

Abstracts – doktorsavhandlingar

Marjut Kirjakka:

**The Ortogonal Finnish Town 1620–1860:
Its Structure, Components
and Dimensions**

Centre for Urban and Regional Studies,
Helsinki University of Technology,
Espoo 1996.

Language:

English. ISBN 951-22-3093-3. 280 pages.

Key words:

Town planning, urban design, grid plans.

A characteristic feature of most old towns in Finland is the orthogonal structure of their central areas. These grid plans derive from several planning periods with a total time span of about 300 years. Simple components and an apparent similarity of design, however, contain a great structural and dimensional variation.

The study covers the grid plans of Finnish towns from 1620 to 1860. During that period the crown controlled town planning in which the architectural principles of the Renaissance were followed. The study contains a chronological account of Finnish town planning, structured into time periods, each of which had specific characteristics. An approach is made to classify the components of urban structure (streets, blocks, open places), concentrating on their dimensions and analysing their changes.

During the period studied there was a constant dialogue between the goals, fire safety and stateliness of the townscape, on one hand, and the actual urban environment built with limited resources, on the other. The battle against fires was waged by restructuring the towns and by developing new guidelines for building. Streets were widened, building plots were enlarged, and plot form was remodelled within the orthogonal framework. Towards the close of the 18th century rows of deciduous trees were introduced as a new structural component.

In the 1830s–1850s the development finally resulted in a specific type of grid plan characteristic of Finnish wooden towns. The new block was divided into plots with wide fire streets which were planted with deciduous trees. Trees were made obligatory even along public streets. The new structure was codified in a building ordinance which also specified how houses should be built etc. The orthogonal principles were followed until the end of the 19th century, but in the late phase the experimental approach in urban design was more or less abandoned and replaced by repetitions of a simple grid.

Abstracts – licentiatuppsatser

Fredrik Nilsson:
**Through the Cracks in the Mirror:
Deconstruction, Derrida and architecture**
Department of Architectural Design,
Chalmers University of Technology,
Göteborg, 1997.

The interest in contemporary philosophy as a source of inspiration increased considerably among architects in the 1980's. Especially the French philosopher Jacques Derrida's theory of deconstruction frequently occurred in the architectural discussion during these years. Architectural projects presented in an almost unreadable manner were produced that from a traditional view on architecture seemed extremely irrational. This licentiate thesis investigates the theoretical backgrounds, the historical and cultural contexts out of which deconstruction emerged in both architectural and philosophical discourses.

The objectives are to present underlying standpoints and attitudes, to look for arguments and perspectives that has been omitted in the architectural discourse and to see how philosophical considerations has been used in the creation of new architecture. The point of departure is the exhibition *Deconstructivist Architecture* at the Museum of Modern Art in New York 1988 which presented seven architects who, in many different ways, tried to change the inherent stability and order of architecture mediated through architectural tradition and so far also by modernism.

The method has been to study the works of these architects and to put them and the following debate in relation to important thoughts in modernism, postmodernism and specifically to features in Derrida's philosophy.

The main findings are that Derrida's deconstruction is not to be regarded neither as a negative operation nor as nihilistic per se, and that attitudes among so called deconstructivist architects displays great differences. Responsibility, ethical and political dimensions, is of great importance in Derrida's thoughts. Deconstruction tries with a great variety of strategies to reveal the built in values and limits of the metaphysical tradition. It also tries to change conventions from the inside without the rejection of tradition and its flaws. Deconstruction is a serious attempt to include what has been formerly excluded, to show what has been depreciated, to point at governing mechanisms in our thinking and thereby provide new possibilities for creation without stating beforehand a particular program or method. A main point is the attempt to *re-inscribe* in some way the deconstructed concepts and values into the discourse. Philosophy and architecture is also

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Architectural theory, deconstruction, Derrida, modernism, postmodernism, deconstructivism, deconstructivist architecture, architectural design, philosophy.

tied together in a complex way by the use of architecture as a predominant metaphor in the initial foundation of metaphysics.

The more detailed analysis of the architects Peter Eisenman, Bernard Tschumi and Daniel Libeskind reveals great differences in their respective attitudes. The work of Eisenman, often seen as deconstruction personified, is far away from the proposed interpretation of Derrida's philosophy that this book particularly emphasizes. On the other hand, the positions taken by both Tschumi and Libeskind seems to be more in line with the actual intentions behind Derrida's enterprise.

Maria Nilsson:

Travel behaviour and environment:**The impact of knowledge and attitudes.**

Miljöpsykologiska monografier nr 10;

Decision-makers' attitudes towards traffic and the environment.

Miljöpsykologiska monografier nr 13.

Department of Architecture,

Lund Institute of Technology, 1995.

The thesis consists of two reports. In the first report, the environmental impact of traffic and the benefits of car driving are listed and an empirical study is presented. The aim of the study was to analyse the importance of attitudes and knowledge related to the *annual driving distance* and the *individual's and household's travel behaviour*, as well as to the *acceptance of traffic restrictions* in urban areas. The second report presents a study of local decision-makers' *acceptance of traffic restrictions*. In total, 422 residents in two areas and 122 politicians and local civil servants in Lund completed a questionnaire.

It was found that, although the choice of transportation was influenced by both household resources and real needs, attitudes were important as well. Short driving distance and pro-environmental travel behaviour was associated with a high level of *environmental concern* and low *car dependency*. The acceptance of traffic restrictions increased also with high *hazard perception* low *efficacy*. On the other hand, to both the public and the decision-makers, *public transport attitude*, *environment and health interest* and *environmental knowledge*, had almost no effect.

There seems to be a psychological process behind the modal choice. This process also seems to direct the acceptance of traffic restrictions for both the general public and the decision-makers. The results suggest that environmental attitudes should not be neglected when dealing with the environmental impact of traffic. Differences between the public and decision-makers in environmental knowledge, as well as in preferences for particular traffic restrictions, enhance the importance of a well functioning communication, as to which restrictions should be implemented.

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Key words:

Traffic, attitudes, environmental knowledge, travel behaviour, driving distance, traffic restrictions, environmental concern, car dependency, public transport, hazard perception, efficacy, decision-makers.