

# Residual space and transgressive spatial practices

## – the uses and meanings of un-formed space

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One of the things that fascinate me in Flemingsberg is how its inhabitants – in thought and action – manage to bring together what was disjointed by modernist zone planning. What they achieve is nothing less than a tremendous act of daily place making. In Flemingsberg, residual space often appears as distances to cross when taking a bus, going to the shop, school or work. In which ways this “surplus landscape” constitutes spaces to appropriate and take into use is one of the questions of my ongoing research. May the residual strips and fields of Flemingsberg be interpreted as public space – and, if so, what kinds of encounters between different groups of inhabitants do they offer?

In his book *Le droit à la ville* (Sw: *Staden som rättighet* 1982) Lefebvre encourages the inhabitants of urban society to fight for the restoration of the places of their cities to spaces for multiplicity, meetings, games and festivity. His work “The Production of Space” celebrates the urban grid: the streets, the squares and the parks of the “traditional” city (1991, p. 388). But what about the vacant, little used and mostly unkempt fields, strips and slopes, that surround the hierarchical spatial schemata of modernist housing production?

It is worth pointing out in passing that illegitimate hybrids of country and city in no way escape the domination of space ... these bastard forms degrade urban and rural space. So far from transcending the conflict between the two, they thrust both into a confusion which would be utterly without form were it not for the “structure” imposed by the space of the state (Ibid. p. 387).

My ongoing research concerns the uses and meanings of residual space in such confused landscapes (Wikström 2002, 2004). It is part of a larger interdisciplinary project concerning public space in the new urban landscape, titled *The Potential of Public Space to Transgress the Boundaries of the Segregated City* (Nylund & al 2002). In this paper, I will explore the potentials of socio-spatial transgression related to all sorts of residual space. What is presented below is a tentative conceptualisation of the results from the ongoing field studies in Flemingsberg.

In a socially, culturally and ethnically segregated urban landscape, the ways that separate areas are geographically and physically connected to – or detached from – each other seems to be crucial for the opportunities for people with



Every day, in thought and action, the inhabitants of Flemingsberg manage to bring together what was disjointed by modernist zone planning: a tremendous act of place making.

different backgrounds to come into each other's presence. Segregation is not peculiar for the functionally zoned landscapes of modernism, far from it! However, when borders between areas take the shape of barriers, certain obstacles against spontaneous encounters and day to day interaction arise.

Based upon the investigations in Flemingsberg, my ongoing research deals with the nature of such areas. It would be too simplistic only to understand them as barriers. Residual areas, buffer zones, vacant land do separate one zone of building from the other, but they also connect the enclaves and afford opportunities of a range of actions. Just like the islands of the archipelago are simultaneously separated and

connected by the sea, the enclaves of modernist planning are joined as well as detached by the spaces that surround them. So, what potentials of crossing borders, and of transgressing boundaries between people with different culture and social status, may be discovered in the residual areas of the new urban landscape?

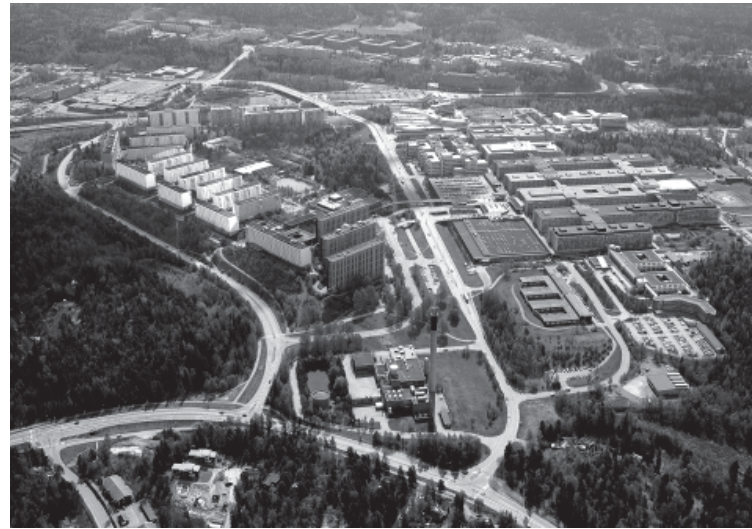
### Passage 1

in which we quit the central parts of the city, heading for what is called periphery, edge or outskirts; leaving the traditional loci of academic production behind and finding new centralities that challenge those of the historical city centre

Today, the suburban landscape of post-war modernist planning is rapidly changing. Conventional dichotomies of centre and periphery seem no longer valid. Here and there, new expansion zones create connections between the housing enclaves of the 60ies and offer new meeting places (Knox 1993). Within these landscapes, old villages, suburbs, industrial sites, infrastructure and even historical city cores are reconnected and obtain new meanings by the waves of new construction that wash over it (Schumacher & Koch 2004). New concentrations emerge that are large enough to be called *edge cities* – the term was introduced by Joel Garreau in his book with the same name (1991).

There is a risk attached to the use of terms like edge cities, peripheries, outskirts and suburbs. The problem involved is that the discourse about the new condensations of the urban landscape may unconsciously take its foothold in the old urban core (Wetterberg 1999). Thus, the new urban landscape, where the most dramatic events occur, still often is viewed from the “real” city. The planners of Huddinge, one of the municipalities south of Stockholm, resent Huddinge being referred to as outskirt. Flemingsberg, with its large university hospital, and Kungens kurva with major retail and entertainment establishments, both located in Huddinge, are examples of urban districts of vital importance for the entire metropolitan area.

New efforts in Swedish urban areas often are based upon cooperation between local planning authorities and private enterprise, ventures that profit from taking place within the jurisdiction of one municipality. In the Stockholm region, the expansion of business and research parks in Flemingsberg as well as in Kista rest upon a close cooperation between public and private actors (Nylund 2004). Here it is possible to develop a complete agenda distributing the actions and responsibilities of all parties involved. The development of the Kungens kurva – Skärholmen concentration displays a more contradictory row of events, where at certain times the separate plans of Stockholm and Huddinge have struck conflict. Actually, this agglomeration without a name could be seen as a “stealth city”, not very different from North American examples (Knox 1993). However, also the development of Kista in the northern part of Stockholm as a centre for the ICT business has given rise to new and unexpected questions concerning neighbouring areas like Akalla and Husby, Tensta and Rinkeby, Spånga and Heleneholm –



Flemingsberg, south of Stockholm, part of a changing urban landscape. To the left and in the background: Million program areas Grantorp and Visättra. To the right: Karolinska regional hospital, opened 1972, behind that: New Södertörn university college from 2002, Novum research park, Flemingsberg central station and Police headquarters.

all within Stockholm – but also with adjoining municipalities. To help integrate these suburban enclaves, not the least in terms of better public transport connections, is a major task for the Stockholm City Planning Office.

In Sweden, since decades, the efforts continue to resolve the problems related to the large-scale housing areas of the Million Program. The residential area, a neighbourhood unit (Franzén & Sandstedt 1981) or enclave with attached commercial and public services, stands in focus of discussions and planning measures. An entire landscape was formed according to the principles of modernist thought, a discourse or representation of space expressed in building. Many residential estates of the Million Program really constitute enclaves, separated by corridors of remaining “nature”. Thus, administrative regions and geographical distances make up a reality that supports the idea of people’s everyday life taking place on “islands”. However, this emphasis upon separate neighbourhood areas may be questioned (Nylund 2004). The relations and connections between such enclaves stand out as crucial for the lived reality of the new urban landscape.

Flemingsberg is cluster of enclaves surrounding a train station on the main railroad connecting Stockholm to Malmö





Residual space in Flemingsberg: expansion area close to railroad station.

and Copenhagen. It was originally developed during the late 60ies around the large regional hospital. Today, apart from the hospital, it contains a number of large scale housing areas, most of them from the 60ies and 70ies, a few areas of single-family housing, a research park, an industrial area and the new Södertörn University College. These enclaves are spatially separated from each other by residual space – transport corridors, expansion areas, buffer zones, strips of remaining nature. Around 12 000 people live in Flemingsberg, but in daytime the population grows with approximately 10 000 students and 11 500 workers. Flemingsberg is well connected to the town of Huddinge and to central Stockholm by commuter trains and roads. (Områdesbeskrivningar 2003; Södertörns högskola [www.sh.se])

## Passage 2

in which we begin to approach residual areas – by sketching the scope and connotations of the term *residual space* and by comparing its meanings with those of the Swedish planning term *impediment*, discovering that residual space has a history that is closely connected to modernist planning

In the transitional zones between different built enclaves of Flemingsberg or in intermediate zones within such areas,

people are moving, sometimes on planned walk paths, sometimes following shortcuts. Unplanned or left-over land, maybe saved as reserve plots or noise prevention zones, now and then with remains of old buildings, attract inhabitants of all ages, pursuing all sorts of activities. Others are repelled by the ugliness and dangers they perceive in such areas. It is primarily such surplus areas – in planning lingo often called residual space – which I will take a closer look upon.

The residual spaces of Flemingsberg consist of vast fields of unkempt grass, slopes where a wild flora has taken over, areas of bushes or fragments of “nature”. Maintenance is non-existent or cheapest possible – which explains a certain littering. Thus, they often display traces of spontaneous use: rests of huts, built by children or homeless people, remains of walks with dogs, lover’s meetings, and improvised picnics or barbecue parties. Shortcuts, trodden diagonally over meadows, strips of woodland, sparsely used parking lots and steep slopes, connect significant places.

There are several reasons why residual areas are significant as settings for transgressive interaction and encounters:

- They provide transitions and intersections but also borders and barriers between sections or enclaves of the city. To pass them implies literally to cross a boundary. As fringe zones, they provide the exterior appearance, what we meet when leaving one enclave and entering another. As intermediate space, they may be experienced as “belonging” neither to this nor to that neighbouring district.
- They represent land that is not subject to a complete and detailed order, but rather afford a certain freedom of action. As deserted or little-used land they are infrequently controlled by the owner. It is not always clear whose rules and norms that regulate their use. They offer places for activities that are excluded from the organised urban environment for being too space consuming, annoying or disturbing. They make possible unexpected encounters between people that act outside of their customary roles. They enable actions that escape the strict control of parents, teachers, neighbours and authorities. As fragments of nature or naturalised city they provide biotopes, sometimes displaying an unexpected abundance of species.
- Although sometimes included in plans, they often constitute the indirect result of planned building and exist in the outmost periphery of architects’ and planners’ intentions.

In the scheme of “figure and background”, they provide that background, which only under certain circumstances switches to foreground and becomes the *Gestalt*. This may be the reason why they often are simply perceived as exploitable land by urban renewal or “densification” projects, when new functions are to be added or when transportation networks are transformed or expanded. The process of making residual space “useful” may involve conflicts with users’ interests, unknown to the planners.

In Swedish, the technical term for residual space is *impediment* – which for us has lost the general meaning that prevails for example in French or English (hindrance, obstacle, handicap etc.). The word is used exclusively in contexts of land-use and planning. Originally employed by land-surveyors and referring to non profitable farm- or woodland, the word infiltrated the language of modernist planners as a term for all those more or less useless spaces that became the results of zoning and traffic planning. *Impediment* has an interesting etymology as it contains the Latin words *pedis* (foot) and *in-* which is a negation. Thus, impediments – in the Swedish technical, area-related sense – are “not for the foot”.

Residual space is typically generated in a *negative* way: To prevent the limits of noise to be exceeded, a noise reduction zone is required between the housing estate and the highway. Such a zone is not a space *for* but *against* something. The security ranges along highways and railroads, interstices that separate one housing estate from another, land reserved for future expansions; all are characterised by not directly being designed *for* a certain activity or set of activities. In that sense, residual areas are often *unformed*.

In his book *Formløs* (formless or shapeless), Danish architectural researcher Tom Nielsen promotes the term “surplus landscape” (*overskudslandskab*). Surplus landscapes, according to Nielsen, are phenomena that exist beyond what architects and planners normally define as their professional domain (Nielsen 2001, p 7). Thus they are not the results of direct design processes, but rather secondary consequences of planning and building. However, the fact that they are not focused within design processes does not mean that they are shapeless. Quite the opposite, surplus or residual space contains some of the formally most dramatic and spectacular places to be found in the urban landscapes of modernism. When designing a “figure”, there is always a

“background” being formed, whether that is intended or not.

My examples raise the question: *Residual space for whom?* When going beyond the perspective of planning, “surplus” or “useless” areas may be made useful by some people, may provide significant places in their everyday lives, and may be cherished and appropriated almost to the limit of becoming “home” for some of us. Strictly speaking, the spaces described here are residual from a certain perspective or according to a certain discourse, thus they can be discovered and become meaningful for a person or a group. In the end, the fate of residual space is a question of which actors have the power to classify urban space as one thing or the other, to decide its use and to initiate measures of change.

Residual areas to a lesser or larger degree are made accessible by people, appropriated and used. However, normally such diffuse and poorly defined spaces are not labelled *public*. In the Flemingsberg context, residual space is often made up of “nature” or at least fragments of woods or meadows, cliffs and slopes. The discourse of public space seldom includes the natural landscape.

Richard Sennett sees the shared public space as a first precondition for people to develop an interest in and engagement with “the other”. Thus, it is important to develop public spaces, which sustain informal everyday contact between different groups and classes (1992a, b). But Sennett elaborates his ideas in the context of a dense, traditional city, with a grid-like structure that enables more fluid transitions between the spaces of the rich and the poor, the established and the newcomers, the intellectuals and the workers, the subjects of the nation and the immigrants.

The residual areas of Flemingsberg in some cases may be understood as extensions or backyards of the urban public realm described by of Sennett. However, they also seem to relate to another interpretation of “public-ness”, the more or less universal access to the natural landscape revered by pre-agriculture societies, a landscape that no one can possess.

Thus, the territoriality of the residual zones is a complex one. It is ambiguous to say the least. It is ripe with contradictions and oppositions. This is where the nostalgic and vital yearning for the comfort of nature stumbles upon the outcasts and rest products of neo liberal society. But this is also where the minor attempts of appropriation by inhabitants are overridden by the growth of urban infrastructure, of new infill housing, and industrial or business areas.



Paved roadbank, more exiting than the planned playground?

### Passage 3

in which we go looking for answers to what *transgression* might be and find that it is not its exceptional but its trivial dimensions that are worth further exploration: transgression as daily experience in and permanent option of the urban landscape

To transgress means to “go beyond the limits set by (a moral principle, standard, law, etc.)”. The words Latin root is *transgredi*, meaning to step across. (Oxford Dictionary) Transgressions is often used in contexts of violation of law and order, committing sins, or even being evil, however also in a broader and more positive sense for actions that challenge power structures and transcend customs, beliefs, traditions and norms.

One widespread understanding of transgression is in the sense of breaking rules, especially in the field of religious or sexual behaviour. The profanation of churchyards by Satanist rituals upsets people far outside the circle of true believers of Christianity. All kinds of border crossings that explicitly involve doing wrong, of exhibiting forbidden behaviour, are associated with transgression. But violating the rules of a certain territory does not necessarily have to involve acts that are perceived as hostile and negative. Doing good

deeds may cause even more confusion, like when a group of homeless people started handing out money to passers-by in central Copenhagen earlier this winter (Uppochnerövänd jul, 2004). The appropriation for some humane activity of residual areas, however ambiguous as territories, is bound to cause opposition by some. The park-playground belongs to everyone, some inhabitants of Flemingsberg said when the Muslim association offered to take responsibility for the deteriorating area.

*Transgression* may refer to the crossing of cultural and social boundaries as well as of spatial barriers. Boundaries are often expressed as dichotomies between in and out, here and there, us and them. Public space can be described in terms of rules – formal or informal, strict or negotiable – that are applicable within and without certain borders. To move through public space means passing between such territories, adapting one’s behaviour according to the current system of rules. It is often when someone breaks a rule, and trespasses the limits of what is considered permissible, that borders between territories become visible (Cresswell 1996). The countryside – although caught in the networks of urban society – is still dominated by agriculture and nature. Nevertheless it is made up by territories where specific rules apply. Try to take a shortcut through a field of standing crops, and you will probably find out. Caught somewhere between city and country, the territories of residual space seem to be in permanent conflict – often a latent conflict that is enacted just in exceptional cases. The person, who follows the wandering path downwards to the lush valley close to Flemingsbergsleden, may never actually meet the one who throws a used tire down the same slope.

Thus the crossing of minor or major cultural and social boundaries is never abstracted from material settings: *Transgression always takes place*. This does not necessarily mean that place is changed in a material sense or even that a movement in space is involved. By *not* acting, e.g. by not removing your Advent star when Christmas is over, you may commit an act of transgression.

The ultimate transgression must be revolution: for instance, picture yourself the proletarian avant-garde breaking into the headquarters of the old ruling class, rushing up the stairs with guns in hand, crossing all those borders that were controlled by the now besieged power, removing old boundaries and creating new ones; those of a new territoriality related



to a proclaimed new era. Historically, carnivals have been important, large scale transgressive events, in some cases surpassing the thin line between symbolic-ritual enactment and revolt (Le Roy Ladurie 1982/1979). In daily life, transgression occurs almost unnoticed, little steps outside that which is prescribed, expected, polite, conventional, or part of a tradition (Certeau 1988). In the long run, however, such little steps may redefine territories, slowly changing society – and thus the conditions of transgression itself. Transgression seems to have revolutionary as well as evolutionary aspects and to concern processes of both macro and micro scale.

One important meaning of transgression would be that of *going beyond the borders of a safe and well known place*, exploring the world outside. This could be for example to leave one's home or neighbourhood to venture into the strange territories of other people, of other groups and classes. The incentive for the inhabitants of a physically detached housing area to go beyond its boundaries and encounter new worlds is strong: The limited range of opportunities as well as the lack of basic everyday functions within each area provokes them to cross its borders, actually producing new vicinities and cultural complexities. Transgression in a similar sense could involve a refusal to behave according to traditions or instructions and to introduce new rules of conduct. It may include opening up one's territory for strangers, to let people with foreign habits and attributes in. In all these cases, places are involved, places where certain practices apply, where a certain conduct is expected, where a certain atmosphere should prevail. The people involved leave the place for another or introduce new ways of acting, that is: make their place another place. Transgression then implies that the permanent or temporary appropriation of place is established, eliminated, questioned, challenged or negotiated – by/for individuals or collectives.

Transgression in another sense involves more specifically *crossing boundaries between private and public*, between territories accessible only for a limited group of people and territories open for anyone. *To enter public space* means leaving a territory, the access of which is restricted, and having to deal with public behaviour. It involves different individuals' taken for granted attitudes and customs being contrasted against one another and against a more or less consensual code of public behaviour. *To exit public space* often, but not always, means going home or to one's place



The base of the water tower, shut off from people's view, a perfect place for graffiti training.

of work. Public space often includes temporary appropriations that offer people a stance within the public: personal or collective space expressed by body language, positioning and movement, and the arrangement of things carried along. These are the short-term places people establish at bus stops, on benches, in trains, on airports, in cafés, at libraries, in seminar rooms, on beaches etc. Appropriation of public space is occasionally more durable, when a certain group more or less takes over a square, a park, a beach or an entire neighbourhood – or when commercial actors takes over part of a square for restaurant customers only or dominate the symbolic environment by abundant signage. Public space enables the connection with enclosed places like bars, restaurants, clubs, shops, and malls where public access is allowed with some restrictions: This is where age-limits, dress codes, sizes of wallets, cultural identities, educational standards etc apply. Such places also may become favourite places of certain groups, which in turn may make outsiders reluctant to enter the locality. Transgression here means to challenge the privatisation of and the exclusion from public space – but also to exercise the opportunities of getting a foothold in the public by appropriating space.

Transgression in a similar sense involves *crossing boundaries within the public realm*. What we call public space is never just the homogenous counterpart to private space. It comprises of regions where different patterns of behaviour are expected. Crossing boundaries between them often means changing ways of acting – running to escape approaching cars instead of strolling along, lowering one’s voice when entering a church or library. To move through such regions of public space – adapting to the requirements of each new territory – is a mere routine for all of us. Such transitions, involving moving one’s body-subject and becoming sequentially involved in different social and material contexts may not imply transgression even in a weak sense. Breaking such rules, however, may have more or less serious consequences – being hushed at in the library or run over by a car. Here, a sort of a statement is made; a temporary place is marked out by loud voices or pools of blood. This temporary place (even if it is quickly refuted and all signs removed) for a moment makes the rules clearly visible. At other times, the street is taken over by crowds of pedestrians and the church becomes an agora. In Flemingsberg, leaving the paved footpath for the spontaneous shortcut means accomplishing a certain freedom, moving at one’s own responsibility. But for some people, taking shortcuts is shameful. It implies breaking rules and doing wrong. Transgression here means moving within the heterogeneous realm of the public, bending or challenging its rules and confronting borders between public territories.

In the suburban setting, built up by separate units, there is another opportunity: To *leave public space* for the surrounding fringe areas, “the illegitimate hybrids of city and country”, means escaping the formal and informal control of public space. To peacefully urinate in the bushes of the road bank, unseen from the artery road close by, may be a wonderful relief. The transgression involved should, however, not be understood as one of immersing into a space of unlimited individual freedom and safety. Other rules may apply here, the rules of woodland wanderers, cross country skiers or berry pickers, the public-ness of the countryside. Residual space offers opportunities to withdraw from the formal and informal control of public space to a less controlled territory. However, this lack of vigilant control does not imply the non-existence of rules.

A special case of transgression is making use of the basic – and for many the most significant – opportunity of pu-

blic space: to turn to the other by using a gesture, letting one’s eyes meet the other’s, by making a small, friendly act of helpfulness, by giving a remark, asking a question or entering a conversation. To overcome the fear or uneasiness of meeting a stranger in the wilderness may in a similar way mean reaching out, but is more difficult. Here one normally lacks the anonymous co-presence of other strangers. Without necessarily becoming personal or private, the participants of such events widen their horizons and broaden their views. They employ a certain skill called *civility* (Bauman 2001), to which I will return below. Although such acts are often seen as characteristic for ideal public space, they in a curious way stand out as transgressions!

This reasoning leads to a certain consideration concerning public space: Transgression in weaker or stronger senses of the word then must be seen as *a permanent option* of the public realm. The transitions between regions where certain rules apply, the attempts of appropriation, the conflicts of territory, the testing of borders, the encounters with strangers, all belongs to what is customary in public space. Some transgressive acts, though, imply the deterrence of transgression. For instance: privatisation, or the exclusion of certain categories of people whose presence is not wanted by those in power, means depriving public space of those freedoms normally associated to it. All kinds of limitations of the accustomed repertoire of action in public space tend to upset people and to provoke to counter-action. One of the core topics motivating the *Reclaim the Streets* movement is that public space has been taken over by commercial forces that crowd the streets with advertisements, business activities and expensive open-air restaurants. Instances of violence and vandalism occurring in connection to reclamations in turn upset other users of public space, who feel their access to and safety within the public being threatened.

What does transgression imply in those areas bordering public space or just being left over during the expansion of suburbs? If transgression is a permanent option here, it is in another sense. Other modalities of transgression are enacted in spaces of apparently ambiguous or confused territoriality. Whereas the transgressive actions of public space mostly occur in the face of the other, such actions in residual areas often come about in the absence of co-actors or spectators. Just like turned-over gravestones at the cemetery are required to show that a transgressive act has occurred, all sorts of ma-



terial traces prove the existence of transgressive behaviour in residual areas. Thus the other is normally not present in person, not even as a superficially perceived figure, but interpreted through left-behind traces. The exterior appearances, on which we base our prejudiced interpretation of the other in the public, are here reduced to little signs, waste products and footprints. And when this user of residual space leaves marks, they will often be interpreted in a negative sense: littering, graffiti, harming nature, etc. “The other” may turn out to be a figure that we are not too keen on meeting.

Transgression has here been interpreted as a wide concept, referring to ever present features of everyday life and public space. Does that make it useless? When applied in a nuanced way and in concrete contexts, it seems to open new perspectives that we shall encounter during the following passages.

#### Passage 4

in which we loose ourselves in vast regions of the urban environment that do not conform to the ideals of public space, that is: they neither offer good conditions of civil intercourse, nor require any of those skills that make up civility

Writers like Habermas, Sennett and Bauman have established an understanding of public space that is rooted in specific forms of human interaction that developed during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries with the rise of the bourgeois class. The ideal public realm discussed by Sennett is characterised by strangers meeting strangers, thus another kind of interaction than the social intercourse among neighbours, friends and relatives. The meeting of strangers is an event without a past and often also an event without a future. *Civility* is Sennett’s term for the skills required in public space (Bauman 2001). Civil public space ideally represents a particular region of communal life, where strangers have the opportunity of encountering strangers and enjoying their presence without becoming personal or intimate.

Bauman’s critical/polemical stance is underlined in the title of his paper: *Uses and Disuses of Urban Space*. He describes four ways in which the “disuses” are expressed, four regions of urban space if you like: *Emic places*, *fagic places*, *non-places* and *empty spaces*. These four ways of regionalisation differ in the ways strangers are encountered, or rat-

her: avoided. However, they all are related to transgression, or rather: the absence of a certain kind of transgression that allegedly occurs when strangers encounter strangers in public space. What Bauman calls *public yet non-civil spaces* are found everywhere, in the midst of society.

As *emic*, Bauman describes places with the sort of inhospitable emptiness that he finds in the open spaces of *La Défense* in Paris. Its monumentality offers visitors nowhere to rest, no place to inhabit if just for a moment. Urban life is reduced to the crowds that, at regular intervals, are spewed out of the *Métro*, quickly disappearing again. Here, strangers are dealt with by separation and the absence of direct encounters. *Fagic* places are the temples of consumption, places without a place, where shoppers experience an almost religious community of shopping. Instead of being separated from each other, strangers here are assimilated by the denial of their otherness, thus direct encounters are disarmed. These two types of “disuse” cover significant regions of today’s public space; however Bauman finds it necessary to make a couple of additions.

*Non-places*, the term borrowed from Marc Augé (1992), share some traits with the *emic* places: *non-places* also discourage any thought of settling-in. But unlike the *emic* places, *non-places* typically are places where people spend long hours: airports, hotels, motorways, public transportation. Whatever the differences among strangers spending time there, they are triggered to follow a uniform pattern of behaviour. Neither here, Bauman writes, have the sophisticated skills of civility to be exercised, since public behaviour is reduced to a few, easy to grasp principles.

The last ideal type, *empty spaces*, involves another way of dealing with difference: to make it invisible or prevented from seen. Empty spaces are places to which no meaning is ascribed; the experience of them does not include sense-making. In such “meaningless” places, the issue of difference never arises: There is no one there to negotiate with. Empty spaces, Bauman writes, are leftover places, “non-colonised places and places which neither the designers nor the managers of perfunctory users wish, or feel need to, earmark for colonization”. They are “the waste-products of architectural blue-printing and the neglected fringes of urbanist visions”. They are, one could say, regions that emerge as a contrast to the regionalisation of modernist planning. (Bauman 2001, p. 26f)

But they are also those districts that we, as inhabitants of the urban landscape avoid visiting, which we consider strange, hostile, rough, boring or uninteresting (p. 27) Thus empty spaces are not only defined in relation to the actual function of the planned and built urban environment, but also from the points of view of different groups of inhabitants. They then express a sort of regionalisation that is produced by the ways the urban landscape habitually is interpreted and taken into use by different groups. This means that any place can be an empty space for some individual, for some ethnic group, social class or local population. This kind of regionalisation is closely related to the segregation of urban environments. Each strata of the population not only creates its well-trodden, well-known and cherished regions, but also its empty spaces, its unexplored regions and its spaces feared, despised and demonised: “The emptiness of place is in the eye of the beholder” (Bauman 2001, p. 26f)

What Bauman refers to as empty spaces covers two categories that each has its own logic. One of them – the leftover spaces – is related to the forms and functions of built structure, and the other to complex and dynamic socio-cultural processes of the urban environment. While the first one with some difficulty adds itself to Bauman’s typology of public yet non-civil places, the second one seems to refer to an overarching precondition of today’s urban landscape: the separation, segregation or ethnification of cities. Emptiness in the second and more general sense is virtual, in the eye of the beholder, yet it influences the spatial narratives people live by.

According to this interpretation of Bauman’s text, there seem to be two facets of empty space that may be relevant in the context of *residual space*, facets that represent separate instances of regionalisation. Firstly, what Bauman describes as neglected, non-colonized and leftover places in a general sense, seem to describe some kind of residual space, public only in a broad sense of the word. Secondly, what Bauman refers to as empty spaces of the mental maps of different inhabitants, is a general condition of urban space – and also a precondition of residual space. Residual spaces may be parts of those regions that are prevented from being seen and experienced by some individuals and groups. Thus, the predicament of residual space – if we follow Bauman – is *dual emptiness*. Not only is it a waste-product of urbanisation processes, it is also made invisible and inaccessible by

the routines people develop when taking the urban landscape into use. As we shall see in the next passage, though, this “emptiness” is never complete; the residual areas of Flemingsberg seem to be vibrant with life.

### Passage 5

in which we discover the diversity of residual space and discuss certain traces of use in terms of transgressive practices of everyday life: informal footpaths here stand out as the most evident traces of human activity

So far, the actual urban landscape of Flemingsberg has only been hinted at. I have described it as an archipelago of detached units of housing, industry, commerce, research and education. What kind of territories, what spatial practises are to be found in the sea of leftover and fringe areas that surround these units?

The exploration of residual areas in Flemingsberg is carried out in three main stages. During the first, I visited, observed and photographed all areas that were not manifestly ascribed specific functions and/or subject to regular maintenance and care. I wanted to get an overview of the varieties of residual areas, and paid special attention to all activities and traces of activities that I discovered. The result was a simple typology of residual space in the Flemingsberg setting, a number of observer’s narratives and a collection of photos. For the detailed investigation of the next stage, I selected two subsections of Flemingsberg, the eastern part of Grantorp and the northern part of Visättra, both housing estates of the Million program closely connected to all types of residual space. The field work during stage two included detailed observations, and the mapping of footpaths and significant places within residual areas of the two subsections. Now I took photos and wrote field notes in a more complete and systematic manner. The maps that I drew were incorporated as layers on aerial (orthogonal) photos of the areas. I documented each of the paths in text and photo. During the third stage in winter and spring 2004/2005, I employ my knowledge about local conditions in general and about residual space in particular when carrying out interviews with inhabitants, workers, and students representing different sectors of the Flemingsberg local context. I also systematically analyse all town plans covering the areas in question.



Shortcuts, access paths and wandering paths: A network of informal footpaths modifies and completes the planned system of walkways.

Based on these studies, I want to distinguish between *four rough types of residual space*: interzones, fringes, infrastructural border zones, and expansion areas. Each of them, it appears, relate to certain phases and varieties of production of space.

*Interzones* are characteristic for modernist planning. They reflect the modernist principle of functional zoning which is the spatial counterpart of the industrial division of work. Interzones separate one unit of building from another, clearly emphasising each part's spatial independence. The interzones are primarily shaped by the form of the surrounding enclaves and provide buffers that tolerate irregularities of the edges of each built unit. In Flemingsberg, such zones surround and lie between different housing areas, around and between different parts of Grantorp and Visättra but also around the large hospital area. Visättra and Grantorp are situated on the flat tops of ridges and surrounded by strips of sloping woodland and even cliffs. Other interzones are covered by grass and may be important for recreational

activities, private picnics, sports activities, and public festivals. In the interzones, well trodden shortcuts run diagonally, effectively allowing passages between separate areas.

*Fringe areas* is an adequate term for those parts of residual space that forms the border of each unit. Contrary to interzones, fringes have a long history, going back to the first human settlements. Whenever space is cleared for communal living, a fringe is established where ordered and cultivated land meets the wilderness. Where the sub-areas of Flemingsberg turn towards large forests, fringe areas evolve, characterised by the expansion of everyday activities outside the housing area. Their shapes reflect the forms of boundaries between planned and unplanned land. Also, parts of interzones may have the character of fringes. In the fringe areas of Flemingsberg, shady or secret activities are found: smoking out of the control of teachers, playing violent or noisy games, making out with the boy- or girlfriend, or illegally dumping garbage. When the physical boundary is blurred, they provide extensions of the ordered public space





Ignoring the paved walkways: shortcut in Visättra, Flemingsberg.

around the buildings: a place to rest or a natural playground. Informal footpaths here may serve as paths for recreation close to wild nature or just as access to interesting spots.

*Infrastructural border zones* are areas generated by the traffic system, the electric power network and main water and sewage pipes. They may be understood against the background of modern welfare society and its struggle to control the negative effects of industrial and infrastructural growth. “Liminal value” – referring to tolerable amounts of noise, airborne pollution, electric fields, radiation etc. – is the keyword here. Main transportation arteries like thoroughfares and railroads are surrounded by safety zones and noise-abatement zones, sometimes planted or containing rests of nature, sometimes covered with concrete tiles or gravel and more or less devoid of vegetation. Although such zones are often fenced in, they may provide arenas for activities, legitimate or illegal. Footpaths along (and sometimes illegally and dangerously crossing) such zones clearly illustrate deficiencies of the existing urban structure. In Flemingsberg, the cleared strips under the power lines invite activities like picking berries or mushrooms, at the same time being exposed to strong electric fields.

*Expansion areas*, finally, are future building or infrastructure sites. In a more general manner, such areas are related

to phases of material expansion. The prerequisite, however, is a planning body of some sort, whether public or private, which has the power to set aside grounds for future building. Their character varies, from completely un-cleared or unkempt to well prepared for future building and provisionally used for parking or as storage-yards. When not surrounded by fences, they offer space for illegal dumping of garbage, old furniture and even car-wrecks. In some cases, they provide room for illegal or approved cross-country motorcycle tracks. In Flemingsberg, the vacant lot close to the station one month was the provisional site for the caravan of a drug addict, next month to be transformed to the grounds for a visiting circus. Other areas respond to the ever growing need for parking space. Due to location, expansion areas may be crossed by significant footpaths.

Geographically speaking, these provisional categories are not mutually exclusive; rather they are often super-imposed upon each other. Fringe zones seem to be the most general phenomenon, forming “halos” around each unit of building. Interzones may be overlaid by fringe areas, infra-structural border zones and expansion areas. All these zones provide different preconditions for transgressive actions, forbidden or not, sometimes mediating between poorly related fragments of the urban landscape, sometimes appropriating them for activities excluded from the enclaves.

When studying the meaning and use of residual space, informal footpaths stand out as the most (self) evident traces of everyday human activities. All appropriation of un-paved land that involves repeated bodily presence also leaves marks in the form of weaker or stronger paths. In the description so far, their form and meaning is just hinted at. It seems that each category of residual space is related to certain sets of activities and thus to specific types of paths. What roles do these paths play and where are they to be found? Based upon observations and mappings, I would like to distinguish between *four types of informal footpaths*: shortcuts, access paths, wandering paths and sidewalk paths.

*Shortcuts* are found everywhere in Flemingsberg, especially where people have to cross interspaces to reach important nodes of their everyday itinerary. One finds them in the middle of Flemingsberg, whenever the regular pedestrian network is uncomfortable or inappropriate. They appear where one housing area is poorly connected to the neighbouring estates. In other places, they cut corners, saving

their users some effort. Shortcuts primarily seem to be related to the routine movements of everyday life. Taking a shortcut, one saves some time or energy. The important effect of shortcuts is to modify hodological space, by improving the spatial configuration. Thus, they reflect the shortcomings of the planned and build traffic network. From a configurational point of view, one may distinguish between two varieties: By adding a new link between separate pedestrian networks, the forest paths that connect the housing in Visättra with the neighbouring industrial zone shorten the walk to work by half or so. The abundant paths that cut over corners of lawns may save the walker a few steps but do not change the system of walkways in a substantial manner.

*Access paths* provide the access to significant places. In Flemingsberg such paths lead to important spots primarily in the “natural” surroundings. In the fringe areas of Visättra, a thin path gains access to a hut built by children. To cliffs and other exiting elements of nature, there are other paths. Access paths, as far as I have seen, tend to become part of networks and are then difficult to distinguish from the next category. On one of the people I interviewed, a middle-aged lady, told about how she in the old days, when her daughters came home from school, took them for a short walk out in the forest clad fringes. We climbed a rock, she said, and standing there on the top we just screamed at the top of our lungs!

*Wandering paths* often meander through fringe areas, e.g. the ones that pass along the edge of the Visättra housing estate but still hidden in the forest. Wandering paths are the expressions of walks *other* than getting from one significant node to another, being part of someone’s jogging track, providing a nice path for walking the dog or just for grabbing some fresh air, smelling the earth and listening to the birds. Flemingsberg also carry traces of the old rural landscape, and sometimes wandering paths seem to be composed by remnants of the movement patterns of the old days. One speculation is that such old foot-paths express a “natural” sensibility of living creatures in relation to their habitat. Their appeal may thus be deeply layered in human culture and conduct. On the wandering paths of Flemingsberg one encounters old men taking walks on the rough ground, young guys playing with their dogs, mountain bikers, stick walkers and mushroom pickers.

*Sidewalk paths* are found along some of the major roads in Flemingsberg, whenever a regular sidewalk is missing on



Wandering paths sometimes connect to fragments of the old rural landscape. Visättra äng.

either or both sides of the road. They belong, it seems, mostly to the routine movements of daily life, having a similar role as shortcuts. Informal sidewalks first and foremost express the lack of recognition from planners of the fact that roads designed exclusively for cars lead to places that may also be the destinations of pedestrians. When walking along the road—intended for cars only—seems to be more attractive than using the separate network of pedestrian paths, we are probably facing some basic misunderstandings within the design process. Along Hälsovägen, the sidewalk path close to the car lanes is doubled by a parallel path running through the grassland by the side of the road.

O. F. Bollnow uses the term *hodological* space to describe practices and decisions that are involved when moving for instance in a landscape. According to Bollnow, there is always question of an *ausgezeichneten Weg*, the most appropriate way from a certain perspective (Bollnow 1990, p. 191ff). This implies that the best way may not only the fastest or least energy consuming, but also the safest, nicest, most interesting or most beautiful passage. In his etymological discussion of path- and route-related words in Swedish and English, Rickard Persson suggests *stråk* as a useful concept

(Persson 2004). This Swedish word simultaneously denotes a space or corridor of movement and the activities of numerous people moving back and forth, it thus represents both process and product. It catches the complex freedom involved in walking, implied in the concept of hodological space and expressed in the deviations people make and in their choices between alternative paths.

The informal footpaths of Flemingsberg's residual zones, sometimes carelessly meandering, sometimes sharply cutting straight through, but always crossing each other and forming intricate networks, seem to reflect a wide range of paces and movement practices. They map out ways of walking related to the sparse economy of everyday chores, to absent-minded wandering, to sharp-eyed discovery, to the joys of bodily exercise, to the yearning for loneliness, to the adventures of good company, to the hunt for treasures.

As soon as we leave the interzones, fringes, and other areas of a residual character, pedestrian activities produce rather few visible marks. Here and there a lawn may be crossed, a fence climbed or a hedge squeezed through, but most shortcuts cross areas intended for some kind of traffic. We then depart from the specific practises related to treading informal footpaths for the more general tactics of walking in the city, described by Michel de Certeau (1988). Peculiar for informal footpaths is that they represent the visible traces of practises that elsewhere are difficult to discover. But the fact that they constitute manifest material forms does not imply that they make up "proper places" (Certeau 1988, p xix). Informal footpaths are maintained by the unplanned and uncoordinated activities of numerous individuals. They are not defended, claimed or fenced in. They rather represent a special case, being the traces of one of those anonymous everyday activities that make the real city.

In the new urban landscape, however, this continuous making-through-walking gains a certain meaning. To summarize, such practises

- modify the configurative properties of the urban structure by drawing new lines of movement supplementing and refining the pedestrian network;
- contribute in enacting public space by making unused areas accessible, thus enlivening them by exposing people to each other in ways that were not anticipated by planners; and

- embody the relations between pedestrians and urban landscape by intensively employing properties of the body like kinesthetic coordination, and the senses of smell, hearing, touch etc.

Here, transgression is present in several senses of the word. I will mention two of them: Informal footpaths on one hand represent transgression perceived as illegitimate, unwanted or just negative actions. But on the other, they express the wisdom of a complex economy of movement, an economy that is rational in a broad and multi-faceted understanding of the word.

### Passage 6

in which we encounter a couple of theoretical writers that both have something significant to say about people's appropriation of urban space – transgressive or not – although they do not seem to agree upon the nature of this use

One precondition for transgressive events at all to occur is that people gains access to an environment and, in some sense of the word, makes it theirs. Lefebvre, in the last chapter of *The Production of Space*, deals with the role of space for the constitution of groups, movements or classes. One of the conclusive arguments is that to achieve significance and power in society, groups and classes have to pass the *trial by space*. He writes that "... groups, classes and fractions of classes cannot constitute themselves, or recognize one another, as subjects' unless they generate (or produce) a space" (Lefebvre 1991, p. 416).

Lefebvre makes a clear distinction between a superficial, self-reflecting relation to a place and a real appropriation. The latter has to deal with "long-lived morphologies" that underpin "antiquated ideologies and representations" (ibid. p. 417). The Swedish Million Program housing estates constitute a striking example of such persevering spatial structures that seem to resist appropriation in Lefebvre's sense of the word.

The *tactics of walking*, vigorously argued for by Michel Certeau, emphasizes an appropriation of urban space that is ephemeral rather than stable. In times when cities are transformed by the effects of strong global economic powers, "the chorus of idle footsteps" (Certeau 1988, p.97) offers some hope for all those who cannot pass the "trial by space".



When describing the virtues of walking, Certeau metaphorically uses words like “ruses”, “tricks” and “poaching”. The tactics involved in “user production” may appear weak, even harmless. But the collective of pedestrians skilfully escape the intentions and instructions laid down in the urban structures. Their tactics, then, seldom lead to the establishment of “proper places” (ibid. p.117f), but to temporary appropriations. Time is on the walkers’ side.

All through *The Production of Space*, appropriation is discussed in relation to domination. There is no balance between the two: Lefebvre makes it quite clear that domination is a major trait of neocapitalism, it “wins a crushing victory” over appropriation, which is “utterly subjugated”. This does not mean, however, that appropriation ever disappears, it continuously surfaces in practice and it is Lefebvre’s quest to make it reappear in theory (ibid. p. 166).

The successive occupation of the Million Program areas by groups of immigrants from different cultures and with varying social backgrounds (although sometimes sharing an existence outside the labour market) seems to represent processes, which may or may not be conceived of as appropriation in Lefebvre’s sense of the word. How can the inhabitants of these areas – having first moved in from Sweden’s low standard housing in city centres, then from the Swedish countryside, and later from other parts of the world, low-wage employed or out of work, from different generations, isolated or socially active, men, women, and children – meet the demands worded by Lefebvre as “trial by space”? What textures, what spatial configurations are available for processes of appropriation? And what does the supply of not yet occupied land, of fringe areas waiting to be exploited, of intermediate zones affording free space for action, mean in this context?

Appropriated space is described as “a natural space that is modified by a group in order to serve the needs and possibilities of that group” (p. 165). This is a definition that seems to have more in common with the original “*räumen*” described by Bollnow (1990) than with the appropriation of Marx. Lefebvre finds Marx’ concept of appropriation unclear: it is sharply opposed to property, but not distinguished from domination. For instance, Marx finds the domination of nature unproblematic, whereas Lefebvre clearly sees the enormous problems related to such a view (p. 343). Appropriated space resembles a work or art, writes Lefebvre,



The monumentality of the new urban landscape: Grantorp high-rises and the Stockholm Globe. According to Henri Lefebvre, domination wins a crushing victory over appropriation. But what about the chorus of idle footsteps, the tactics described by Michel de Certeau?

without imitating it. It may be a monument or a building but also a section of the city: a site, a square or a street. “Examples of appropriated spaces abound, but it is not always easy to decide in what respect, by whom and for whom they have been appropriated” (p 165).

As a contrast, dominated (and dominant) space is a space transformed and mediated by technology and practice (p. 164). Such spaces are easily recognisable: “Dominated space is usually closed, sterilized, emptied out” (p. 165). Dominated space has a long history and its origins coincide with those of political power: think of fortifications, dams and irrigation systems! Typically technology is involved, introducing rectilinear or rectangular forms: “A motorway brutalizes the countryside and the land, slicing through space like a great knife” (p. 165). However, these are just the exterior signs of ubiquitous hegemonic power:

As a body of constraints, stipulations and rules to be followed, social space acquires a normative and repressive efficacy – linked instrumentally to its objectivity – that makes the efficacy of mere ideologies and representations pale in comparison. It is an essentially deceptive space, readily occupiable by pretences such as those of civic peace, consensus or the reign of non-violence. (p. 358)

How is any opposition possible, one asks, against such overwhelming and all-penetrating forces? Where are the cracks, the niches and clearings in neocapitalist social space that make appropriation at all possible? What does it mean that appropriation always re-emerges?

Social space also contains potentialities, Lefebvre answers. These are related to *works* (in a sense similar to work of art) and to *reappropriation*, where the artistic sphere is important. The body itself is a source of transgression: in people's hopes of a better life, to some part realised as holidays, the sun, the snow, and the sea plays important roles: "Neither spectacle nor mere signs are acceptable. What is wanted is materiality and naturalness as such, rediscovered in their (apparent or real) immediacy" (ibid. p. 353). Experiences of leisure, and of the joy of being "free" in one's body, become the enemy within the gates of neocapitalism, impossible for mental space to neutralise. Lefebvre's examples are strictly Mediterranean. A Northern European would here add the experiences of woods, moors or meadows for walking, picking berries or hunting, of mountains to climb or beaches to comb – all sources of bodily transgression that people of the North sometimes have just around the corner, even in the residual fragments of more or less natural land.

Here, transgression implies overcoming – in specific situations – general patterns of domination. The question is if such transgressive moments of appropriation contain seeds of change in a deeper sense, and if they do, what sort of expectation could possibly be attached to them. According to Lefebvre's analysis, the option of appropriation is present in contexts of contradictions that mark the phase of capitalism of his time. The question is to what degree these preconditions remain since the 80ies.

Certeau shares with Lefebvre the recognition of social space as a strong force, a strategic body or instrument stronger than ideologies, that works through its extended and structured materiality. Certeau's concept of *strategy* is described as

... the calculus of force-relationships which becomes possible when a subject of will and power (a proprietor, an enterprise, a city, a scientific institution) can be isolated from an "environment". A strategy assumes a place that can be circumscribed as proper (propre) and thus serves as the basis for generating relations with an exterior distinct from it (competitors, adversaries, "clienteles", "targets", or "objects" of research). Political,

economical and scientific rationality has been constructed on this strategic model. (Certeau 1988, p. xix)

Whereas Lefebvre's work primarily is based upon a critical reading of Marx, Certeau in a likewise critical way refers to Foucault and Bourdieu. Certeau's concept of *tactics* implies a radical restoration of the users, whose actions and trajectories are impossible to grasp through the "analytic fragmentation" of conventional social sciences (ibid. p. xviii). Certeau's work then seems to represent a critique of the production of knowledge in society that is equally strong as Lefebvre's. The users or consumers are "... unrecognized producers, poets of their own acts, silent discoverers of their own paths in the jungle of functionalist rationality ..." and Certeau emphasizes the unpredictable and indeterminist character of their doings.

Many everyday practices – Certeau mentions talking, reading, walking, shopping, and cooking – can be understood in terms of *tactics*. Certeau defines tactics as

... a calculus which cannot count on a "proper" (a spatial or institutional localization), nor thus on a borderline distinguishing the other as a visible totality. The place of a tactic belongs to the other. A tactic insinuates itself into the other's place, fragmentarily, without taking over in its entirety, without being able to keep it at a distance. It has to its disposal no base where it can capitalize on its advantages, prepare its expansions, and secure independence with respect to circumstances. The "proper" is the victory of space over time. On the contrary, because it does not have a place, a tactic depends on time – it is always on the watch for opportunities that must be "seized on the wing". Whatever it wins, it does not keep. (ibid. p. xix)

In a wondrous way, the consumers/producers of Certeau seem to *avoid* rather than to pass Lefebvre's trial by space. The concept of tactic displays an extremely strong tension between autonomy and unpredictability on one hand and subordination on the other. In the often quoted description of looking out from the top of World Trade Centre in New York (p. 91), Certeau contrasts the "erotics of knowledge" implied in the overview from the top with the lack of visibility of "the murky intertwining daily behaviours" characterising the labyrinths below. Tactics in Certeau's sense obviously lack overview, but is also "invisible" to conven-

tional, visually biased procedures of knowledge. Does the voyeur ever meet the walker?

### Passage 7

in which our roaming temporarily ends by tentatively addressing three significant questions – at the prospect of forthcoming ventures

A remaining impression of weeks of criss-crossing the residual zones of Flemingsberg is silence, emptiness and lack of manifest human presence. This is definitively not the space of festivity and carnival that Lefebvre advocates. Whereas the attempts of many different actors to appropriate the central spaces of the urban network are clearly visible and manifest for most inhabitants, the appropriation of residual space mainly occur in silence, in those “empty spaces” that Bauman writes about.

In architectural discourse, the quality of public space is sometimes judged by the amount of people simultaneously assembling there or just passing through. More sophisticated measures pay attention to the specific actions and meanings of urban life, e.g. the civility of public space. The interpretation of sparsely used areas, such as the leftover strips and zones of the present urban landscape, implies other approaches. The routinised or sporadic events seldom coincide to create a populated landscape. The explorer would have to be content with the scarce encounters with strangers, were it not for all those signs that people cannot help leaving. When I, as an observer/wanderer, had trained my senses in discovering traces of human presence, the slopes, fields and fragments of woodland were not silent anymore. In ways not always clear and consistent, they started speaking about other meanings, scales and ranges of urban life.

Then, what potentials of crossing borders, and more specifically, of transgressing boundaries between people with different culture and social status, may be discovered in the residual areas of the new urban landscape? Based upon the ongoing fieldwork in Flemingsberg, I would like to summarise the experiences in three questions, questions that are at once speculative interpretations and hypotheses for the forthcoming work.

The *first* one concerns the nature of the appropriation going on in the residual areas of Flemingsberg. It is quite clear that the activities found do not interfere with funda-



“ET”, decorated natural monument in the fringes of the regional hospital.

mental power relations in society, thus they do not challenge relations of domination. There is hardly a place being created here that can pass the “trial by space”. Transgression in a grand, societal sense of the word is obviously not at stake.

However, what actually is going on seems to be another kind of appropriation. It involves people making use of the surrounding urban landscape for a wide range of purposes – with recreation, personal growth and daily logistics as the most evident. One question is if these more or less unplanned and unorganised activities can be interpreted in terms of Certeau’s concepts of tactics and the production of the consumers. What is happening here is appropriation in a weak sense of the word (some would say “weak” is a misleading word in this case: what we face are definitely strong and persevering social procedures), a use of space that leaves abundant traces, but never creates reliable and defensible strongholds. A tree, a hill or a clearing may be important if not crucial places for individuals. An old lady, living in one of the high-rises of Grantorp told me how she, twice a year, visits a small hill in Visättra, close to where the family farm was in the old days. She sits there for a while, immersed in memories of the country life of the 40ies, remembering





Under the power line: allotments as example of appropriation of residual space.

clearly her cows coming to greet her. The fact that this significant place still remains unbuilt is a mere strike of luck. Thus, it is not what Certeau would call a proper place. It would not stand a chance in Lefebvre's trial by space. In the case of residual land, transgression means making use of space to sustain one's individuality, to expand one's range of activities, to try out new ways of interacting with the material world and with other humans, and to find relief from the dullness and stress of daily obligations – but never to, explicitly or publicly, claim a place as one's own.

So, the first question is: What would it mean to analyse the practices related to residual space in terms of weak appropriation, user production and tactics? The ephemeral character of such practises is contradicted by the relative permanence of some of the traces left behind, especially all sorts of informal footpaths.

The *second* question is about informal rules, legislation and public conceptions of justice. Transgression, in one important sense of the word, means breaking rules of the law. Activities in Flemingsberg's residual areas are not necessarily clear-cut unlawful, but often seem to exist on the borderline between the legal and the illegal. Often it is hard to know what the rules are. In an interview made early in

the research, a teenage boy told how he and his friends used to gather on one of the small hills close to the housing area (in this case not Flemingsberg) to have a barbeque. The first time, some neighbour called the fire brigade. However, the guys promised to be careful and were left alone. The next time, no one tried to intervene and their barbeques, for some time, became a tolerated habit.

What does domination mean here? It could be understood as the prevention from all unauthorised attempts to obtain a proper place. This implies the prohibition of permanent appropriation of space (the informal footpath could possibly be seen as an exception!), all occupation must be temporary. There is neither protection by the law or by public conception of justice for the kids who built a hut in the strip of woodland close to Visättra nor for the drug-addict who parked his worn out caravan in the middle of the vacant lot close to the railway station. The barbeque gang was accepted as long as their activities did not constitute a fire hazard, and provided that they did not try to make their camp permanent. Domination, in the sense of the execution of superior power, is only one facet of the picture. Another facet relates to ancient communal traditions, protecting people's free access to land that is neither build nor farmed.

The ways actions in residual areas are handled by authorities and the public seem to be closely related to the principles of *allemansrätten* (the right of access to open country), which among other things states that camping on someone's grounds is accepted for one night only. However, *allemansrätten* is built upon common law; it is not even part of official legislation. Obviously, other dimensions than of instituted law are at play here: the popular traditions warranting the right to move freely in the countryside. Similar to the countryside walking paths in Britain and shortcuts in Norway (Snarveger i Trondheim 1999), the rural landscape in Sweden is subject to shared conceptions protecting public access that have a long history.

In the context of Flemingsberg, though, if paying too much attention to proper place, we risk missing important potentials related to the kinds of space use that Certeau names tactical. The "weak" modes of appropriation do not imply weak responses when the access granted by common law is threatened. The grief that some of the staff of a day-nursery in Grantorp expressed, when their wonderful nearby forest was cleared for the erection of the new university college,

never led to manifest action. But in other Swedish contexts, there are numerous examples of protests, demonstrations and even occupations in the face of, for instance, the clearing of a small grove near a housing area, the felling of a few trees in a park or on a square, the building of a motorway or a railroad through a conservation area, the transformation of a public square, not to mention the demolition of theatres, industrial buildings and entire city districts. Whether the context is urban or rural, people are often prepared to transform into action their concerns about the territory they fear to lose.

There seem to be two traditions of rights regulating the access to residual areas, one primarily urban and one related to rural life, and both with long histories. In what ways these sets of rules coincide or clash when being enacted in the residual areas of Flemingsberg still has to be found out. The result seems to be, on one hand, that a certain freedom of movement and action is achieved, and, on the other, that any action striving for manifest and enduring use of space will be countered. But the protectors of these rights are not only authorities: In certain instances people tend to protect their terrains of tactics as strongly as if they were proper places. In the context of protection of publicly accessible space, eventual differences between the separate sets of rules appear to be of little significance.

The second question is then: How can domination in the context of residual space be understood in the interplay and contradiction between practised “urban” and “rural” sets of rules – rules not only sustained by authorities but also by layers and groupings within the public? This domination tolerates “weak” appropriation and allows direct and indirect negotiation with the other.

The *third* question to be touched upon here concerns the core topic of my study as well as of the larger project it is part of. What is the potential of the residual areas of Flemingsberg of transgression in the sense of crossing boundaries between groups of the population with different ethnic origin, cultural attachment, or social status? Are there any signs of encounters that could contribute to the undermining of sharp divisions in society?

More than the two questions above, this one leaves me to fragments and speculations. At this stage of investigations, observations and mapping offer sparse evidence of actions and events reaching beyond the realms of the individual or



Light in the tunnel and fruits for sale! Commercial activity makes this pedestrian passage a safer place. Access to Flemingsberg central station.

group. My hope is that future interviews will provide narratives and perspectives that will elucidate this aspect of residual space.

So far, many of the bits and pieces suggest that the residual zones of Flemingsberg are spaces of competition and even confrontation between different groups. One of the cases waiting to be closely scrutinised concerns the little wooded hill at Grantorp, which partly consists of a deteriorated park/playground that used to be run by a municipal staff of at least two people. The assistant headmaster of the nearby school tells about her raids in this natural park, intervening in drug-abuse activities of the older children in an improvised tent on the top of the hill. This is also where youngsters collect in the warm summer nights to play loud music, a nuisance for people living in the top floors of the nearby high-rise (this is a case when appropriation of residual space is not so silent). When the Muslim association offered to rent the empty playground building to run it as a youth club, the spontaneous reactions among some of the inhabitants were quite negative. According to one of the representatives of the local tenants' organisation, many people felt that the area would no longer be accessible to the general public. It

did not help, that the representatives of the Muslim group assured that no one would be excluded from their activities. Eventually, the building was burned down.

Barbeques on the other hand, are events, often occurring on the borderline between maintained and unkempt territory, that seem to attract a wide range of people with varying cultural backgrounds and of different ages. Some of the interviewees asked for better opportunities to arrange barbeques, and the new barbeque sites built in one part of Visättra were immensely popular. A barbecue area was one of the suggestions by locals for improving the former playground area in Grantorp. Some of the immigrant groups bring with them barbeque traditions from their home countries, traditions that now may work as vehicles to become acquainted with the landscape of the Southern Stockholm region – and with other users of that landscape.

Children's activities, whether spontaneous play or the organised excursions of day-nurseries and schools, bring together children of different background in acts of appropriation of the bordering landscape. My interpretation, based on very little evidence, is that in such cases residual areas are used primarily as instances of nature. But the nearby woods also contain cherished monuments, "works" of great significance: a strangely formed tree that kids like to ride upon, smoothly formed cliffs to climb, and a giant boulder on which someone has painted eyes, a nose and a mouth. The children used to call it ET (after the movie). The "non-proper" (I here refer to Certeau's sense of the word) character of such appropriations appears for instance in the painting someone has made of an erect penis in the middle of the stone face.

So, the third question is: What (hidden) potential of sustaining and encouraging a friendly coexistence among diverse groups of the population does the (co)appropriation of residual space hold, as it is – and what new possibilities may be opened by making material or organisational changes?

In the context of residual space, the dual emptiness described by Bauman has been challenged through the passages of this text. However, now being fully aware that the residual areas of Flemingsberg are not empty in the sense of deserted or vacant, we must keep in mind that Bauman writes about emptiness from the perspective of civil public behaviour, and as an aspect of the perception of the city and its parts. His analysis is probably more relevant in relation

to the discourse of planning, than for the consumer-producers of Flemingsberg.

According to the planners, residual zones are seldom subject of any intervention that may lead to costs for the municipality, if not in the context of an advantageous and profitable development. Then they are basically treated as virgin soil: local people are not expected to have developed an attachment to such places. Public and private real estate owners seem to disregard residual areas as long as possible. Any program for improving access, clearing and cleaning such areas, implies the demand of a budget and may easily be refuted with financial arguments. When maintenance actions occur, intervals are extremely long, like the clearing of some fringe zones of wooded land in Grantorp during 2004, for the first time since the housing was constructed. The ongoing development here seems to be quite the opposite: the formerly well-maintained park/playground is left to deteriorate and residual space is actually expanding. In their official roles, it seems, decision makers and planners tend to turn a blind eye to residual areas.

Among the users – whether inhabitants, students or staffs of public institutions – the perception of residual space seems to be more complex. Depending on time spent in the area, they have had the opportunity to build relations to the surrounding landscape. The people I have met so far often have their favourite spots and their daily shortcuts within this or that residual area. As mentioned in examples above, some of these places represent strong memories and emotions. Such cherished places appear to be private phenomena, they "belong" to the individual or to the small group, and, most of the time, do not have to be negotiated with others. However, other areas are subject to collective irritation or ignorance: some areas that one has to pass every day and others that can be avoided and safely forgotten. The loss of good opportunities of spending time in free air appears to be traumatic for some. Deterioration upsets people, as in the case of the natural playground/park of Grantorp.

Residual space may be experienced and thought about as the realm of utopian/dystopian freedom, a territory resembling the "other spaces" sketched by Michel Foucault (1986). It obviously reflects the conditions of society, sometimes in a condensed form: society's problems and conflicts as well as its positive features. Domination here takes on a strange meaning: By keeping a low profile in residual areas, powerful



actors make room for transgressive practises that represent “weak” modes of appropriation. By neither allowing the spontaneous creation of proper place in such zones, nor actively turning them into maintained public space, residual areas are saved and stored as resources of land for future development. Waiting for that golden moment, the sedimented “objectality” of this background *Gestalt* of residual strips and fields keeps on doing its work, initiated some 40 years ago.

When sketching an agenda for the future of residual areas, the opportunities are manifold – as well as the obstacles. Here I will just hint at the range of opportunities: By continuing a non-interventionist attitude, authorities and landowners leave areas open for relaxing, exiting, and risky endeavours by some, provoking irritated responses from others. The tremendous work of place-making of the consumers/producers remains the same. To capture and transform residual areas as public would imply the restoration of welfare society, offering a higher quality of life in what might be a cared-for, pastoral landscape. To colonise such



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areas as private allotments, would mean to activate a multitude of locals to voluntarily cultivate, maintain and control the former leftover land. To develop residual space for building implies that the problem is solved once and for all, but what existing qualities and what potentials are then given up?

No matter what combinations of measures are considered, it is my belief that an agenda for residual space must take into account the dimensions of differentiation and mobilization. Each type of area has its range of limitations and opportunities of appropriation, and each specific place has its unique preconditions. Thus, there is no general way to initiate physical or organizational measures in residual zones. Measures taken without the mobilization of informal groups, associations, and institutions have limited chances of success. As “terrains of tactics” also in the future, the peaceful coexistence in interzones, fringes, border zones and expansion areas will rest upon the maintenance and continuous transformation of generally accepted rules of interaction, rules that must be continuously transgressed.

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