

Rebuilding the City

Stockholm and Urban Social Movements

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In the end of the sixties a protest movement against the rationalistic rebuilding of the city of Stockholm very rapidly emerged. In the article the short history of this so-called “neighbourhood movement” is described and analysed. According to relevant theories the movement can be seen as one of the “new” social movements of this period. Some of the groups of the movement are presented as well as the structure of the movement and the external and internal work in the groups. This neighbourhood movement came to an end around 1980. However, in the early nineties another protest movement against the new kind of city-planning at that time in Stockholm emerged. The reason for this was the city’s efforts to construct a good infrastructure in order to rebuild Stockholm into a global city in competition with other big cities. This contemporary protest movement is also shortly described in the article. As it is shown the movement is very different from the earlier neighbourhood movement. It reflects the fragmentation, individualisation and globalisation of today’s post-modern society.

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Introduction

There are two main traditions in town-planning according to a classification once made by the French town-planning theoretician Françoise Choay (1969). They consist of one rationalistic and one humanistic tradition. The rationalism and the humanism in town planning can be seen as reflections of Ferdinand Tönnies’ contradicting terms *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* (community and society). The rationalistic tradition has been dominating in Sweden. In its early stage in Sweden it was called functionalism and had its breakthrough at a large exposition in Stockholm in 1930. The climax of the rationalistic building in Sweden was the so called million-programme, when one million dwellings were built in the ten years 1965–1975, which should be compared with the Swedish population of about eight million people. Radical rebuilding of the central parts of towns were also carried out. At the end of the sixties, however, protest-movements against the large-scale industrialised building emerged.

Consequently, the following years saw more examples of a humanistic way of building.

The Swedish labour movement and the social democracy have had a pronounced future-directed outlook. Older buildings have been seen as marks of the old class society and of poor housing conditions. The dominating position of the social democracy in Swedish politics has therefore contributed to the dominance of rationalism in the building area. A younger generation of social democrats has not been so committed to a negative estimation of the past.

The rebuilding of Stockholm to a modern city was a complicated process. The change of the central area of the city, lower Norrmalm, was the largest town-building project in Swedish history. It took place mainly in the period 1950–1975 and was carried out as one process under firm supervision of the city authorities. The new suburbs in Stockholm were in the fifties internationally considered as models and especially the new Vällingby received much attention. The traffic planning initially tried to fulfil the de-

mands of motor society. Its culmination came in 1967 when an extensive construction of parking-houses in the downtown was proposed. However, this project was never carried out due to a changed view of traffic planning. The regional planning was actively managed in the sixties and seventies in order to rebuild Stockholm into an internationally competitive city in relation to other major European cities. At the beginning of the seventies there was a period of economic recession and also a cease in the population growth of the Stockholm region. This had an impact on all the areas concerned with the town-planning.

The dominating social democratic party mainly pursued the rebuilding of the city with support from the liberal party (folkpartiet) and the major part of the conservatives (moderaterna). It was also carried out in co-operation with large private companies. Only a minor group of culturally oriented conservative politicians pleaded for greater consideration of old areas in the city.

It is remarkable that criticism from the public was so little heard at the beginning. When the demolitions in downtown Stockholm started in the fifties, only a few leading personalities in the field of culture protested. In the early sixties, however, a wave of criticism emerged in the press but it did not have much effect. The end of the sixties gave rise to a more popular criticism in the shape of the so-called "neighbourhood" movement, which had its name from the organised form of co-operation in the Old Swedish peasant society.

The Neighbourhood Movement

The Short History of the Neighbourhood Movement

At the end of the sixties oppositional movements grew strong in the western world as well as in Sweden.¹ The so-called New Left had a basis at the universities and in the academic world. The idea of participatory democracy was characteristic of the movement. In Sweden the development was similar to the rest of the Western World, where the protests against the Vietnam War had a great impact on the radicalisation of society. 1968 became the climax of the Swedish

students' movement with several spectacular events, which attracted much attention.

Like the development in other countries, the anti-authoritarian students' movement and the New Left in Sweden soon split up into several authoritarian socialist and Marxist groups. The idea of participatory democracy, however, was still alive in other new or transformed movements, such as the women's movement, the ecological movement and the neighbourhood movement.

The neighbourhood movement in Stockholm emerged out of a number of different events: the demolition of an old gasholder building near the centre of the city, actions for alternative playgrounds for children, a proposed reconstruction of a street into a traffic route, as well as reactions against the commercialisation of society. The first group of the movement was formed in September 1968. The most substantial increase of the movement took place during the first quarter of 1969, when eleven different groups were formed within the boundaries of the city of Stockholm. At the end of this year there was a network of groups covering most of Stockholm. The neighbourhood groups operated within delimited districts of the city and worked with both public policy and social policy issues. After an unstable initial stage the movement was stabilised at a range of 10–15 groups in the beginning of the seventies. After 1973 no new neighbourhood groups were formed and the activities in the remaining groups gradually ceased. It can be claimed that the movement came to an end in 1980 even if some groups existed much longer.

The Core Groups of the Movement

The neighbourhood movement had two core groups – *Arkiv samtal* (Archive Dialogue) and *Alternativ stad* (Alternative City). These were different from the real neighbourhood groups since their activities were not limited to one single district in the city.

Arkiv samtal was formed in 1968 by initiators who had a background in experiences of children's theatre and pedagogy and also from Copenhagen, at that time a centre of "alternative" movements and lifestyles. Co-operation and community among the inhabitants in city

districts were the main goals of *Arkiv samtal*. Theories from the young Marx and the Danish social psychologist Arne Sjölund formed the base for the theoretical vision: by changing the local environment of man in such a way that it is based on co-operation, man too will be changed in a similar way. Of special importance to *Arkiv samtal* were playgrounds and other arrangements for children. *Arkiv samtal* managed no actions of their own and served mainly as a centre focused on advisory service and documentation. Information from the experience of different groups was collected in archives. Gradually, *Arkiv samtal* expanded their advisory service to groups all over Sweden, and as a consequence the main part of the group moved to the south of Dalarna, north-west of Stockholm. Here, the large premises of a closed down old people's home made it possible to arrange summer courses for interested people from all of the country. In 1981 the work of *Arkiv samtal* came to an end.

The group *Alternativ stad* was formed in 1969 with the aim to work with issues of city-planning and building all over Stockholm. The group had its localities in the centre of the city, and these became somewhat of a meeting place for people critical of the current city-planning. *Alternativ stad* became well-known during the battle concerning a group of elms in the central park Kungsträdgården. The elms were to be felled because of the construction of a new underground station. In the night of May 12, 1971, the authorities failed in their attempt to fell the trees. Around one thousand demonstrators had rapidly come to the park with the help of a telephone chain arranged by *Alternativ stad*. The non-violent action that *Alternativ stad* had planned changed into uncontrolled violence by participating young anarchists, whereupon the felling of the elms was abandoned. Later, decisions taken by the authorities resulted in the trees being allowed to remain. The battle of the elms became a turning point in the rebuilding of the city, as well as a mass media dream event, which was spread all over the world. The symbolic meanings of the event were important. The elms can be seen as an important symbol of fundamental values in life, as well as a symbol of an alternative city set in contrast to the

rationalistic city. The group *Alternativ stad* is still active and even today it is characterised by the values of participatory democracy.

Kungsholmens byalag

Two of the neighbourhood groups have been more thoroughly studied. They will be described here in order to show something of the activities in typical neighbourhood groups. *Kungsholmens byalag* represents a group in a central district while *Årsta byalag* was a group in a suburb.

Kungsholmen is a district as well as an island in the west of central Stockholm. The district is a residential area, but has a large number of offices. The neighbourhood group *Kungsholmens byalag* was formed at a meeting in the autumn of 1969 on the initiative of some activists from *Alternativ stad*. The group carried out several big actions that got much attention. Norr Mälarstrand – the southern embankment of the island Kungsholmen – consisted at that time of a street, a park and a quay. According to an existing plan, a traffic route would be constructed here, which meant that a number of buildings from the 18th century had to be demolished. The action of the neighbourhood group took place during the autumn of 1969 and the spring of 1970. It included a number of activities: official letters to the city council, public meetings with invited politicians, exhibitions presenting a draft of an alternative plan (a traffic route in a tunnel and a park on the embankment), distribution of information pamphlets, a petition with 24 000 names, and a protest march to the city hall. The action got much attention in the press. For instance, *Dagens Nyheter*, the largest morning paper in Sweden, published a large perspective drawing of both the official project and the alternative one from *Kungsholmens byalag*. In the end the traffic route was never built, apparently as a direct consequence of the protests.

The group's next action focused on an old military hospital that was to be rebuilt into an office building for the regional administration. Here the conflict concerned the use of the park surrounding the building, where a number of parking places was to be laid out. *Kungsholmens byalag* wanted the park to be open to the public. As part of the action the group collected

drafts of alternative designs of the park from the residents in the neighbourhood. One of the drafts presented with much imagination a skating ground, an outdoor café, sheep, poultry, ponies, a greenhouse with a winter café etc. In the end a compromise with the authorities was achieved. The number of the parking places was limited while the imaginative drafts were not realised. *Kungsholmens byalag* also carried out a number of other actions, for instance one against the construction of a new office building for the police headquarters. These actions were less successful.

Kungsholmens byalag was also engaged in rent issues. In Sweden the rents in blocks of flats are mainly settled through negotiations between the organisations of property owners and tenants. The tenants' union is traditionally dominated by the social democracy. By joining the tenants' union the activists of the neighbourhood group took over the union's local branch at Kungsholmen, which after that was managed in

a way similar to the neighbourhood group. Within the frame of both the tenants' union and the neighbourhood group a number of actions was carried out against motor traffic: painting of white crosses in streets where accidents had occurred, blockades of streets and so on.

Another element of the activities of *Kungsholmens byalag* was community work in the shape of an alternative celebration of Christmas open to everyone in the district. Around 1975 the activities of the neighbourhood group came to an end.

Årsta byalag

Årsta is a suburb situated south of the inner town of Stockholm. It was built in the forties and fifties as a so-called neighbourhood unit. *Årsta byalag* was formed rather late (1972) as a reaction against a new ring road around central Stockholm. The southern part of this ring road *Södra länken* (Southern link) was to be built through Årsta.

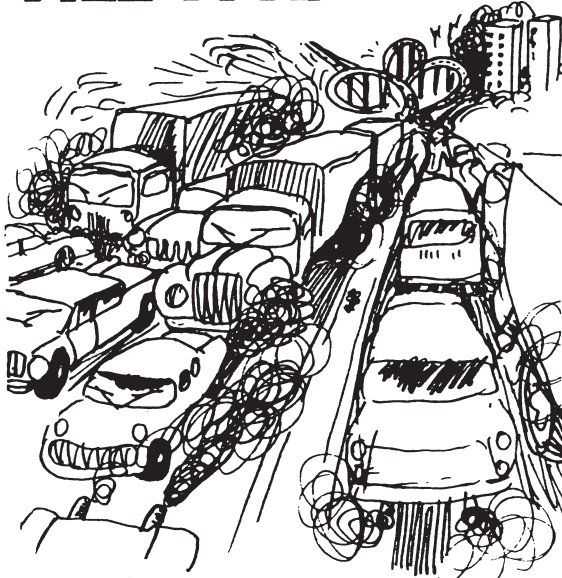


Du som vill skydda Årsta mot ytterligare buller och avgaser, **SLUT UPP TILL MÖTET.**

Om tillräckligt många är villiga att göra en aktiv insats för att bevaka årstabornas intressen, protestera mot nya genomfartsleder, kräva signalreglerade övergångsställen på Årstavägen etc samt verka för större gemenskap,
KAN VI BILDA ETT BYALAG.

Årsta Centrum
Möte
Onsd. 12-1 kl. 19³⁰
AKTIONSGRUPPEN MOT SÖDRA LÄNKEN.

Södra länken, VILL VI HA DEN?



1. The neighbourhood group *Årsta byalag* opposed vigorously against the southern part of the planned ring road (*Södra länken*) around central Stockholm. This bill called to a general meeting to form a *byalag* – a neighbourhood group – against the project.

The major part of the activities of *Årsta byalag* circled around the resistance against the southern link. The group worked out its own draft, which suggested that the traffic route should be built in a tunnel beneath Årsta. Different methods were used to persuade the authorities: official letters, calls to the authorities, petitions and public meetings with invited politicians and exhibitions of drafts of their own. At the beginning of 1974 the city council announced that the traffic route was not to be built. A fundamental change in the aims of the town-planning was now introduced. The main reasons were the economic recession in the Stockholm region together with the widespread protests against the town-planning in Stockholm. The pressure from the small group *Årsta byalag*, however, had probably no impact worth mentioning.

Part of the work of *Årsta byalag* was focused on community work in the district. Especially noticeable were the activities for children with regular cinema showings, and the rather special Christmas celebration. The Christmas celebration was open to everyone and was called *grannskapsjul* (neighbourhood Christmas). It was arranged for nine years and in the end the only remaining activity of the group. In 1980 the last Christmas celebration took place and *Årsta byalag* came to an end.

The Structure of the Neighbourhood Movement

The Rise and Fall of the Neighbourhood Movement

Structural changes in society were of vital importance to the emergence of the movements of the sixties, the so-called "new social movements". These can be summarised in five main trends in society: 1. The technical/economical development had a negative impact on the environment and on life conditions. 2. The trends of concentration, large-scale production and an increasingly complicated society resulted in a larger distance between the power and the people. 3. An increased material prosperity made it possible for common people to take an interest in other things than in satisfying primary needs. 4. The new information technology,

especially television, made it possible to spread news in a new way. 5. The explosive development of the university education resulted in a rapid growth of the number of students.

The neighbourhood movement can be regarded as one of the "new" movements. By analogy with Alberto Melucci's definition of social movement, the neighbourhood movement can be defined in a similar way (Melucci 1989). It can thus be seen as "a collective action by groups with participatory democracy which were active in geographically limited areas and which on their programme had both public work concerning urban environment and social work in the form of community work".

The movement emerged out of three different contemporary trends in society: 1. Anti-commercialism. 2. An aspiration for community and co-operation. 3. Criticism of the town-planning. The movement was successful initially because it brought up criticism which was latent in broad categories of the population. The fundament of this criticism was the rationalistic town-planning and its increasingly brutal rebuilding of Stockholm. The existence of the neighbourhood movement was very short and this had several explanations. There were two main reasons: the threats to the urban environment came to an end and the community work of the groups had seldom any real function. Secondary reasons also contributed to the short existence of the groups: the core group of activists was as a rule gradually weakened by the lack of new recruitment, activists leaving the group or internal antagonism. Furthermore, many of the groups had no meeting place of their own.

The External Work of the Neighbourhood Groups

The community work of the neighbourhood groups mainly took the form of anti-commercial celebrations of Christmas. The groups in the suburbs also focused on some other community issues, mostly concerning children. Another expression of the community work was the periodicals that many groups produced. In these, local problems were frequently discussed. The community work was generally much more restricted than the intention was from the start. An exception was *Gamla stans byalag* (the

neighbourhood group in the Old Town). Here the community work was dominating and it focused on the rather special problems of the district. This group survived until the nineties.

The neighbourhood groups can be classified as *reactive* and *programmatic* groups, which were characterised by reactions to threats from the outside and work with more long-termed issues, respectively. Regarding the actions, there was a difference between reactive and offensive actions, i.e. reactions to threats or the group's own initiative for change. The reactive actions were most frequent, but some groups (e.g. *Kungsholmens byalag*) took several initiatives of their own, which should be seen as a measure of their strength. There were mainly three different forms of pressure on the authorities: 1. Creation of public opinion (general meetings, written information, exhibitions, demonstrations and spectacular actions). Here, the relation to mass media was of vital importance. It is remarkable, however, that no strong leaders from the movement appeared in the media. 2. Consultation (calls, petitions and official letters, all directed to the decision-makers). 3. Confrontation, which seldom occurred. The battle of the elms was in fact an exception. At a later stage, however, confrontation occurred in the shape of street-blockades against motor traffic.

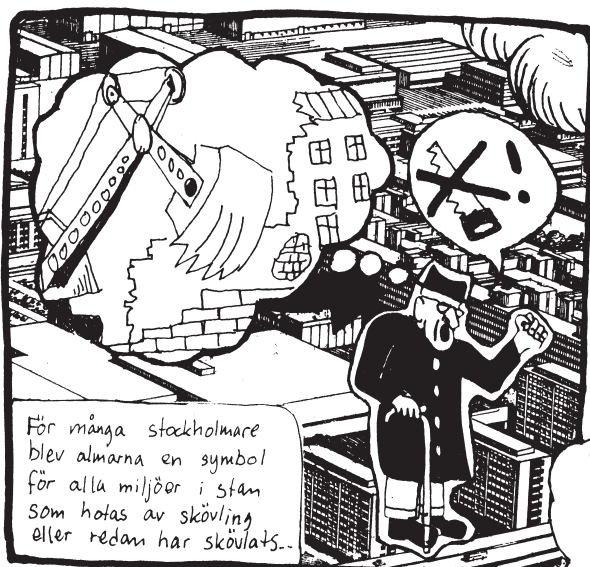
It was primarily in the first phase of the movement that any tangible success was reached. An analysis shows that the following factors (no ranking) had importance for the success of the actions: 1. The issue had an interest to a wider public. 2. The neighbourhood group was able to create a large opinion. 3. The issue got much attention in the mass media. 4. The action had an early start. 5. The group had support from politicians of different parties. 6. Politicians and officials were unprepared for extra-parliamentary actions.

The rebuilding policy in the city of Stockholm was altered in the first part of the seventies, which mainly was due to an economic recession in the region together with the widespread protests. The great symbolic turning point was the battle of the elms in May 1971. The neighbourhood movement prevented furthermore some projects already started, as well as some that were never made public. The

movement, however, was probably most important through its long-range effects, since it contributed to a greater appreciation of both old and car-free urban environments. Another impact was that the movement contributed in creating a more open attitude in town-planning procedures.

Aristide Zolberg has characterised certain turbulent times in history as *moments of madness*. At such moments everything seems possible. The wall between instrumentality and expressivity collapses and politics becomes poetry and poetry politics. Politics breaks its boundaries and invades all life (Zolberg 1972, see also Tarrow 1993). The neighbourhood movement had its great moment of *madness* during the battle of the elms. At this moment the movement lost control over the course of events. The tumultuous battle was followed by a week of festivity, when violence turned into community and fellowship among people of different ages and social classes. Creativity flourished in new ideas of urban environmental struggle. Zolberg's thesis of *boredom* as one explanation of such turmoil also had its correspondence in Stockholm, where the dullness and monotony of the new urban environment can be seen as one of the explanations of the outburst of feelings in the form of the battle of the elms. The importance of the battle of the elms in Kungsträdgården can not be underestimated.

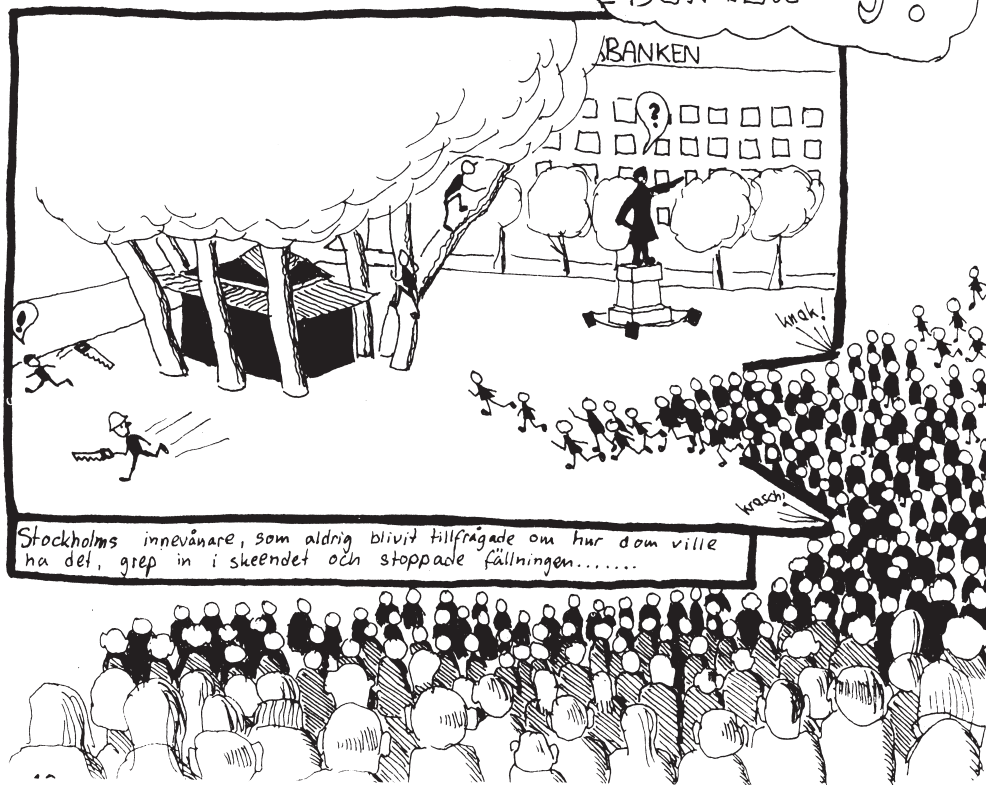
The neighbourhood movement had an antagonistic relation to the social democracy, which is shown in the case studies and in an examination of protocols of the city council. The reason for this was, among other things, that the movement did not follow the political rules. The social democracy was the dominating political party in Stockholm and it considered itself a guardian of the political system. An examination of the regular publications of the building workers' union also shows antagonism. The neighbourhood movement was seen as a threat to the building activity and consequently also to the jobs. To some extent pure class antagonism is visible in the publications, as the neighbourhood groups were seen as students and upper class. In the tenants' union, dominated by the social democrats, fierce conflicts arouse when participants of the neighbourhood groups joined the union as



Gatukontoret hade tillkännagivit att man tänkte fälla träden tidigt på morgonen den 13 maj. I hemlighet hade dom dock bestämt sig för att dra ut med motorsågarna ett dygn tidigare...

För många stockholmare blev almarna en symbol för alla miljöer i stan som hotas av skövling eller redan har skövats...

VAD HÄNDE MORGONEN DEN 12:e maj?



Stockholms innevånare, som aldrig blivit tillfrågade om hur dom ville ha det, grep in i skeendet och stoppade fällningen.....

2. The battle of the elms in May 1971 was the symbolic turning point in the city-planning of that time. It was also a moment of madness. In the movement's periodical *Klara Papper*, a cartoon was published in which the events were described. The top picture shows the fury among many inhabitants in Stockholm at the demolitions of central city areas. The picture below shows very simplified the battle. About one thousand demonstrators broke down a fence around the elms and then climbed the trees to defend them. The attack and defence was organised by a retired army general. The fierce fight with the police, partly on horses and with dogs, is not shown in the picture.

active members. These conflicts were also conflicts of values between the cultures of a movement of the industrial society and a new anti-authoritarian movement of the sixties.

A network of personal contacts loosely connected the neighbourhood groups. The two core groups *Alternativ stad* and *Arkiv samtal* also functioned as informal co-ordinators. There are examples of joint actions by different groups. Through its network structure and its internal work in the groups (see below) the neighbourhood movement can almost be seen as an archetype of a post-war new social movement according to the description by for instance anthropologists Gerlach and Hine (1970, 1973, see also Melucci 1996:113f).

The Internal Work of the Neighbourhood Groups

The organisational model of the groups was based on participatory democracy. Primary decisions were made at general meetings, and the meetings were open to anyone interested. The current work with actions etc. was carried out in special working teams. There were no elected leaders and no functionaries in the groups, and written rules and formal membership did not exist. Even if the neighbourhood groups had a non-hierarchical structure, there was a gradual division into different roles. A classification can thus be made into *leaders*, *experts*, *activists* and *participants*. The problem of this informal leadership was the difficulty in removing an informal leader, which could result in the discontented leaving the group. The two groups of the case studies had no internal conflicts worth mentioning, which is explained by their work being based on an intense defence of their environment. The developments of other groups implies that groups with no strong motivation to their work often had internal conflicts. It was also much easier to work *against* something than *for* something. One factor that contributed to minimising conflicts was that all party-political issues were avoided in the neighbourhood groups. The movements participatory democracy structure was, as David Held has argued, not only an organisational model but also a way of life (Held 1996).

The movement's *activists* were those who took an active part in the work of the groups.

The main part was in the ages 20–29. An important category was university students, but the neighbourhood groups also included white-collar workers, people with free professions and to some extent blue-collar workers and senior citizens. Those who were working had a strong connection to the public sector and had in most cases a high education. The activists consisted to an equal extent of men and women and were often left-wing radicals without connection to any specific political party, however. Furthermore, they were established in their district, since they usually had a flat of their own. The *participants* of the movement were the total circle of people who participated in the group meetings, but who did not necessarily participate in active work. This category has not been investigated in detail, but – as far as can be judged – it was much more representative of the population in the district than the activists regarding age, profession and political view. When it comes to the activists, comparisons with international research on new movements of the sixties and seventies show a firm correspondence between the neighbourhood movement in Stockholm and other contemporary movements (Gundelach 1988). In the case of the participants, however, it is striking, that the neighbourhood movement in Stockholm was composed of such broad categories of people.

The interviews that have been made, show a number of motives of commitment in the movement work. These were without ranking: 1. Criticism against contemporary town-planning. 2. A wish to improve the environmental living conditions of the district. 3. A need for social community, fellowship and identity. 4. A need to establish bonds with the district as a newcomer. 5. A need for commitment. 6. A professional interest in town-planning. – Furthermore, an interesting result is that there was a number of what can be called “colourful personalities” among the activists, who cannot properly be categorised. They had very different personal motives, where pure commitment probably was the most important. Examples of these “colourful personalities” are the retired army general, the old communist plumber and trade unionist, the anarchistic agitator and world citizen, the business economist at the large company, the



3. After the battle of the elms activists climbed the trees and even slept there in order to prevent new attempts to cut the trees down. Photo: Björn Gustavsson.

computer consultant and the vicar. However, it is important to stress that the activists of the neighbourhood groups were well integrated into society. At the interviews twenty years afterwards they had to a great extent kept their values, even if the values had been modified and were freer from illusions.

The women very often had prominent roles in the neighbourhood groups. Kungsholmens byalag was even dominated by women, probably as a result of the commitment of an elderly woman with a background in the women's rights movement. In the groups of the neighbourhood movement there were no traditional organisational structures. The new and untested model of participatory democracy made it easier for women to commit at a time when equality between men and women had seriously been brought to the fore in society. The active participation of women in the movement obviously

had the result that feminine values had an influence on the methods. The movement's rather soft and peaceful image, where confrontation had been replaced by discussion can be understood in such a perspective.

The Alternative City

The impact of the neighbourhood movement on the rebuilding of Stockholm can be summarised in four points: 1. The movement had at an early stage obvious success and stopped some important construction projects. 2. Other environmentally delicate projects were not even started or planned. 3. There was a consciousness-raising concerning the values of urban environment among the public, the media and decision-makers. 4. Authorities took the initiative to improve public participating in the town-planning and to broaden the local democracy.

In the long run the neighbourhood movement

had a lasting effect on the rebuilding of the city. The movement represented more humanistic town-planning ideas, and its activities contributed to change the rationalistic town-planning in a humanistic direction. The obvious difficulty in changing the town-planning can be explained by the inertia of the thinking of Man according to the theories of French mentality history.

The movement's ideology was based partly on a vision of co-operation and community among people, partly on wishes for a different humanistic town-planning. The movement lacked what can be referred to as long movement-texts, even if short written texts existed (see Thörn 1997). However, it is not enough to read the ideology only in the texts of a movement. Equally important is the orally transmitted ideology. Even if written models seldom were mentioned by the interviewed activists, the consciousness of the importance of participatory democracy, alternative city building and community among people was firm.

At the most active stage of the movement the vision of the *Alternative City* was never clearly specified. However, by looking at the criticism of the movement against town-planning in their different actions, a picture of this city can be obtained: The *Alternative City* had no motor traffic in the inner town, nor in the residential areas of the suburbs. A network of bicycle paths found their way between the city districts. Existing traffic routes mainly went in tunnels and were hardly noticeable. Public transport was well developed and had free fares. All new office buildings were placed outside the inner town, which instead had more flats in rebuilt office- and parking-buildings. In the green parks and on the car-free embankments there were outdoor cafés and gardens. A large number of meeting places, managed without profit, existed all over the city. In most residential areas allotment gardens were available for the residents. A picture of the *Alternative City* made up at the final stage of the movement is found in one of the periodicals of the movement (*Klara Papper* 1976). Here a future residential district is described, especially its sense of community and co-operation among people. The city emerges as a return to *Gemeinschaft*, to a humanistic city built for people living in community.

The Movement of the Nineties

New Protests

In the early nineties a new protest movement against the city-planning in Stockholm emerged.² The conflicts were focused on three different issues: the construction of a system of ring roads around central Stockholm, the expanding of the railway on the west side of the Old Town and different office building projects in the cultural valuable areas around lake Brunnsviken, close to the northern part of central Stockholm. All these projects can be understood as components of the efforts to rebuild Stockholm into a global city in competition with other big cities. To construct a good infrastructure has been one part of this strategy. Another has been to make room for new office buildings for big international corporations. In this perspective the surroundings of Brunnsviken have been very attractive, with its royal parks, unique natural beauty and central location.

It is interesting to see that most of the new roads have been planned to be laid in tunnels. The suggested central Ring Road was to be built already in the sixties, but that project was abandoned in the early seventies. No part of it was then to be laid in tunnel, which the neighbourhood groups at that time demanded. Present-days efforts to construct road and railway tunnels can be seen as an expression of a greater consciousness of the values of urban environment today compared to the sixties. However, road tunnels are not sufficient for many of the contemporary urban protest groups. Their aspiration is a total stop to all big road projects.

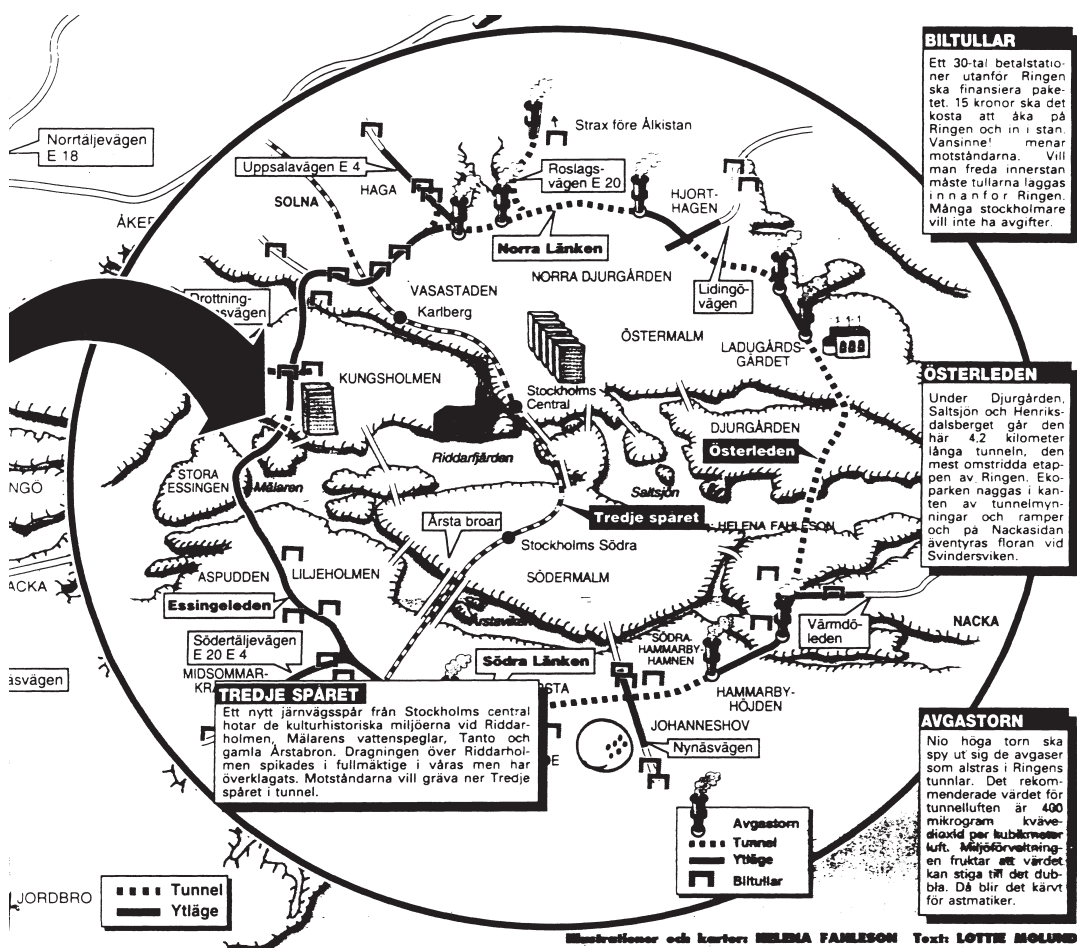
The contemporary protest movement in Stockholm has been very different from the neighbourhood movement. It reflects the fragmentation, individualisation and globalisation of today's post-modern society. The fragmentation is shown in the wide range of very different groups. Some examples illustrate this: the anarchistic youth group *Socialekologisk aktion* (Social ecological action), the still very active participatory democracy group *Alternativ stad* founded in 1969, neighbourhood groups and nature protection groups with traditional hierarchical structure such as *Haga-Brunnsvikens*

vänner (Friends of Haga-Brunnsviken) and the small elite group of well-known people *Kommitén för den Gustavianska parken* (Committee for the Gustavian park).

There has also been highly qualified individuals who have carried out their own actions by writing articles in newspapers and letters to authorities. An interesting and somewhat surprising kind of network of individuals was called *Vi som älskar Stockholm* (We who love Stockholm). It existed only a couple of years and was composed of bank executives, financiers, stockbrokers, authors, journalists, professors, direc-

tor-generals; conservatives, liberals and social democrats.

The globalisation appears in the various international contacts that exist mainly among younger activists in the leftist groups. In summer holidays young activists have travelled abroad and visited other activist groups, which they have got in touch with on Internet. The American/English organisation "Earth First!" has inspired young anarchists to use sabotage methods like "monkey-wrenching" to destroy road construction vehicles (Wall 1999). By inspiration from England and the London organ-



4. The Ring Road around central Stockholm as shown in the newspaper *Expressen*, September 13, 1994. The picture illustrates that the western parts of the Ring Road – the existing roads – was to be kept on ground level. The main parts of the roads were to be built in tunnels. Nine high towers should take the exhaust gas out of the tunnels. The most controversial part of the Ring Road was *Österleden* (Eastern Link). This link was rejected 1997 by the social democratic government as well as a road west of Stockholm (not in the picture) across lake Mälaren and the island Lovön, also the location of the royal castle Drottningholm.

isation "Reclaim the Streets" independent Swedish groups called "Reclaim the Streets" and "Reclaim the City" have been formed. Their "street parties" have caused fierce confrontations with the police.

The contemporary movement has been characterised by its networks. The word network has turned up frequently in all connections, almost as a mantra (cf. Castells 1996–1998). Networks of groups, networks of people, networks of friends and networks of colleagues have worked together in a complicated system all over Stockholm. Networks of groups have been able to form successful coalitions in the urban conflicts by creating special umbrella organisations, a new kind of strategy of the urban movements in Sweden. This kind of co-operation of different groups in conflicts has been called "federated frontstage structure" and "rainbow coalition" (Stoecker 1993, Peterson 1997). Such co-operation seems also internationally to be an innovation regarding contemporary social movements compared to the movements of the sixties (Klandermans 1997:143ff).

In the umbrella organisations very different groups and their members have been able to work together, from young anarchists to middle-aged and elderly established citizens. This is very much the reason why the movement has accomplished to mobilise people to mass demonstrations in front of the Parliament and the City hall. In dark winter evenings large torchlight processions have been arranged and well-known people from the establishment have spoken against the projected roads.

The big city-building projects have been carried out by initiative and support from the three large parties in the city council; social democrats, conservatives and liberals. Only some small and relatively unimportant parties have put forward objections. Thus, there has been no real opposition in the City council, which has meant that the protest movement has had to work mainly outside the parliamentary system. However, the protest movement has succeeded in getting support from different members of the three main parties. Especially important has been the support from local social democrats, the dominating party both in the Swedish parliament and the City council. A network of

social democrats against the projects has been formed, which has had support from the local women's and youth organisations of the party.

The movement has had substantial success. A first victory came when the surroundings of lake Brunnsviken together with the royal park Djurgården was declared as a "Nationalstadspark" (National Urban Park). This was done by the creation of a new law, which came into force in January 1995. The intention of the law was to protect the area against further exploitation. A second success has been when the authorities decided that the expansion of the railway in the Old Town must be further investigated. Efforts are now made to find a solution with a tunnel under water, which will improve the environment west of the island considerably.

However, the most important victory was the decision of the Swedish social democrat government in 1997, that the construction of the major part of the ring road system should be abandoned. The roads in the most valuable nature areas should thus not be built in a foreseeable future. This decision is interesting, because it meant that the social democrats in the government made a totally contradictory judgement compared to the local social democrat party in the City council. This decision was not so problematic as it seems because of the existence of the internal opposition in the local party organisation.

At present only minor environmental conflicts emerge in various issues in Stockholm. In general it can be said that the movement of the nineties is now defending the achieved results and is trying to prevent that new threats to the urban environment emerge. Some of the groups have as a consequence of the uneventful latest period now come to an end or have very little activities. But the calm may not last very long, since there are several visible signs that the planning and construction of the ring roads once again will start.

In summary it can be said the environmental movement of the nineties has had great impact on the city-planning in the Stockholm area. However, there is no doubt that the neighbourhood movement made the foundation to this. As mentioned above this earlier movement has had a long-lasting importance in the shaping of

a greater consciousness of environmental values already in the seventies among the public, the media and decision-makers.

In the end of the nineties some of the groups in the environmental movement also joined in actions against the new liberal city politics, the new economy and against the social and spatial polarisation of the city. These trends in society had then become very obvious in Stockholm as well as in other big cities of the world (cf. Mayer 1999). Two organisation networks have been formed with the significant and somewhat provoking names *Stockholm inte till salu* (Stockholm not for sale) and *Mot Marknadens Diktatur* (Against Dictatorship of the Market). A new different movement has thus emerged as a reaction to what can be seen as consequences of the ongoing economical and political globalisation.

An Urban Environmental Movement

In the case of Stockholm one could in a historical perspective either speak of a couple of urban environmental movements active in different periods or of one single movement that has gone through different phases. Three such different phases can in that case be observed: 1. An early phase with a height in the fifties and sixties characterised by the activities of single leading personalities in the cultural field. An early stage of this phase extends back into the past. This period has not been treated in this article. 2. A very active phase at the end of the sixties and the first part of the seventies dominated by the neighbourhood movement. 3. Another very active phase in the nineties, characterised by a great variety of groups with very different structures, partly led by an elite in society.

Alberto Melucci has shown that a movement can pass through phases of latency and mobilisation. In the phase of mobilisation hidden networks from the phase of latency are activated. The everyday practice of these hidden networks represents, according to Melucci, the continuity in a movement (Melucci 1989, 1996). Sidney Tarrow argues that instead one should see movements as recurrent cycles of protests. The top of a protest cycle is formed by the activists' networks, which also maintain the movement in periods of decline. The organisations and the activists' networks are, according

to Tarrow, the basis of a continuous existence of a movement (Tarrow 1998, see also Rupp and Taylor 1987).

Even if a movement has ceased to exist, its essence can survive in people's consciousness and values, as well as in society as a whole. When these values are threatened there is a potential for a new mobilisation of the movement. This is illustrated by the later development of the urban environmental movement in Stockholm, where totally new groups and people have been activated. Surviving networks, organisations and the everyday practice of hidden networks can, as Tarrow and Melucci argue, be important to a movement in periods of decline. However, it can also be argued that it is the long lasting fundamental values that represent the continuity and coherence of a movement in the different phases of visibility and latency, which a movement can pass through.

Notes

1. The movement has been studied with help of about sixty interviews with activists in the movement, as well as written material collected from the activists. Also protocols from the city council, newspapers, periodicals, city plans and literature has been used. The results of the research have been published in my doctor's thesis (Stahre 1999).
2. The movement of the nineties is now studied in a new project called "The Green City" which is financed by The Swedish Council for Research in the Humanities and Social Sciences (HSFR). The study is carried out with interviews with activists completed with written sources. The project will be concluded in January 2002.

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