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## STRÅK – PLANNING FOR CONNECTIVITY IN THE SEGREGATED CITY

KARIN GRUNDSTRÖM

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### Abstract

“Stråk” is one of the design approaches in the current Swedish sustainability discourse, which has been developed with the objective of reconnecting so-called vulnerable districts with the urban core. This paper investigates the architectural transformation of the Rosengård stråk in Malmö, Sweden. Taking everyday movement as a theoretical starting point, empirical data was gathered through interviews with key planners in Malmö municipality and a questionnaire distributed at the two endpoints of the Rosengård stråk. The study found that the stråk contributed to the liveliness of the disadvantaged neighbourhood and that movement through the neighbourhood had indeed increased. The paper suggests that in urban design, stråk can be defined as corridors of movement that connect neighbourhoods and nodes and link local and regional scales, and, that planning for stråk imply a shift towards planning for connectivity. This approach contrasts with previous planning approaches and ideologies, which have focused on improving adjacency and accessibility to service and amenities at the neighbourhood scale. Planning for connectivity, in contrast, implies creating a network of connections with the aim of also making people leave their neighbourhood to access services and amenities necessary for daily life. The paper concludes that although investments in stråk may make it easier for people to exercise their right to move, they carry the risk of reduced investment at neighbourhood level, since when connectivity matters more, adjacency matters less.

Keywords:  
connectivity, daily movement,  
stråk, Sweden, urban design,  
urban planning



## Introduction

*Stråk* is a Swedish word that roughly translates to “path” or “thoroughfare”. It is also one of the more recent urban design approaches developed in Sweden, with the objective of upgrading disadvantaged neighbourhoods and reconnecting them to the urban fabric in order to counteract segregation and fragmentation. Over the past decade, Swedish cities such as Stockholm, Lund and Malmö have all invested in the design and construction of *stråk* (the word is both singular and plural): that are aimed at connecting or “building together” the city (Boverket, 2010). In Lund the city centre will be connected to the new European Spallation Source (ESS) through a “knowledge *stråk*” (Lund stad, 2017) and Stockholm is planning “promenade *stråk*” to become “the walkable city” (Stockholm stad, 2017; 2010). Although several Swedish cities are investing in *stråk*, Malmö was the first major city to plan and build a *stråk*: the so-called Rosengård *stråk*, with the explicit political ambition of supporting the integration of one of the city’s disadvantaged, Million Programme neighbourhoods (Malmö stad, 2010; The Delegation for Sustainable Cities, 2012). The housing estates built in Sweden in the 1960s and 1970s under the auspices of the so-called Million Programme have, almost since their inception, been criticized by planners and architects for being large-scale, homogenous and monotonous (Boverket, 2014; Nylander, 2013). Because of this criticism, since their original construction these neighbourhoods have undergone various upgrading projects, ranging from renovating courtyards and outdoor spaces to reducing the number of flats through demolition (Boverket, 2010). Common to these projects is that the focus has been entirely on improvements within the neighbourhoods themselves. However, despite these upgrades, multiple neighbourhoods have experienced deepening poverty (Hedin, et al., 2012), increased disadvantage (NOA, 2015) and processes of stigmatization (Wacquant, 2007). The response from the urban planning and design field is that the disadvantaged neighbourhoods are isolated islands – socially, culturally and economically – and therefore in need of integration (Boverket, 2010; Malmö stad, 2013). Integration is interpreted in spatial terms as the design of connections, such as *stråk*, which, in contrast to previous upgrading projects, focus on connections to places outside the neighbourhoods. Previous studies show that such approaches may lead to reduced availability of services and amenities at the local, neighbourhood level (Boverket, 2010). If upgrading approaches previously have centred on improvements within neighbourhoods, and if the current *stråk* approach suggests a new focus on connections outside neighbourhoods, which may have detrimental effects at the local level, then it is important to learn more about *stråk* as a new urban design approach. Based on the Rosengård*stråk* in Malmö, the aim of this paper is to investigate *stråk* in both discourse and practice. How has urban design discourse been influenced by the incorporation of *stråk* and how do people use *stråk* in their daily life? Secondly, how has the increased significance of *stråk* influenced notions in urban design?

## Theoretical starting points – everyday movement and network capital

Designing paths, connections and transportation networks is not new to architecture and urban design. Some of the earliest instances of movement being considered in relation to the built environment are found in the architecture of the nineteenth century, when concepts such as “circulation”, “enfilade” and “marche” originated in the design of spacious palace and mansion architecture (Forty, 2004). Design approaches that support movement was transferred from architecture to urban design throughout the twentieth century, as notions of movement were embedded in urban design concepts aimed at supporting an architecture of visual impressions (images) that are aesthetically appealing, facilitate orientation through increased legibility and support a populated and safe streetscape (Grundström, 2011). Some of the best-known examples include: “serial vision” (Cullen, 1961); “imageability” (Lynch, 1961); “life between buildings” (Gehl, 1971); lively, well integrated streets (Jacobs, 1961), the integration measure of “space syntax” (Hillier, 1996) and the “urban corridors” of New Urbanism (Duany and Plater-Zyberk, 1993). Several of these urban design approaches have since been incorporated into the discourse and practice of sustainable urban design and are offered as good examples of dense, green, mixed-use and varied, sustainable urban form (see for example Wheeler and Beatley, 2004; Haas, 2012). But even though understandings of movement in urban design are central to shaping the built environment, these approaches are primarily based in a modernist perspective, of conceptualisations defined by generalisability, function and form. This results in a “deluded detachment” (Till, 2009) from lived space, since such conceptualisations fully take into consideration neither the lived and practiced daily life of people nor the socio-economic differences between neighbourhoods. In response to the fragmentation and enclavism of cities (Graham and Marvin, 2001), and, social polarisation of many European cities (Madanipour, 2014), public space has been re-theorised based on “new narratives and new normatives” (Carmona, 2015) and been theorised as “linked-in-motion” (Jensen, 2009). Researchers have investigated “liquid modernity” (Bauman, 2000) and theorised flows, flux and movement in relation to cities in the age of digital sprawl (Pinder, 2011; Picon, 2012); in relation to airports, roads and bridges (Cresswell and Merriman, 2011); and in relation to housing (Grundström, 2018b).

In order to investigate stråk as a new urban design approach aimed at supporting social integration of disadvantaged neighbourhoods, the theoretical frame in this paper is based in an understanding of spaces as linked-in-motion (Jensen, 2009) and mobility as one of the “major stratifying factors of our time” (Bauman, 2000). In an increasingly mobile world, mobility is an asset, a form of “network capital” (Urry, 2007). Network capital, also referred to as the “social relations of circulation”, is a form of capacity to acquire co-presence with others, a capacity that is increasingly



important in a mobile society. Referencing Bourdieu (1995), Urry argues that network capital is a product of the relationality of individuals with others and with the affordances of the environment (Urry, 2007, p.197). The ability to access network capital is thus dependent on the existence of physical infrastructure as well as on the ability of individuals to acquire and use such infrastructure. According to Urry, network capital comprises the following eight elements that in their combinations produce a distinct stratification order: appropriate documents, such as visas, money, qualifications; others at a distance, such as workmates, friends and family; bodily movement capacities and ICT knowledge; location-free information and contact points; communication devices; appropriate, safe and secure meeting places; access to transportation and infrastructures; and finally the time and resources to manage all of the above (Urry, 2007). Considering that the increased focus on urban design and public space has evolved in parallel with the increasing social and geographical polarisation of the Swedish metropolitan regions, this paper frames the analysis of stråk using theories of mobility and network capital, and references the aforementioned urban design approaches – such as those of Lynch, Gehl and Jacobs – inherent in current Swedish discourses and approaches.

### Methodology – interviews, mapping and observations

Methodologically, this study is a mixed-method comparative case study (Bryman, 2008) that comprises semi-structured interviews, mapping, statistics, observations and a questionnaire. The case study serves to investigate the stråk in both discourse and practice and to compare movement patterns between the vulnerable and wealthy ends of the stråk. The selection of the Rosengårdstråk in Malmö was based on information-oriented selection (Flyvbjerg, 2006). The Rosengårdstråk received financial support from the Delegation for Sustainable Cities and the European Union. It represented the largest investment in a stråk in Malmö and was built with the political ambition of supporting integration and social sustainability (Malmö stad, 2010; The Delegation for Sustainable Cities, 2012). Seven semi-structured interviews (Kvale, 1997) were carried out with key Malmö municipal planners in 2012. Respondents were the mayor of Malmö, the director of the department for strategic planning, the director of the planning department, the director of the environmental department, the director of the traffic and roads department, the director of the city district council and a chief planner. In their daily work, these key officials influence planning documents and planning policy, and thus the meaning they ascribe to stråk has important implications for how it is defined in discourse and in planning practice. The interviews were recorded, transcribed and for this paper translated to English by the author. In planning and urban design, meaning is not developed solely through words, but also through mapping, designing and drawing (Belardi, 2014; Cross, 2011). The key officials interviewed were therefore asked to draw the most important stråk on a map of Malmö. Their

separate drawings were subsequently compiled into a single map. Combining interviews with drawing and mapping helped develop an understanding of how stråk is defined and how stråk are considered to support movement through the city. In addition to interviews and mapping, design proposals and planning documents for various stråk under development in Malmö also made up part of the empirical material. The stråk between Rosengård and the Western Harbour was investigated using participant observations and a questionnaire (Bryman, 2008) in a pilot study. Observations took place at the two endpoints of the stråk: Örtagård Square in Rosengård and Propellergatan/Sundspromenaden in the Western Harbour (see figure 1). Observations were carried out simultaneously at the two sites, three times per day, on two days, a Sunday and a weekday in November 2013. Observations included counting the number of people moving into and out of each site, assigning them to age groups, and noting how many lingered at each site. On the same occasions a questionnaire was distributed to users of the stråk. The questionnaire included questions about users' everyday life; how often and to which places they usually travelled along the stråk; and their means of transportation, i.e. walking, biking or public transport. The questionnaire also included questions related to sustainability: to what extent the stråk contributed to social, environmental and economic sustainability. A total of fifty-four questionnaires were collected: thirty in the Western Harbour and twenty-four in Rosengård. The overall objective of the observations and the questionnaire together was to investigate movement patterns, and in combination with statistics from Malmö stad, they served to pinpoint some tendencies, despite being rather quantitatively limited.

The remainder of this paper is divided into six parts. The first part presents the historical and political-ideological shifts in Swedish housing history that first led to the construction of large-scale housing estates, an initiative known as the "Million Programme". The second part presents a map of the most important stråk in Malmö and the third part reviews the results of the interviews with key planners. This is followed by an analysis of the stråk, which shows that both Rosengård and the Western Harbour are lively districts and that the use of the stråk has increased during recent years. The paper concludes that, despite improvements, there is a risk of less investment at neighbourhood level, since when connectivity matters more, adjacency matters less. In addition, the paper suggests that in contrast to previous urban design approaches focused on adjacency and accessibility at neighbourhood level, stråk implies planning for connectivity: a form of planning centred on movement and one that entails creating a network of connections between nodes at the local, urban and regional scales.



## The Million Programme – Swedish large-scale housing estates

The Million Programme neighbourhoods have, almost since they were completed, been the subject of various projects and upgrading efforts (Boverket, 2010). The Million Programme was the culmination of the Keynesian, welfare state housing model, popularly known as *Folkhemmet* (the “people’s home”), developed in the 1930s by the Social Democratic party, which at the time was the largest political party in Sweden (Grundström and Molina, 2016). Although the *Folkhem* was used as a metaphor for Social Democratic policies in general –conveying the image of a home built on solidarity and rationality, in an economically and socially equitable society – housing was certainly its central pillar

Figure 1  
The stråk between the East and West in Malmö. Top left: the observation site in the Western Harbour. Top right: the site in Rosengård. The upper plan shows the entire length of the planned stråk between Rosengård (to the right) and the Western Harbour (to the left). The lower plan shows the section of the Rosengård stråk that was upgraded.

PHOTOS AND COLLAGE: KARIN GRUNDSTRÖM.

(Hirdman, 2000). Housing became a state interest due to the appalling standards of working-class housing at the beginning of the twentieth century. Through the *Folkhem* model, a complex and effective system of regulations and subsidies that succeeded in shielding the housing market from capitalist speculation in land and in housing, these poor housing conditions dramatically improved (Dickens, et al., 1985; Grundström and Molina, 2016). Over a period of forty years the standard and quality of housing increased. Slogans like “only the best is good enough for the people” paved the way for high-quality urban neighbourhood design and high-quality residential architecture. Dwelling sizes increased from two to three bedrooms and bathroom and kitchen standards improved. In parallel with this increase in housing size and quality, the number of units constructed annually also rose, from ca. 25.000 units in 1930 to 58.000 in 1950 and 70.000 in 1960.

At the beginning of the 1960s it became evident that even this construction rate was not sufficient to supply the number of dwellings needed. This marked the beginning of the Million Programme [*Miljonprogrammet*], which lasted from 1965 to 1974 (Boverket, 2014). The intent was to build one million units over a period of ten years, enough to eradicate the housing shortage. The focus shifted from quality to quantity, in a housing programme that entailed large-scale construction, standardization and the separation of administration and construction engineering. Housing districts were designed with high-rise housing, traffic separation systems and an enclave-like urbanism that created islands of easily identifiable neighbourhoods, distinctly separated by tunnels, paths, green areas or road systems (Grundström and Molina, 2016). In 1974 the construction rate peaked at 110.000 units, and the Million Programme came to an end. Despite the high quality of the dwellings, and the successful eradication of the housing shortage, the Million Programme housing districts were criticised by architects and planners for being large-scale, homogenous and monotonous, as early as the 1960s. The district of Rosengård in Malmö was characterized in the newspaper *Expressen* as a “newly constructed slum” (Boverket, 2014; Nylander, 2013). The large scale of many of the Million Programme housing districts and the criticism they incurred eventually led to the exodus of those residents with sufficient financial means to leave, and the districts were made targets of stigmatization processes through metonymies of dirtiness, madness, and social disintegration (Ristilampi, 1994).

The period that followed the completion of the Million Programme was one of deregulation and privatisation. The number of housing units constructed annually fell dramatically, to 30.000 units in 1980 and down to 12.000 in the year 2000 (Boverket, 2014). At the beginning of the 1990s, liberal political parties introduced housing policies based on supply and demand and a paradigmatic shift occurred towards deregulation, abolishment of subsidies and marketization (Bengtsson, 2014; Christophers,

2013). Housing became geared towards privileged groups who could afford the high cost of newly constructed housing, and new forms of concept housing were developed and marketed to specific age and interest groups while the lack of affordable housing increased dramatically. In 2006 the state housing subsidies were finally completely abolished. In addition, the municipally owned housing companies founded during the *Folkhem* era were re-regulated. They went from being non-profit-driven to profit-driven and based on “business-like forms”, and thus were no longer capable of guaranteeing housing for vulnerable groups (Grundström in CRUSH chapter 3, 2015).

Undoubtedly, the *Folkhem* model was characterised by ideas of universal fairness, but even so, the model initiated a segregation trend, rooted in differences between forms of tenure and types of housing, that to a certain extent still exists. Developers and builders had to restrict themselves to only one form of tenure in order to take advantage of the state loan and subsidy system (Dickens, et.al., 1985). This led to a segregation pattern expressed as homogenous clusters of housing. Thus, working-class districts consisted almost entirely of multi-story rental apartment buildings, while middle-class districts consisted of row houses, detached houses, and smaller apartment buildings, mainly organized as cooperatives and finally privately-owned villas for the upper middle class (Grundström and Molina, 2016). This segregation pattern has been reinforced over the past two decades through a process of social polarisation in which both wealth and poverty are geographically concentrated in specific districts (Hedin, et al., 2012). In addition, residential segregation is no longer along purely socio-economic lines but displays an increasingly racialized pattern, as low-income immigrants have been relegated to peripheral, low-status areas, primarily Million Programme housing estates (Andersson and Molina, 2003).

The segregation pattern of 2019 is, in general, characterized by physically homogenous clusters of housing; barriers between housing areas; stigmatization of some of the disadvantaged Million Programme housing estates; a lack of housing subsidies and the re-regulation of municipal housing companies. Since the municipalities thus have less influence in the housing sector, one consequence is that urban planning and design has shifted focus from housing to public space, and to new urban design approaches to re-connect the city. This is where *stråk* comes into play.

## Mapping *stråk* in Malmö

The Rosengårdstråk was, as previously mentioned, built with the aim of supporting integration as a means of counteracting segregation. The segregation pattern of Malmö displays an east-west divide; the wealthier western district comprises the inner city and areas located along the Öresund waterfront, while the less privileged areas, primarily consist-



ing of Million Programme housing estates, are located in the east. This segregation pattern and the process of social polarisation have resulted in a situation in which neighbourhoods in the west have experienced a process of “super gentrification” while neighbourhoods in the east have experienced “low-income filtering” (Hedin, et al., 2012). In order to counteract this development, local politicians in Malmö appointed the so-called Malmö Commission to develop proposals concerning health, welfare and justice to improve social sustainability (Malmö stad, 2013). This included urban planning and design, and the commission asserted that planning and designing good housing, inviting parks and green areas, efficient public transportation and safe and inviting public spaces indeed is a way to counteract segregation and improve healthy living conditions. Furthermore, the commission stated that the planning monopoly held by Swedish municipalities holds the potential for municipalities to support development projects that break down barriers between urban districts and support movement through control of land use and through the even distribution of key urban functions throughout the city (Malmö stad, 2011; 2013).

One urban design approach to break down barriers and support movement through the city is the design and construction of so-called “stråk”. This Swedish word has no exact translation in English but is close to the word pathway. In old Norse, stråk means “a pathway on which people often walk or linger. People were strolling along the new stråk lined with cafés and bakeries” (Norstedts, 1988). As an embodied practice of walking, a stråk is a pathway that gives the experience of a flow or stream of people moving, a flow that one might either follow or deviate from (Persson, 2004; Wikström and Olsson, 2012). According to the director of urban planning in Malmö, the stråk concept has increased in importance and use in the past decade. Because of the increased use of stråk in Malmö, the planners interviewed for this study were asked to define and draw those stråk that they considered most important in the city. The result is presented in the stråk map below. Although each planner only saw his or her own drawing, the stråk they drew exhibit a correspondence when compiled into one map.

First of all, the stråk drawn by the planners can be categorized into three main directions. The oldest stråk is the medieval Ur-stråk along the coast. This was the trade route that connected Malmö to other villages and cities and to the trade in the harbour area. The second category of stråk runs between the north and west and connects the three metro stations of Malmö to the Öresund bridge and to Copenhagen. The third category of stråk connects the eastern, socio-economically vulnerable districts to the wealthier western districts: one example is the Rosengård stråk. Second, and more importantly, the drawing also reveals that stråk comprise a variation of material forms and ways of moving. Materially, a stråk can be a metro, a cycle path or a bus route. People move along a stråk in





varying ways; as bus riders, cyclists or pedestrians. One important conclusion to be drawn from the map is that stråk, interpreted as an urban design concept, comprise both material form and movement, but primarily considers movement – or rather, a flow of people moving; the design of a stråk implies planning in support of a flow of people.

**Figure 2**  
Map of the Malmö stråk considered most important by officials interviewed. The Öresund bridge and Copenhagen are at the left (west) of the map, Rosengård at the right (east) and the Western Harbour at the top (north).

COLLAGE: KARIN GRUNDSTRÖM. PHOTOGRAPH: SARAH NEWMAN.

## Connecting the city through stråk: a discourse of making people move

The stråk concept has entered planning and urban design discourse in the aftermath of the Million Programme as an urban design approach that combines material form and movement. Embedded in this understanding is the assumption that supporting the daily movement of individuals is decisive for supporting integration and counteracting segregation. This notion is expressed in the interviews carried out for this study and in planning documents.

To begin with, stråk is one of the concepts that, together with mixed-use and a dense, varied urban form, represent a distancing from modernist planning ideals. Stråk are considered important by planners because they represent a new urban design concept that contrasts with the dominant functionalist planning approaches of the 1960s and 1970s.

One of the planners interviewed criticised the Million Programme as representative of “functionalist planning”. Functionalism, a term more frequently used in Sweden than modernism, was based on categorisation, division, separation of functions and zoning, and since the 1980s has been strongly criticised for creating homogenous clusters of easily identifiable neighbourhoods. According to the same planner, stråk create connections:

*Stråk are of course very important, because they are part of breaking with the old functionalist division, they break down barriers, create openness and coherence. So, for that reason alone, it's very important to establish some well-functioning stråk to create connections through the city./.../ Stråk connect environments. They connect places. They connect the city.*

“Coherence” and “connection” imply a shift from neighbourhood design to the design of stråk that support movement. This in turn, implies that making people move to other places has increased in importance. The neighbourhoods, local environments and places are no longer understood as the primary sites of social relations. Instead there is a need to break with the previous planning ideal of division and support social relations through movement along stråk.

In addition, stråk figure prominently in planning discourse and in political visions of social integration, at both the regional and local levels. According to the mayor of Malmö, the large-scale, regional infrastructure investments in the metro (itself referred to as stråk in the interviews and on the stråk map) and the Öresund bridge were central to the transformation of Malmö from an industrial city to a city of “knowledge and events”. These investments were made when Sweden entered the European Union and when discourses of attractivity and competition between cities (Florida, 2001) developed in the political vision of the 1990s (Dannestam, 2009). According to the director of planning, the consequence of regional stråk is to increase connections, thereby improving social integration with Copenhagen:

*...if we look at what's happening now in the city, there's so much happening with stråk, new stråk and patterns of movement and we consider that in connection to all the new infrastructure./.../ the movement pattern and all of these points in the city will be much more fine-grained and also if you see it as an aspect of integration in the city and the region. If you connect it to the net of Copenhagen, which is also finer and become more fine-grained, then there's also more power in the regional integration.*

The regional investments in infrastructure were accompanied by the development of new housing areas designed to attract new, so-called

creative inhabitants to the city. The most famous example is the flagship sustainable housing development known as the Western Harbour, located on the Sound (Öresund). The Western Harbour has become a popular place for Malmö residents to swim and sunbathe in summer and is often offered as an example of integration at the city scale. The stråk, and the movement along it between disadvantaged housing estates and the Western Harbour, are seen as a form of social integration. This was pointed out by the director of the traffic and roads department, who interprets the Rosengård stråk as an example of how it is possible to connect the city to let people who live in different districts come together:

*Well, we see it already in the outdoor swimming area in the Western Harbour, which is used very much by youngsters from all over the town, the way it's talked about, I don't know how much truth there is to it, but it's said there are very many youngsters from Rosengård who go there to swim in the evenings and at night. Isn't that an example that it's possible?*

The discourse of stråk as a means of integration thus exists at both the regional and the local levels. One difference is that, in regard to the integration of Rosengård with the Western Harbour, the question is one of bridging a gap between different socio-economic groups. In contrast, discourses about integration on a regional scale, which implies economic growth, relate to the new connections established between the Western Harbour and Copenhagen. What all these discourses of integration share, however, is a focus on supporting patterns of movement: of making people move.

In addition to new ideals and visions of integration, the stråk concept is also part of viewing the city holistically. According to Boverket (2010), the adoption of a holistic versus a local approach to urban planning and design has varied in Sweden over the past decades. The predominant view in Malmö is holistic, as suggested by the director of planning, who states:

*I don't think about urban districts at all nowadays, I don't. You know, the entire city, it is the entire city that is relevant, it is the city as an urban corpus that should be built together /.../ Yes, the entire city is the most sustainable structure and if you claim that you need a more intertwining structure – you have to look at the entire city.*

The “entire city” is set in contrast to previous ideas of the “neighbourhood”. While the neighbourhood was a central to planning in the 1950s and through the Million Programme districts of the 1970s (Engfors, 1987; Nylander, 2013), the current planning approach has shifted towards a holistic view of the entire city. Instead of designing local centres and neighbourhoods, the focus is on the “sustainable structure” between

the districts. Thus, the holistic view primarily focuses on designing connections, rather than improving the urban district per se. This signals that there is less attention paid to the Million Programme districts locally, and more effort made to support connections, and thus movement to and from other parts of the city.

Finally, the development and implementation of stråk as a new urban design approach has been stressed in planning documents. Key urban planning documents, including the Malmö General Plan, identify stråk as a way to support movement (Malmö stad, 2011; 2012). The general plan lays out a vision of Malmö as “attractive and sustainable”, and assigns stråk the role of supporting attractiveness through movement: “Stråk connect places and create movement between different urban districts” (Malmö stad, 2011, p.71). In addition, the so-called “value-based” planning approach (Malmö Stadsbyggnadskontor, 2009; 2011) identifies stråk as one of three urban elements that are central to achieving high urban values. In value-based planning, “stråk are connections to, from and through the urban district. Stråk populate and contribute to the active city” (Malmö Stadsbyggnadskontor, 2011, p.28). These two examples show how stråk is assigned the role of creating movement and supporting a populous and active city. Movement between nodes and privileged places is key to reaching the goals stated in general plans and visions of attractiveness.

It is clear that movement is a significant feature of stråk. Movement is central to the break with modernist planning; movement is key in visions of integration at the regional and local scales; movement is embedded in the holistic view of the city and it is prominent in urban design aimed at building a lively and populated city. The difference of the interpretation of movement between stråk and related concepts such as “path” or “street” is the aforementioned notion of planning in support of “flow of people moving”. If a street or a cycle path is to be experienced as a stråk, it must have numerous people moving along it. One reason for planners to incorporate stråk in their vocabulary is likely that its use signals a populous space and that it is considered an incentive to make people move through the city. This discursive notion held by the planners, rests on the assumption that by making people move, the city will be less fragmented and less segregated. Yet, the discourse says little about how mobility as a resource is distributed among different groups and different neighbourhoods in the city. Referencing Urry (2007), the physical paths, nodes and public places together can be said to comprise affordances that, in combination with the different abilities of individuals to use the stråk, are aimed at supporting network capital, or “social relations of circulation”. In the context of the current holistic approach taken in Malmö, the question is how building a stråk influences how and where people move in their daily lives? Furthermore, how does building a stråk influence the liveliness of places at the local level?

## Movement in daily life between the east and west in Malmö

The Malmö stråk between east and west, between Rosengård and the Western Harbour, is the largest urban design project of a stråk through Malmö. The underpinning of the project was that the stråk should contribute to a lively urban environment and connect people to places of significance in their daily lives.

### Western Harbour connected

The Western Harbour is the flagship sustainability district of Malmö. It was built in part as a housing exposition in 2001 and has since undergone a transformation similar to other dockland projects in Europe. The Western Harbour is adjacent to the medieval inner city of Malmö and sits amidst office and apartment buildings, the new university building and the metro station that opened in 2010. As of 2017, the district was well furnished with both services and businesses and housed some 7.000 residents. Its urban plan was designed with reference to small-scale, mixed and varied urban form – as a contrast to the functionalism of the Million Programme era. Its signature building, the Turning Torso, designed by Spanish architect Calatrava, has become a symbol of the entire city. Because of its location on the coast, its focus on sustainability and the Turning Torso building, the district draws both international and local visitors year-round. Visitors come here to stroll along the seaside, take photos, mingle in one of the cafés or restaurants and swim and sunbathe in summer.

Undoubtedly this can be considered a lively urban district, owing to its many visitors, the research trips made by people from all over the world and the residents who frequent its public spaces. On the days when observations were made for this study, a total of 380 people travelled the stråk in the space of one hour at lunchtime on a weekend, and 250 during a week day; the figure was somewhat less in the mornings and evenings, when between 110 and 200 people travelled the stråk. Two thirds of the respondents stated that they used the stråk several times per week, up to five days per week. Half of the respondents thought that the stråk had become more frequently used during the past three years, noticing an increasing number of people cycling and walking along it. The questionnaire and observations showed that the stråk served as a pathway to reach important places in daily life. Uses included commuting to work or school (10 respondents), travelling for leisure (12 respondents) and travelling for exercise (6 respondents). The “network capital” (Urry, 2007; Bourdieu, 1995) of respondents was spatially focused on the Western Harbour and the central parts of Malmö. This became evident through the identification of places frequently used by respondents: the promenade along the coast, the central parks, the opera, the main library, the central railway station and the marina. The stråk was also used in daily life for meeting up with friends or colleagues. Places along the stråk,

such as the central station, a large grocery store (ICA Maxi), the promenade and Turning Torso were used as nodes for meeting up. This use signals that, in this part of the city, the stråk connects places that are well known and function as nodes for many inhabitants in Malmö.

The geographical focus on the Western Harbour was evident when respondents commented on the possible contribution of the stråk to integration. One respondent mentioned that it was important that people pass the Western Harbour because of its significance as a sustainable area and another mentioned that it was positive that people cycled and walked because this contributed to “positive energy” in the area. Others mentioned that the stråk supported integration by facilitating access to other parts of the city and that it supported movement and thereby created more liveliness in the Western Harbour. The summer months were specifically pointed out as important for integration and contact between different groups, since people from all over the city come to the Western Harbour to swim and sunbathe during the summer. Thus, the movement, connections and interactions considered supportive of integration were primarily those that took place in the Western Harbour itself or in the central city. Only three of the thirty respondents perceived the stråk as leading “all the way to” Rosengård. Critical voices were also raised. One respondent said that the segregation in the city was “too great” and that Western Harbour was “like a completely different world”. Another said that the area was sustainable only for the people who live there and that “people don’t actually meet only because they happen to be in the same place”.

In physical terms, the Western Harbour is centrally located, well-connected to the transportation network and a node in itself, as shown both on the stråk map and in the investigation on site. This makes the Western Harbour well-connected to several scales and forms of movement in close proximity; to cycle and pedestrian movement, to the central station and to the metro leading towards national and international locations and nodes. This central and socio-economically privileged location results in multi-directional movement: there is not one specific main direction, but a multitude of directions. In terms of digital connectivity, the district is home to high-profile media and educational institutions, such as Sveriges Television, Media Evolution City and the main building of Malmö University. At the district level, both digital and physical connectivity (Mitchell, 2003) are high. Its privileged position means that the Western Harbour is not in need of any particular investments in design to support movement between buildings (Gehl, 1971), or to increase the number of local nodes, since these already exist. Furthermore, as the stråk map above shows, the Western Harbour is located at the node where most of the stråk are connected. This also indicates that the Western Harbour is one of the most connected locations in the city.



### Rosengård connected

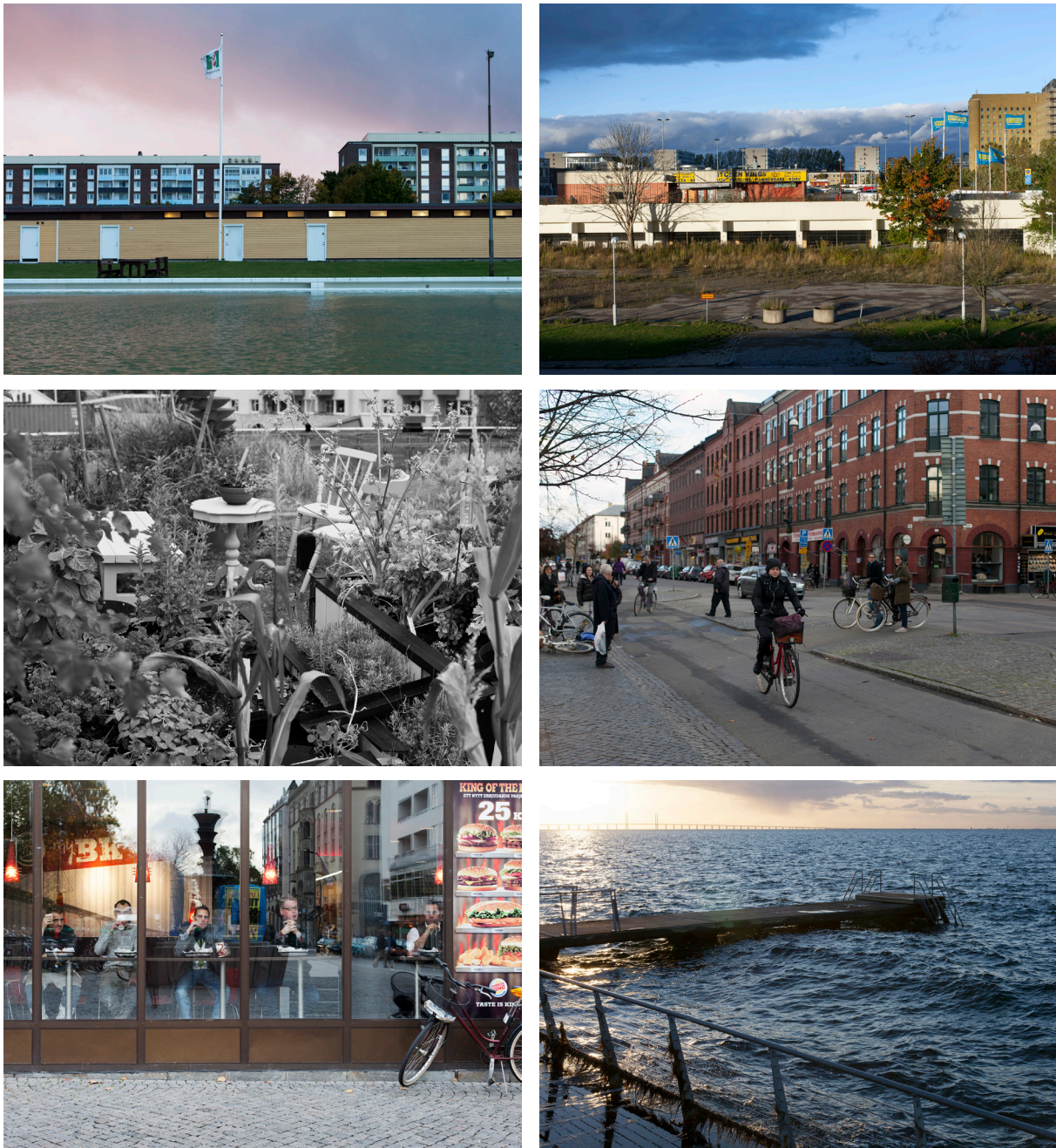
Built in 1967–1972, Rosengård, with 7.000 dwellings and some 20.000 inhabitants, is one of the largest Million Programme districts in Malmö and in Sweden. Rosengård was designed and built as a housing district, complete with a shopping centre and educational and health facilities, but no workplaces. Architecturally, it is comprised of freestanding, multi-story housing of between three and thirteen floors. The district is divided by a four-lane car and bus street that connects the inner ring road around Malmö with the central city. Within the district, vehicular and pedestrian traffic are separated. Despite the relatively central location of this district, its residents need to commute to work, since Rosengård is still primarily a housing district. Travel from Rosengård is by bus, by bicycle or by foot. Since 2015 a new super-bus has run between the east and west of the city. Like other large-scale Million Programme districts, Rosengård has suffered from an exodus of residents with financial means. The district has become socio-economically stigmatized and today its residents are predominantly of so-called foreign background.

Almost since its inception, Rosengård has been the target of various upgrading projects. One of the most recent examples is the Rosengård stråk. The stråk was originally a bike lane leading through the district towards central Malmö. One of the first projects along the stråk was the construction of so-called Bokals, combined commercial and residential buildings that were designed and built in 2010 on Örtagård Square. A row of shops was added to the existing buildings and designed so that each shop connected to an adjacent apartment. New projects in 2013 along the stråk included the addition of a small herb garden for a local restaurant, an outdoor activity space targeted towards young girls and the upgrading of Örtagård Square. At the time of this study, Örtagård Square was a very lively place where people did their shopping, gathered to talk, and biked and walked along the stråk. On the days when observations were made for this study, 222 people travelled the stråk in the space of one hour at lunchtime on the weekend, and a larger number, 261 people, travelled the stråk in the late afternoon. According to the respondents, the stråk was used daily to get to work and school and was also frequently used by young people in their spare and leisure time. A majority of respondents thought that its use had increased over the past three years, likely due to the addition of new shops and public places, but also the stronger articulation of the stråk with distinct markings and lighting. As in the Western Harbour, respondents in Rosengård were spatially focused (Urry, 2007; Bourdieu, 1995) on Rosengård itself. The square and local businesses were part of daily life, according to several respondents who mentioned that Örtagård Square and the Bokals had become meeting places, especially for young people. There is also a youth centre, which was mentioned as another place to meet with friends. In contrast to the Western Harbour, Rosengård residents mentioned places on the outskirts of the city rather than the inner city. Among these were sports

facilities, the Zlatan Court (named after the football player who grew up in Rosengård) and the new shopping centre, Emporia. Additionally, residents had a more pronounced awareness of the direction of the stråk. Half of the respondents perceived the stråk as leading “all the way” to the Western Harbour, although fewer mentioned actually travelling to the Western Harbour regularly. The stråk facilitated travel to the Western Harbour, and respondents mentioned going there in summer. But critical voices were also raised on integration. One respondent said, “Rosengård is left to itself”.

An important factor affecting daily movement in and through Rosengård is the location and socio-economically challenged situation of the district, which contributes to a binary movement pattern: to and from the inner city. Additionally, Rosengård is less integrated than the Western Harbour into the street and stråk network of the city. It is correct that Rosengård is well-connected by public transport, but its location means that residents must travel further to reach transportation nodes and additionally have to change transportation mode several times before reaching their destination. The stråk map made by the key planning officials also shows that although the Rosengård stråk bridges the east-west divide of the city, it is not located as centrally or with as high connectivity as the Western Harbour (see figure 2). In contrast to the Western Harbour, investments in the upgrading of public places have been made in Rosengård, in order to support movement, including on the local level. The construction of the Bokals, Örtagård Square, the herb garden and the public places have contributed to the daily use of the area, which undoubtedly can be considered a lively district (Gehl, 1971) and as a place with many eyes on the street (Jacobs, 1961).

From an upgrading perspective, the investments in new places in Rosengård undoubtedly have contributed to the liveliness along the stråk and an increase in the number of people moving along the stråk. Even so, those investments have not been enough to make any great impact on existing patterns of segregation in terms of distinction of place and of location. As shown above, the Western Harbour is located closer to transportation networks and is more connected than Rosengård to nodes, stråk, streets and public transport. Compounding this is a difference in distinction of places. While the Sound promenade along the coast attracts both tourists and residents, Örtagård Square does so to a much smaller extent. In conclusion, it could be argued that even if the stråk urban design approach is grounded on a notion of a system of physical places in support of social relations of circulation (Urry, 2007), the investments made along the Rosengård stråk have not been enough to break down the existing socio-economic differences.



### Planning for connectivity in the segregated city

As shown above, movement is central to stråk, both in discourse and in practice. In societies where mobility is an asset (Bauman, 2000), being on-the-move (Cresswell, 2006; Jensen, 2009) is crucial, both for the individual and for urban planning and design. This focus on mobility result in a form of urban planning and design I would refer to as *planning for connectivity*. Planning for connectivity entails planning the physical elements that, together with social interaction, form “systems” that support “social relations of circulation” (Urry, 2007). Planning for connectivity means planning for speed and for proximity to transportation nodes, and it entails

Figure 3  
“Long the Path”. From Rosengård (top left) to the Western Harbour (lower right). A photographic essay by Sarah Newman, based on the stråk map drawn by city planners in Malmö (see figure 2).



the development of new concepts, such as stråk. In physical terms, places with a high connectivity are located in proximity to transportation nodes or along corridors of privileged places linked to high-speed infrastructure. High connectivity also implies being connected to high-speed information and communication technology (ICT). The importance given to connectivity can be exemplified by the new spaces of privilege that develop when high physical and digital connectivity overlap (Mitchell, 2003). Such spaces comprise exclusive, residential housing that offer a lifestyle of “dwelling-on-the-move” (Grundström, 2018a) and exclusive lounges at airports and on trains. Arguably, connectivity is an asset increasingly being considered when planning and designing privileged places of prime office space, consumption and housing. Places with low connectivity, on the other hand, are places located outside of the high-speed infrastructures and locations of prime office space and exclusive housing. Such places can be exemplified by the disadvantaged housing estates, often designed as islands surrounded by barriers comprised of green areas or transportation infrastructure.

Stråk is an urban design concept that has developed as connectivity has become increasingly important, and it is a concept aimed at breaking down the barriers that surround disadvantaged neighbourhoods. Based on the investigation presented in this paper, I suggest that stråk as an urban design concept can be defined as *corridors of movement that connect neighbourhoods and nodes and link local and regional scales*. The concept of stråk makes a novel contribution to urban planning and design through its emphasis on supporting a flow of people as the central design problem. This opens the door to the inclusion of different materialities and urban forms and multiple forms of daily use. Additionally, it paves the way for an urban design approach of connections between nodes at both local and regional scale. In Malmö, stråk are used to connect the major squares, the different housing areas, the important transportation nodes and the important workplaces of the city and of the region. Stråk is interesting as an urban design concept since stråk can incorporate several typologies and link different scales.

One consequence of planning for connectivity is that when connectivity, rather than adjacency, is the ideal, planning focus shifts from the neighbourhood to the in-between spaces of the city. One opportunity that planning for connectivity affords is that it aims to support easy and speedy access to places and nodes in different parts of the city for all urbanites. Even if this is needed and beneficial to several groups and individuals, it is simultaneously a challenge, since it risks leading to fewer services and amenities being available in disadvantaged neighbourhoods. It could be argued that neighbourhood planning has become less relevant in our mobile society, but nevertheless, local access to services and amenities remains crucial for large groups of inhabitants, depending on economic situation, bodily movement capacity and age.

## Conclusion

This paper set out to investigate how the new planning initiative known as “stråk” is expected to support movement in daily life and how a stråk may be used by travellers at both its wealthy and vulnerable ends. The study found that movement through the disadvantaged neighbourhood had indeed increased and that upgrades along the stråk contributed to the liveliness of the area. This is important, not only since the United Nations considers movement to be a human right, but also because urban planning and design have an important role in considering movement in daily life as a form of redistribution. In a mobile society it is important for planning authorities to consider mobility as a resource, to which different areas may have more or less access, and to take an active part in its distribution. As shown in this study, although the disadvantaged district benefited from the notion of stråk, the wealthier district benefited even more, since its connectivity increased through stråk construction. This is one example of how segregation patterns tend to persist in spite of new investments. Consequently, new investments would need to be considerably larger to be able to break down existing segregation patterns. Secondly, the study set out to investigate how notions of urban design are influenced by the incorporation of stråk in current discourse and practice. In sum, the paper suggests that in urban design, stråk can be defined as “corridors of movement that connect neighbourhoods and nodes and link local and regional scales”; and, that planning for stråk imply a shift towards “planning for connectivity”. This approach contrasts with previous planning approaches and ideologies, which have focused on improving adjacency and accessibility to service and amenities (schools, health centres, shops) at the neighbourhood scale. Planning for connectivity, in contrast, implies creating a network of connections, with the aim of also making people leave their neighbourhood to access the services and amenities necessary for daily life. Investments in movement may make it easier for people to exercise their right to move, but they also carry the risk of reduced investment at neighbourhood level, since when connectivity matters more, adjacency matters less. This is highly important because it signals a shift in relation to previous planning in which the neighbourhood has been a central entity. Such a shift needs to be the subject of serious consideration by both planners and politicians, as residents undoubtedly should have the right to move – but they should also have the right to remain in place.

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