more efficient use of natural resources — energy, water and raw materials' (Regeringskansliet 1996, quoted in Lidskog and Elander 2012: 416). This idea of a Green Welfare State entailed changing the relationship between society and its natural environment by improving energy systems, recycling waste, rationalizing raw material extraction and refinement, and investing heavily in green technology. In turn, the implementation of 'ecological engineering' and 'eco-entrepreneurship' (Måland and Nordlung 2020: 496) would safeguard jobs and welfare for future generations, and would provide Swedish companies with exportable innovations and practical knowledge.

The concept of *Bo01* as an ecologically sustainable housing fair emerged from within this economic vision. The early development stages of Stockholm's Hammarby Sjöstad (1994-2020), also regarded as one of the earliest examples of a sustainable urban development, occurred almost simultaneously. The period was also marked by the transformation of the Swedish socioeconomic model through processes of deregulation and neoliberalization in the late 1980s, alongside the decentralization of governmental responsibilities, with a shift in public management from national to municipal governance and the increase in the influence of market forces in planning (see Mattson 2023). Municipal planning offices in Sweden adopted growth-oriented policies and formed partnerships with private actors to engage them in processes of 'urban entrepreneurialism' (see Harvey 1989), and the 'marketization of planning policies' to enhance 'city competition' (Ward 1998: 2). This deregulated and decentralized scenario aligned very well with the vision of economic growth and went hand-in-hand with the protection of the environment proposed by ecological modernization (Mol et al. 2000: 7).

In *Bo01*, this scenario unfolded in different ways, from unconventional collective processes between developers and municipal planners to the prescription of innovative Swedish green technology at the district level. These and other approaches aimed to make the *City of Tomorrow* a role model for sustainable urban development. The field of urban political ecology emerges as an exciting interdisciplinary field by which to examine the entanglements between urbanization processes, climate change, and sociopolitical dynamics. The publication *Turning up the Heat: Urban Political Ecology for a Climate Emergency* proposes two ontological shifts to broaden our understanding of these urbanization practices. The first, 'urbanization of nature', unsettles traditional perceptions of cities as distinct from nature (Tzaninis et al. 2023: 3). It claims that urban materials — brick, asphalt, steel, or concrete — are processed natural resources assembled through human labour, capital investment, and technology, all governed by power relations: 'There is no "city" as such; no "nature" as such. There is a perpetual dialectical process: the "Urbanization of Nature"' (Kaika 2005: 7). The second, 'extended urbanization', expands the geographical scope of urbanization to include extractive sites supplying urban developments (Tzaninis et al. 2023: 2). This concept highlights interactions between landscapes in the Global North and in the Global South and between peripheral rural lands and urban centres, as our increased concern for sustainability is based on someone else's socioenvironmental disaster (Kaika 2017: 91-92).

These two shifts help us rethink the historization of urbanization processes, viewing them not as confined to spaces within urban boundaries but as extended socioenvironmental phenomena that transcend the work of urban planners and

architects. This perspective encourages studying how natural resources shape the built environment through the dynamics of labour, capital, and technology, which prompts questions about whom these processes benefit and for whom they are envisioned.

Moreover, urban political ecology analyses the concept of sustainable urban development as a neoliberal model of urbanization, arguing that while it appears an ecologically and socially conscious planning strategy, sustainability often prioritizes profit over equity (for example, Gould and Lewis 2015; Krueger and Gibbs 2007; Swyngedouw 2007; Swyngedouw 2014; Kaika 2005). Whether or not it is intentional, bringing environmental values to new developments or redevelopments attracts affluent residents and thereby displaces low-income residents (Checker 2011: 210). The geographer Erik Swyngedouw defines sustainable development as an example of technocracy, managerial governance, and consensual politics that, due to its widespread acceptance, evades essential antagonisms and the imagination of alternative models. He argues that sustainability consensus tends to depoliticize the question of sustainable urban development, aligning with neoliberal agendas and promoting market-based solutions, privatization, and the commodification of nature, ultimately hindering debate on other ways of urbanization (2007: 32–35, 38).

Using urban political ecology as a theoretical framework offers a way to explore how planning and architecture narratives can enrich debates about the role of sustainable urban development, and it brings further nuance to *Bo01* as an early example of this type of urbanization. It broadens the boundaries of the housing exhibition, revealing that sustainability, as both a discourse and a practice, operates within a neoliberal framework that entangles capital-driven interests under the guise of environmental consensus.

To study *Bo01*, available primary sources about the exhibition were gathered, including preparatory documents, official records, photographs, and building permit plans available at Stadsbyggnadsnämnden, Malmö's city planning archive, and Malmö stadsarkiv, Malmö's municipal archive. Published marketing material directly related to the fair was examined, including the three catalogues and more than 20 brochures for visitors in four languages (Swedish, English, German, and Polish). Additionally, national press and professional media coverage from 1999 to 2003 were reviewed. All material was analysed and classified through hermeneutic and contextualized readings (Ricoeur 2009). The intersection of official planning and advertising documents with newspaper articles from local press and architecture magazines offers a partial but compounded view of the event that focuses on how the sustainability narrative was constructed and disseminated.

The City of Tomorrow

The *City of Tomorrow* was by no means Sweden's first housing exhibition. Housing exhibitions have been regularly taking place since 1985, coordinated by Svensk Bostadsmässa (Swedish Housing Exhibition), an organ founded by the Swedish Housing Department to stimulate the debate on housing, architecture, and technology. In 1995, the year in which Sweden joined the EU, Svensk Bostadsmässa decided to organize a more ambitious fair on the theme of 'technological and human sustainability' (Nilsson 2001: 26). The Western Harbour site in Malmö was chosen: a flat, desolate, contaminated landfill peninsula with some industry, offices, and university buildings as well as the immense former Saab factory that housed the Malmö Trade Fair Centre **(Figure 4)**.

Figure 4: Aerial view of Västra Hamnen before *Bo01* (year unknown). Malmö Stad website.

Malmö is Sweden's third largest city, located in the country's far south. In the late 1990s, its population was about 260,000. Once a typical, industrial, working-class city, the decline of traditional industries called for a re-orientation towards more knowledge-based production. The noteworthy shipyard Kockums stopped operating

in the 1980s, and the car manufacturer Saab closed shortly thereafter, in 1991. The industrial decline meant a loss of 25,000 jobs and 10% of Malmö's population in the early 1990s (Persson and Rosberg 2013). This identity crisis was pivotal for the *City of Tomorrow*'s narrative: the fair was part of the path to Malmö's glorious rebirth.

In the book *Boo1 Staden. Byggnaderna, planen, processen, hållbarheten* (The Boo1 City. Buildings, Plan, Process, Sustainability), published in 2001 to disseminate *Boo1*'s urban planning process, Malmö's city council chairman, the social-democrat Ilmar Reepalu, states that local politicians of the 1990s 'had to realize that the era [of Malmö] as an industrial city was coming to an end' and had to 'transform Malmö into a city of knowledge' (2001: 8). In the exhibition catalogue, the organizers refer to the fair as the beginning of a new era, or 'Year 1' (Boo1 Information Brochure [2001]: 5):

> Boo1 will act as an ecological spearhead as we embark upon a new millennium. Boo1 will set the standard for European industrial towns. Boo1 will show how an industrial estate can be infused with a new sustainable life. Boo1 – the City of Tomorrow will provide credible and stimulating visions of housing and architecture in Europe in the first years of a new millennium. (Boo1 Information Brochure [2001]: 10)

Boo1 was therefore expected to be much more than a spectacular housing exhibition. It would help change the city's 'public image' (Jansson 2005: 1675), positioning Malmö as a competitive, global, post-industrial city and symbolizing the celebrated information society and globalism that saturated politics during the mid- to late 1990s (Berg et al. 2000).

Life in the 'new millennium'

The actual challenge for the housing exhibition was giving form to 'creative environments' for the new, post-industrial 'creative class' (Florida 2005), or 'IT people' (Boo1 Information Brochure [2001]: 21). According to the information booklet, visitors had to 'see how the sustainable society can be realized' (B01 [2001]: 10) and experience the desirable life and future that sustainable practices offer and shape. The urbanist Richard Florida maintains that attracting the knowledge workers who drive post-industrial economic growth is the key to urban competitiveness in the new millennium: 'places that attract people attract companies and generate new innovations ... leads to a virtuous circle of economic growth' (Florida 2005: 139). Two excerpts that accompanied the housing display during the fair give us an idea of how life in the 'new millennium' was envisioned:

> To live in Malmö as a European citizen means that you are closer to airports, the continent and big city but also the small-town atmosphere, and the sea. Nature and quietness. Our family consists of businesspeople with Europe as their working field. Back in the home in Malmö work has to be combined with leisure time in a natural way. To work undisturbed twenty-four hours a day becomes as natural as having a vacation in the home. The children have moved out but often come by. Business associates and friends from different parts of the world arrive for shorter or longer stays.
> . . .
> I imagine as tenants for a terraced house of 65 square meters with two floors:
>
> First, Maja, thirty years old. Works full-time at Radio Rix as a media saleswoman. Rarely on Saturdays and Sundays. In her free time, she socializes with friends and enjoys being close to the center of the city. Maja is also interested in shares and has bought a lot of Ericsson shares. At the moment she is working on getting a scuba-diver certificate. She loves the sea and having the possibility to take walks by the sea.
>
> Second, Martin, twenty-nine years old. Works as a pilot for SAS after many years of technical education. He likes to walk in the woods and be outdoors. Dives when he has the opportunity and likes to 'stop-over' when he is abroad. He likes good food and wine and enjoys cooking together with Maja. Martin's interest in art is considerable frequently likes to visit galleries. (Eriksson 2001: 14, 24; English in original)

These excerpts convey a vision of a sustainable living paradigm: a future society infused with technology, extreme mobility due to its proximity to Copenhagen's airport, and access to commodified nature. Moreover, they reveal for whom the sustainable living was envisioned: a middle- to upper-class European or global citizen, working in IT or the creative industries, interested in stock markets, who frequently flies for work or pleasure yet is committed to improving their sustainable lifestyle by equipping their household with the latest technology. This vision did not mirror Malmö's socioeconomic and ethnical diversity; in the 1990s, Malmö's population had the country's highest proportion of foreign-born residents (24% in 1995, with the largest groups coming from Iraq, Iran, and the Balkan counties) and a higher unemployment rate than the national average (Malmö stad 1999/2000) that mostly affected ethnically segregated minorities (Scarpa 2015: 917).

The 'Quality Programme'

Unlike other housing exhibitions in Sweden, the *City of Tomorrow* was not privately financed. Although private and public co-operation has a long tradition in Swedish

housing, the conditions have changed considerably over the years. Since the neoliberalization processes of the late 1980s, the private sector has become the motor for housing development, in contrast to the former strong policy programmes and mass solutions of the 1930s to the '60s (see Grander 2017). Consequently, the market determined — and still does — what was to be built, and to avoid risks, companies did not start construction before the property had been sold (Amsellen 2004: 96). In the 1990s, the private sector's dominance was criticized for leading to repetitive, conservative aesthetics in the built environment based on the 'conventional' tastes of potential buyers; this contrasted with the more 'creative' and 'speculative' spectacular approaches being seen in other European countries at the time.

In this context, *Boo1*'s planning process suggested a different solution in terms of organization and initiative. Instead of developers, the city could be the primary driver and the largest landowner, retaining the right to finalize the plan. The exhibition was wholly owned by Svensk Bostadsmässa, but Malmö's city officials assumed most of the planning responsibility for the project. The exhibition would eventually be integrated into Malmö's masterplan for the entire Western Harbour area. The regional government allocated 250 million SEK via a local investment programme to support the environmental ambitions of the exhibition and promote the creation of green jobs (Nilsson: 26).

Developers were required to participate and collaborate in an unconventional collective process: before the city sold the land, a 'creative dialogue' took place between planners, city officials, and developers themselves. This resulted in a planning document entitled 'Kvalitetsprogram' (Quality Programme) that served to guide the project design. The 'Quality Programme' was intended to act as an operative tool for the developers, developed through a consensus process involving municipal actors, planners, and the developers themselves, to secure the lofty ambitions of *Boo1* and the city regarding ecology, technology and the design of outdoor spaces. One of the aims of this planning document, according to the Manual of International Developers, 'is to create a common platform for achieving the best city district that has been built in the world' (Manual [2001]: 14) and, according to the document itself, 'to ensure a very high quality in the district's environmental profile so that the area becomes an internationally leading example of environmental adaptation of dense urban developments' (Kvalitetsprogram [2001]: 5).

The use of the 'Quality Programme' as a planning tool made it possible to bypass building regulations, such as the Swedish Building Code. The architectural historian Helena Mattson notes that quality programmes emerged in Swedish planning as a new governance strategy in the mid-1980s, allowing planners to maintain control over

urban form and appearance by regulating geometries, finishes, and the relationships between buildings and their outdoor spaces while circumventing the Building Code (2023: 144). In Hammarby Sjöstad, for instance, a quality programme controlled the design of the built environment, and a *miljöprogram* (environmental programme) did so for the sustainability requirements. In the case of *Boo1* however, the 'Quality Programme' did not regulate the appearance of buildings but instead encouraged as much variation as possible, fixing only maximum heights. Regulatory emphasis was placed on the infrastructure and technology that buildings had to include to meet sustainable standards as well as on the assessment of the green areas through calculation systems. Metrics such as *gröna punkter* (green points) determined the minimum amount of greenery per block, and *grönytefaktor* (green area factor) regulated the number of elements — such as birdhouses, bat nests, climbing plants, or frog biotopes — that would promote biological diversity (Kvalitetsprogram [2001]: 52–54).

The European Village

Among the preparatory documents reviewed was a manual for developers in English, a document that targeted international participants in the fair, known as the Manual for International Developers. The manual contains memorandums, conditions and requisites for participation, available documentation, a calendar, and texts explaining the convenience of investing in Malmö's housing market. Other texts included in the manual argue that *Boo1* would bring Sweden, a new EU member, closer to the other EU countries. Interestingly, the manual can be largely read as a call for international partners to take part in the construction of a 'European Village' that was to be on the exhibition grounds.

Part of the *City of Tomorrow*'s masterplan, the European Village was reserved for international European architecture: EU/EEA member states were invited to build one- or two-family dwellings in accordance with newly approved European construction rules while using each country's production methods and building traditions **(Figure 5)**. According to the manual, the European Village would celebrate the new common rules for construction in Europe in terms of mechanical resistance and stability; fire safety; hygiene, health, and environment; safety in use; sound-proofing, heat and energy (European Commission 1999). It was thus a way of demonstrating 'the value of having rules common to several countries and highlight[ing] the opportunities afforded by such regulatory framework.' More importantly, it highlighted Europe as a big market for the construction business — 'a way of drawing attention to the advantages that can be obtained from a coherent well-functioning European construction market' (Manual

[2001]: 19). The result was reminiscent of the national pavilion culture; a myriad of houses from different European building traditions would be built around a canal and showcase the diversity of European building culture and its networked force on the way towards sustainable development.

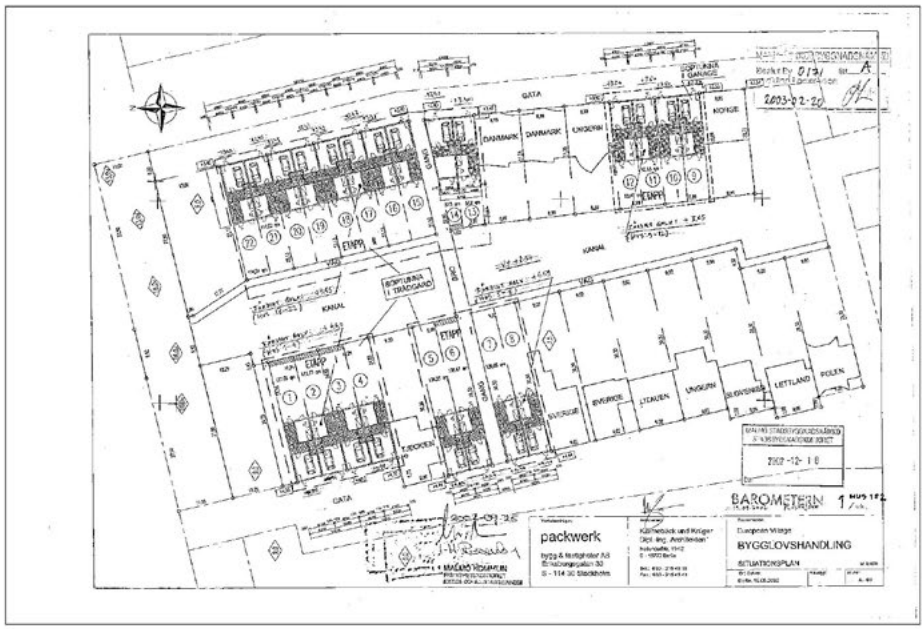

Figure 5: Site plan of the European Village. Names of countries developing houses are noted on the plots, from left to right, top to bottom: Denmark (x2), Hungary, Norway, Czech Republic, Sweden (x2), Lithuania, Hungary, Slovenia, Latvia, and Poland. The plots with the ground floor drawings were intended to be developed by other eleven EU countries that signed up but ultimately withdrew. Stadsbyggnadsnämnden, Malmö. Available at https://digitaltritningsarkiv.malmo.se/C3WebExtern/DocumentList.aspx.

The manual closes with two parallel images: an interior of the 1851 Crystal Place in London, showing the structure of the vaulted galleries, and an exterior view of the 1930 Stockholm exhibition with the rounded cornices of Gunnar Asplund's restaurant Paradiset **(Figure 6)**. The two images depict how new technology affects architectural innovation, and, as the manual states, situates the *City of Tomorrow* in the tradition of ground-breaking exhibitions, 'housing exhibitions that have changed Europe' (Manual [2001]: 32).

Figure 6: Spreadsheet from the Manual for International Developers of Bo01. Stadsbyggnadsnämnden, Malmö.

Technologies and urban shapes

Boo1 employed Klas Tham as the exhibition architect and designer of the *Boo1* masterplan. A Swedish architect from Stockholm, Tham, like many of his generation, began his career designing functional slabs for Swedish housing programmes. He later rejected the functionalist model as homogeneous, inhumane, manipulative, and of an overall deplorable heritage, eventually turning his practice towards more 'complex', 'sensorial', 'stimulating', and 'human-centred' design (Tham 2010: 11, 14). His extensive experience working for Erskine between 1968 and 1985 and the writings of Jane Jacobs, Jan Gehl, and Peter F Smith, all of whom arguing that the modern city was detrimental to human wellbeing, shaped his approach to urban design (Tham 2003: 6).

At the *City of Tomorrow*, the environmental challenge was primarily addressed through technological innovations, a direction set in 1995 when the decision to host the *Boo1* fair was made. The goal was to establish a metabolic district where renewable energy was generated locally, with waste and sewage eco-cycles operating at a district level. The springboard for the event was the collaboration of Swedish research and manufacturing industries, with the aim of developing methods and techniques that could shape sustainable dwellings (Reepalu 2001: 14). A series of technological devices designed by the Swedish industry were thus tested at *Boo1*: the heating demands for the whole district would be met with a heat pump operating from an aquifer, located under the fair's surface, with the help of 2600 m² of solar thermal collectors distributed over the new buildings; electricity would be produced by 1200 m² of photovoltaic cells and a two-megawatt wind turbine; and domestic waste and sewage would be treated via domestic grinders and separated vacuum waste systems, to later be transported to sewage, biogas, and recycling plants to transform into energy (Henrysson et al.

2013). The flats would also include their own cutting-edge green technologies: heat recovery from ventilation systems; thick layers of wall insulation; triple-glazed, low-e windows; the above-mentioned grinders for domestic waste; and other energy efficient appliances.

Tham's imprint is evident in the urban design of the district. He wanted a 'humanistic' masterplan, where 'people are put at the centre, and the environment is not seen solely as an area for new technical solutions' (Kvalitetsprogram [2001]: 9). To this end, Tham writes:

> Bo01 argues that the urgently-needed readjustment of society to sustainability can only come about when sustainable alternatives seem more attractive than their opposites. The sustainable city and the sustainable way of life must therefore be at least as convenient, economically advantageous, secure, pleasant, exciting and beautiful as their present-day, less ecologically sound opposites. (Persson and Tham 2000: 110)

The excerpt, published in the European landscape magazine *Topos*, shows the environmental ethics proposed by the fair: technology solves environmental problems and allows a 'sustainable way of life' where lifestyle patterns operate as usual in an example of applied ecological modernization. A self-evaluation report on *Bo01* from 2005 puts it clearly: 'the expo residents would not need to deprive themselves of anything to reduce their environmental impact — it would be both fun and comfortable!' (quoted in Persson and Rosberg 2013: 14).

Tham's vision for the masterplan of the *City of Tomorrow* referenced a fishing village from his childhood on the Swedish west coast, as well as the scale and density of a northern European medieval city (Tham 2000: 20). Departing from a tabula rasa, he takes the concept of diversity as a driving force for the design, as a way of creating a 'beautiful and stimulating' space (Kvalitetsprogram [2001]: 12). In opposition to the repetitive, alienating milieu of functionalist urbanism, he envisioned a diverse city where 'every eighth metre something will happen in the street' (Tham quoted in Waern 1999: 26). This eventful value for the exterior space was moreover claimed to be a prerequisite for 'free' individual choice: 'Diversity is a must at a time when more and more people have completely different images of a good life. No one can define or programme what a good life is. Instead, we must create diverse spaces where people can shape their own lives' (Kvalitetsprogram [2001]: 14).

The plan shows a perimeter of taller buildings (four to six floors), protection from cold northerly and westerly winds, enclosing a car-free village-scale interior microclimate created by blocks of row houses and two- and three-storey multifamily

flats. Reminiscent of Erskine's ideas for Arctic towns, this plan has a generally small interior scale, streets six to eight metres wide, two-metre alleys, 40 × 40 blocks and 25 × 25 squares, and the basic order of 'a net that has been pulled apart' (Tham, quoted in Waern 1999: 26) **(Figure 7)**. It is a dense area, free of personal vehicles and where walking, cycling, and public transportation are promoted and endorsed by the public authorities.

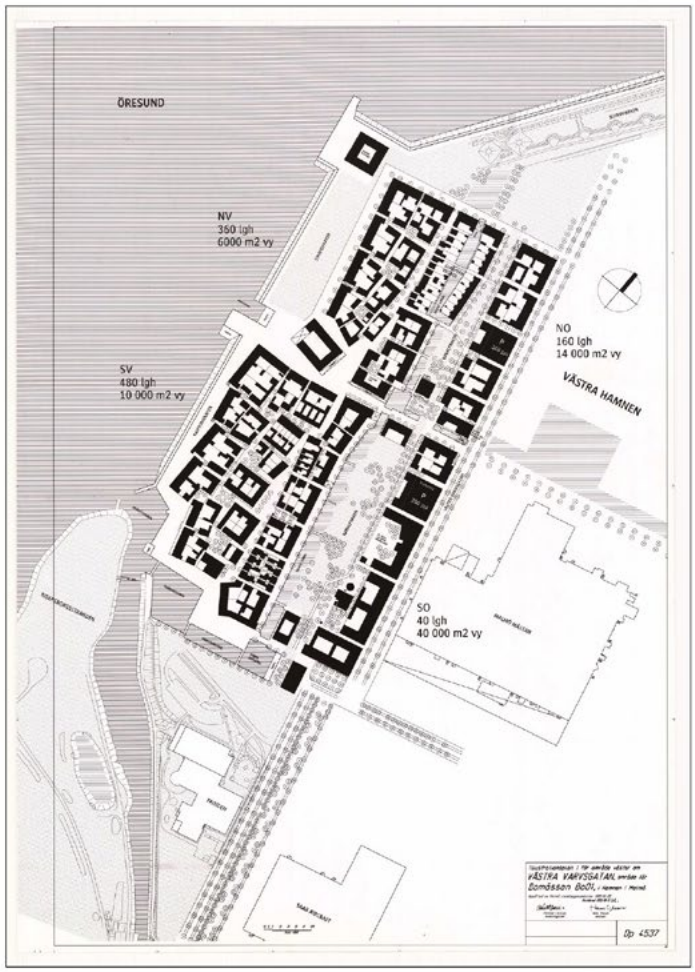

Figure 7: Detailed plan submitted to Malmö's planning office in August 1999. Note how the northern part was planned to be ready for the exhibition. Stadsbyggnadsnämnden, Malmö. Available at https://digitaltritningsarkiv.malmo.se/C3WebExtern/DocumentList.aspx.

The architecture of the *City of Tomorrow* is also planned for diversity, and small-scale property division is an unusual tactic to achieve such diversity **(Figure 8)**. Small blocks are divided into individual plots, allowing the involvement of smaller developers and construction companies in collaboration with different architects. While the developers were ultimately responsible for the architectural design of the projects, Tham and his team pushed for the coupling of architects and developers

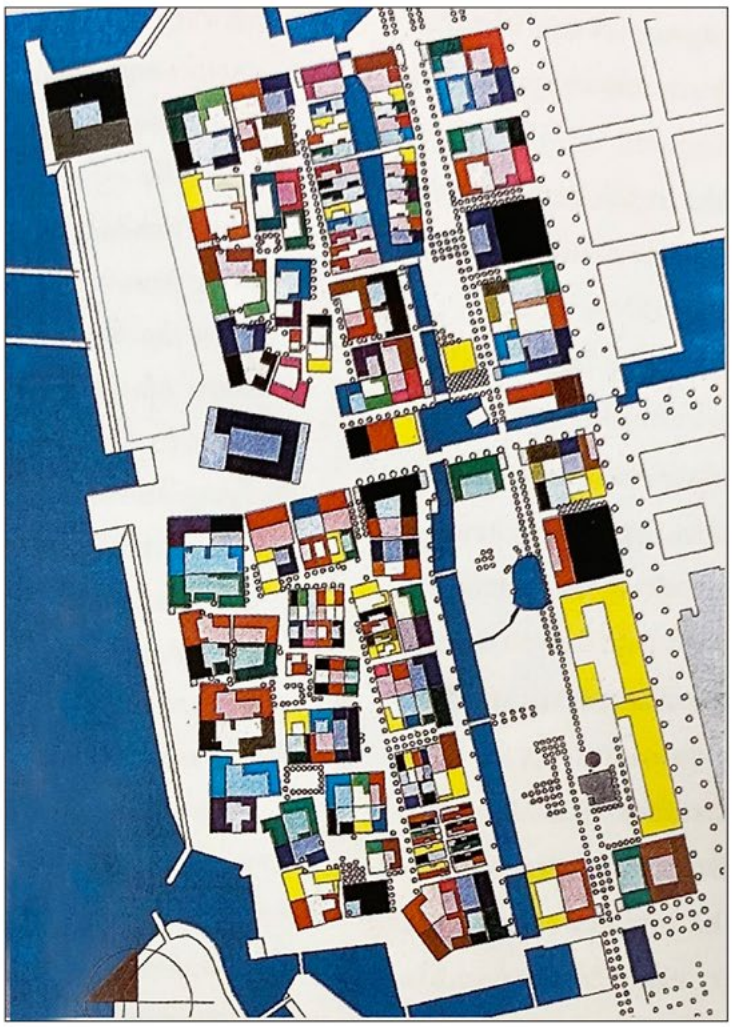

Figure 8: Initial masterplan sketch. Stadsbyggnadsnämnden, Malmö.

(Kvalitetsprogram [2001]: 4). Twenty architectural firms designed around 500 flats in 75 dwellings. Moreover, the 'Quality Programme' dictated that 'listless, indifferent design and architecture must be banned' (Kvalitetsprogram [2001]: 12), and limited only maximum heights. Diversity is therefore regulated by deregulating the Building Code. Architects thus had total freedom in terms of regulatory frameworks and were encouraged 'to do whatever they want as long as they don't disturb anyone' (Tham, interviewed 2000: 54). International names mentioned earlier, such as Calatrava and Erskine, shared the stage with Swedish firms like Gert Wingårdh and FFNS Arkitekter (now Sweco), and offices from other Nordic countries, such as Kai Wartiainen and Dalgaard & Madsen Architects **(Figure 9)**.

Figure 9: Aerial view of the *Bo01* area in the early 1990s. Malmö Stad webpage.

A long hangover

Implementation of the masterplan began in 1999, and the first problems were soon encountered. The land chosen for developing a sustainable district model turned out to be contaminated; the demolition rubble containing asphalt and other tar-based products used as landfill had resulted in unacceptably high levels of PAH (polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons) (Henrysson et al. 2013: 125) **(Figure 10)**. The necessary decontamination work significantly increased the costs and caused delays to the start of the urbanization

work. Actual construction began in March 2000, leaving only fourteen months for the exhibition's developments to be fully built before the exhibition opened.

Figure 10: Uncontaminated soil filling the existing polluted land in the southern part of the plot, Sundspromenaden. Malmö Stadsarkiv, box F12:45–50.

On May 17, 2001, despite the odds, the Swedish king and queen inaugurated *Bo01* with fireworks **(Figure 11)**. The king first recalled 'the inauguration of the Öresund Bridge a year ago and then spoke about the City of Tomorrow and its unique combination of technology and powerful investment in environment, almost as if excerpting a brochure' ('Idylliskt' 2001). By then, both the European Village and the Turning Torso were still under construction, as was most of the northern part of the district. The whole exhibition looked like a construction site **(Figure 12)**. Of the 500 dwellings planned, only 300 were built — the initial idea was to between 600 and 800 — and just three out of the 12 houses in the European Village were complete.

For four months, the *City of Tomorrow* would consist of the display of three intertwined sections **(Figure 13)**: a housing fair with architecture and interior design, including the international section of the European Village; a landscape display with parks, promenades and experimental gardens; and an art exhibition entitled *Visions*, co-curated with renowned art critic and theorist Boris Groys. In the former Saab factory, the work of renowned international artists such as Anish Kapoor, Sara Sze, and Perejaume looked at questions of domesticity, identity, nomadization, and ecology.

Figure 11: The Swedish king and qwith Klas Tham at the *Bo01* opening, May 18, 2001. In the background is the former Saab factory, transformed into the Trade Fair Centre. Photographer: Ingvar Andersson. From Rothenborg (2001: 8–9).

Figure 12: View of the southern part of Sundspromenaden under construction. In the background, Gert Wingårdh's building for the municipal housing company MKB is under construction. Note that the picture is from April 20, three weeks before *Bo01* opened. Malmö Stadsarkiv, box F12:45–50.

Figure 13: Visitor's map to the fair. The blue points show *hemutställning* (home exhibition), the green are *bostadsträdgårdar* (interior gardens), the blue lines are *parasites* (small-scale temporary interventions), and the grey points *uteservering* (outdoor seating spaces). Stadsbyggnadsnämnden, Malmö.

The first signs of economic failure became clear in early June. Visitor numbers were half of what was expected, interest from potential buyers and investors was low, and sales were insufficient. The district began to be perceived as a place for the rich, geographically and socially disconnected from the city. In the standfirst of the editorial page of *Dagens Nyheter* for August 7, 2001, the planning historian Thomas Hall reveals his disappointment when he writes, 'There is one point in which the exhibition gives a very clear and unequivocal message about the housing of the future: it will be exclusive and expensive.' He continues: 'There is a long tradition of housing fairs in Sweden, and they have often been models for continued construction. But Bo01 seems to be a dead end. Or rather: one hopes that it is!' (Hall 2001).

In late August, the municipality of Malmö accepted a 40m SEK loan for the Bo01 company, rescuing it from bankruptcy. But when the fair closed on September 15, bankruptcy was a fact: 'Last Thursday, visitor number 400,000 paid the entry fee to the housing fair in Malmö. Nonetheless, when it closes today it will be labelled a fiasco' (Rothenborg 2001).

Economic disaster overshadowed the *City of Tomorrow* months after its closure. Newspapers and journals regularly reported on disillusioned taxpayers, unpaid entrepreneurs, artworks from abroad that could not be returned to their owners, and more. As an editorial in the magazine *Arkitektur* stated, 'The mistakes became a serial drama in the media' (Hultin 2001). The district was continually described as an unfinished, filthy ghost town devoid of social vitality, scattered with leftover structures from the fair (**Figure 14**). Most flats remained empty for years. The sustainable narrative that had enjoyed political and social consensus was heavily criticized — not for its environmental goals but for its planning process, public-private cooperation, high prices of apartments, and the overall misuse of taxpayers' money.

Today, the area developed for *Bo01* is still perceived as segregated. The continued residential development of the rest of the Västra Hamnen peninsula became a testing ground where mistakes and failures from previous phases were addressed in subsequent ones. After *Bo01*, different types of tenancy and social infrastructures were introduced to counteract social segregation. Despite these efforts, Bo01's rich public spaces reverted to modernist planning values. The newer phases featured large-scale property divisions, enclosed blocks with internal gardens and playgrounds, and spacious streets, and no green technologies were implemented at the district level due to economic sustainability concerns.

På fredag är det precis ett år sedan kungaparet invigde Bo01. Det var Sveriges största bostadsmässa i modern tid. Ändå gick den i konkurs.

Drömmar om en bomässa

"Allt det bara är möjligt ett misslyckat ett projekt så till den milda grad."

Figure 14: Two-page spread of the article 'Dreaming of a Housing Fair', published one year after the exhibition's opening. The caption below the photo reads, 'It must have started on time. A boy, perhaps with dreams of becoming a builder, wandering around the part of the fair that is still under construction.' Photo by Ingvar Andersson. From Rothenborg (2002: 8–9).

The Reality of Sustainability

The discursive reconstruction of the exhibition exposes the entanglement of sustainability practices and various economic, political, and social interests. Examining these practices and interests in the rhetoric, technocratic approaches, and urban design strategies related to the exhibition help us to understand how sustainability really operated at *Boo1*.

The 'frontline' of sustainable practices

Boo1 can be included in a long history of planning practices that make use of large events to prompt urbanization, despite its failures on several fronts. The desirable sustainable life on exhibit was meant to change Malmö's identity, steering it away from a city in degeneration and rebranding it as a model of sustainable urban development. But the purpose of the exhibition was more than that. The *City of Tomorrow* was for a way to present the new EU-member country Sweden to the European housing market, both

for real estate investors and buyers. It also was intended to introduce green Swedish technologies and good practices in urban sustainability as exports.

The environmental profile of *Boo1* encouraged political consensus and attracted generous project development funding from local, national, and European public authorities. As is often repeated in the preparatory material, the condition was that the fair itself would also become a forerunner: 'the Expo will demonstrate the position of the Swedish and European "frontline" with regard to environmental aspects of architecture, design, the knowledge of material, and other field areas within town planning and building' (Manual [2001]: 9). The renovated Swedish green economy would shape a new district to be displayed, seen, inhabited and appreciated by fellow Europeans. The European Village perhaps best epitomizes this idea of the exhibition as a sales display. By inviting all EFTA countries to build a detached house on the site using their own materials, production methods, and traditions, with the same budget and plot dimensions, comparisons were inevitable. As the host country, Sweden, unlike many others, applied potentially exportable cutting-edge green tech construction products to not just the buildings of the European Village but a whole new district, thus positioning itself as a leader in good practices of sustainable urban planning and architecture.

Technocratic environmentalism

The fair was promoted as a model of a paradox: a lifestyle that was both luxurious and sustainable — 'everyday luxury', as stated in the catalogue (Eriksson 2001: 52). The generous spaces and well-designed interiors of the flats, all equipped with cutting-edge green technologies, align with the new creative class's sense of luxury in balance with the environment, where consumerism and excessive mobility *keep going*. Geothermal machinery, solar panels, wind turbines, waste-to-energy technologies, domestic grinders, and ventilation heat-recovery systems all allow the production of 'green' energy and the recycling and management of domestic waste, making the *City of Tomorrow* energetically autonomous.

This entirely technical approach depoliticises *Boo1*, overlooking the social implications of an urban development that is presumed to be sustainable. The preparatory documents situated the ecovillages that bloomed across Sweden in the 1980s as precedents to *Boo1* (Persson and Rosberg 2013:14). However, these ecovillages claimed autonomy as a way of 'disconnecting' from the capitalist-extractivist society and the top-down domination of nature through the use of 'liberatory technology' (Bookchin 1965). In the sustainable city of *Boo1*, however, autonomy is part of a technologically

driven project led by the state, research institutions, and manufacturing industries to promote green technologies without addressing the need to alter lifestyles. It represents an approach to sustainability through technocratic governance, simplistically reducing the environmental problems of urban planning processes to a set of manageable technical issues that can be resolved through expertise and technological intervention.

Deregulated diversity

Boo1 was presented as an innovative process, and to some extent, it was. The collaboration between the planning office and the developers in 'creative dialogues' and the use of the 'Quality Programme' as a governance tool were atypical, but not completely novel in Sweden. However, the way the 'Quality Programme' in *Boo1* controlled the green areas within the blocks was distinctive. Planners used calculation systems to keep the green content in the design process under control, guiding it towards specific quantitative biodiversity standards without a detailed formal regulation.

In both the fair's promotional material and in numerous interviews, Tham argued that the social aspect of the new district was carried out with a 'humanistic' approach to urban design. His proposal hinged on the concept of diversity as a way to provide individual freedom. The neoliberal sustainable *City of Tomorrow* seems to have been designed from its exterior image, destined to become a visual catalogue of options from which the buyer is free to choose, unlike in the repetitive environments of modern planning. To achieve this, its 'Quality Programme' limited only the maximum building height, deregulating previous design restrictions 'imposed' by the Building Code. In a city segregated by class and ethnicity, which Malmö was, and still is, diversity was only referred to as a formal strategy, as a resistance to the abstract aesthetics of modern architecture; it was by no means addressed from a social perspective.

The public space of the *City of Tomorrow* contains only parks and promenades; there is no single social infrastructure such as a cinema, market, or museum. Moreover, the dense morphology with high building blocks encircling row houses and two- to three-storey blocks, high prices, and the lack of social infrastructure in the district made *Boo1* a Swedish version of a gated community, a spatially segregated district for the wealthy ones.

Ultimately, *Boo1* symbolizes decentralized planning in an age of retrenchment of the welfare state with its subsequent precipitation of municipal entrepreneurialism in the search of capital. In *Boo1*, diversity is a marketing strategy, a way of branding the image of the neoliberal sustainable city to make it attractive to investors, 'IT people', and the creative class.

Conclusion

The *City of Tomorrow* bears a complex, composite, and entangled history with broader socioeconomic shifts. It is tied into Malmö's economic decline, plans for the transnational Öresund region, the adoption of ecological modernization in Sweden's economy, and Sweden's new membership in the EU.

This article shows that the concept of sustainability was deployed in different ways. On a discursive level, framing the urban development as sustainable secured political consensus for the event in its initial phase and helped procure local, national and European public funds for its further development. The branding term 'urban sustainability' attracted the attention of the general public and potential buyers and, more significantly, it led to the participation of international decision-makers, developers, and designers, positioning Sweden as a leading country in green construction and sustainable urban planning. The fair thus acted as a showcase for Sweden's ability to export green-tech construction products and sustainable urban planning services.

The analytical perspective facilitated by urban political ecology has helped unveil the interconnected environmental ethics, aesthetic formulations, and techno-managerial character of *Boo1*. The district promotes consumerist lifestyle patterns and advanced Swedish green technology as key to sustainability, thereby removing any need for social change while increasing apartment prices substantially. Although architecture is deregulated to encourage heterogeneity and individual freedom, outdoor spaces are regulated through the use of a new planning tool, the quality programme. Despite this seemingly deregulated framework, *Boo1*'s sustainability narrative hinged on unfolded regulations regarding the use of technology and the design of green areas. Its dense, car-free masterplan inspired by the medieval city, and the maintenance of the district technologies and green spaces, evoke a sense of 'urban living' in balance with the environment, helping to establish a model of guaranteed, socially-prescribed, and institutionally-supported sustainable living.

Note

[1] All translations from Swedish to English are by the author.

Competing Interests

The author has no competing interests to declare.

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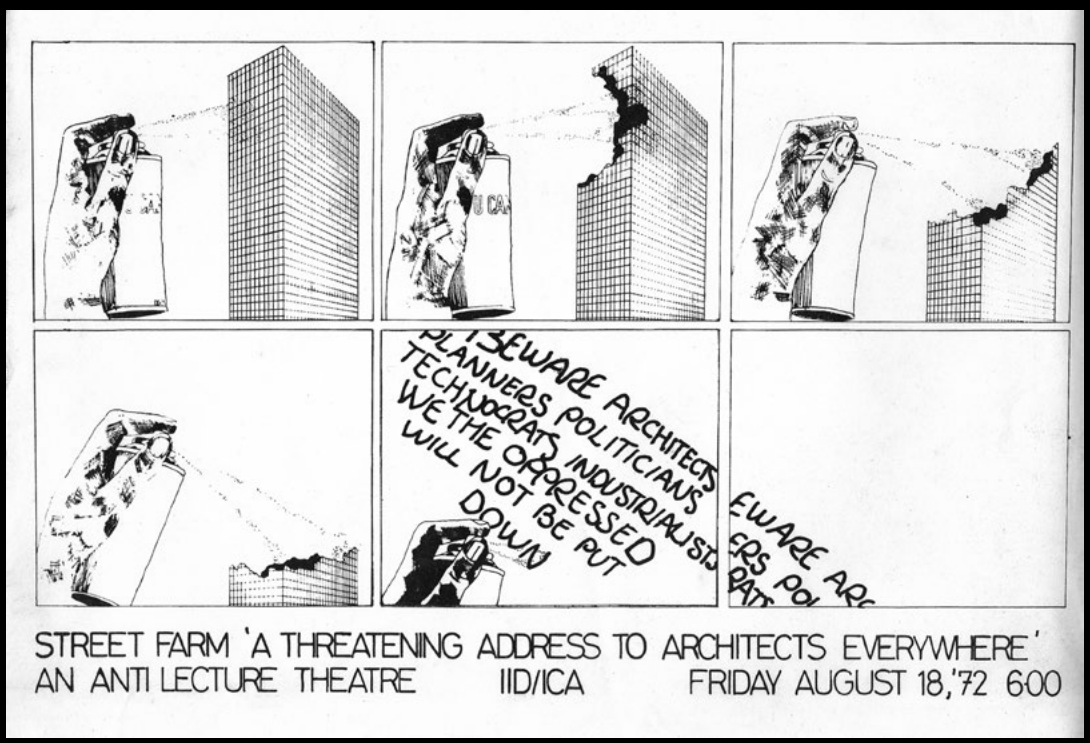

This PhD thesis explores the emergence of European environmental activism practices after 1968 and the subsequent assimilation of the ideas, participants, technologies, aesthetics, and design strategies thereof from the 1970s and in the early years of the new millennium, when the concept of sustainable urban development became normative in planning. Comprising five articles and a cover essay, the thesis is a critical historical analysis of sustainable urban development as a planning discourse, tool, and typology.

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