

# Postmodernism and Urban Life Style in Finland

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Is the time of modernism over now? Is the new direction, postmodernism a cultural dominant of the whole Western culture? Can we talk about postmodern consciousness? In that case, what does this mean? Is it a new way of thinking, a new lifestyle or a new system of values? In this article the urban Finnish lifestyle and new system of values is described through the actions of a young urban professional single woman in Helsinki. In the end of the article there is a discussion about the effects of changing lifestyles and postmodern consciousness might have on planning.

**D**OES POSTMODERNISM MEAN that everything melts into the air? Or is it the current way of asking questions, a new kind of consciousness in architecture, art, literature, philosophy and in the life styles of people, reflecting what has been happening during the late eighties.

Many people have heard of Postmodernism but do not have a very clear idea of what it means. Yet, according to Scott Lash (1990:1), postmodernism has become a household word. After more than twenty years, the Post-Modern Movement has achieved a revolution in western culture which has affected films, music, dance, religion, politics, fashion and almost every activity of contemporary life.

Postmodernism accepts that the discoveries of the twentieth century – of Freud, Einstein and Henry Ford – the two world wars and mass culture are now integral parts of our global picture, but

it does not build an entire ideology on this. Like the other movements of the last two hundred years, it has also produced its fair share of pretentious nonsense and bad art.

In the late 1980s postmodernism became academic and respectable and its products started turning up on every coffee table. Its defining characteristics have changed shape and meaning since its inception in the late 1950s. Its subtle changes in name, such as *post-Modern*, *Postmodern* and *Post-Modern Movement*, have to be distinguished from events which took place quite independently, such as Pop Art, the counter-culture, feminism and pluralism. Its conceptual and historical activity changed in parallel up to the mid-1970s, when they merged, and we can begin to speak of a Post-Modern Movement, at least in architecture (Jencks, 1987: 11-12).

According to Hassan (1985), the term post-modernism was first used by Federico de Onis in the 1930s to indicate a minor reaction to modernism. The term became popular in the 1960s in New York, when it was used by young artists, writers and critics such as Rauschenberg, Cage, Burroughs, Bartheleme, Fielder, Hassan and Sontag to refer to a movement beyond that of the exhausted high modernism, rejected because of its institutionalization in the museum and the academy (Featherstone, 1991:7).

The postmodern movement cannot be explained simply in terms of the aesthetic problems and history of one genre of art. Postmodernism in art corresponds to postmodernism in life. According to Charles Jencks, if we paraphrase the French theorist Jean Francois Lyotard, we can say: "*We listen to reggae, watch westerns, eat hamburgers from MacDonaldis for lunch and homemade food for dinner. We use Parisian perfume made in Tokyo and copied design clothing from Hong-kong.*" The postmodern discussion deals with life styles and the way of life of this age (Jencks, 1987: 26-27).

Postmodernism is not a password and not only a question of aesthetics. It is a new way of looking at things and of taking a position on political and cultural change. It has predecessors, but on the whole is a creation of this age. Thus postmodern style is a question of more than simply a style.

Amongst the central features associated with postmodernism in the arts are: the effacement of the boundary between art and everyday life; the collapse of the hierarchical distinction between high and popular culture; a stylistic promiscuity favouring eclecticism and the mixing of codes, parody, pastiche, irony, playfulness and the celebration of the surface "depthlessness" of culture; the decline of originality or genius in the artistic producer; and the assumption that art can only be repetition (Featherstone, 1991:8).

The philosophic background to the postmodern movement has been created by theorists like Jacques Derrida, Francois Lyotard, Jean Baudrillard, Theodor Adorno and Fredric Jameson. Jameson (1986) thinks it is essential that postmodernism should be defined not only as a style but also as the domination of culture. He uses postmodernism as a cultural logic, or cultural dominant, which leads to the transformation of the cultural sphere in contemporary society.

Jameson, however, does not think that all production of culture is "postmodern" in the usual sense. Postmodernism is more of a force field, where different cultural impulses have to work themselves out. In his opinion we have to achieve some sense of cultural dominance so that we can understand this age. Jameson thinks the basic feature of postmodernism is a new kind of superficiality, which extends to theory and the world of pictures.

As Lash (1990:3) writes, the cultural terrain in which we now live, work, love and struggle is pervaded by postmodernism. To gain a better understanding of postmodernism we must compare it with its predecessor, modernism.

### **The Definition of Postmodernism**

What is postmodernism and where does it come from? This is a difficult question. Charles Jencks writes in *What is Post-Modernism?* (1987) that no definitive answer is possible, as it is a continual growth and movement.

The Finnish researcher Terttu Pakarinen points out that Charles Jencks is one of the key characters in the discussion of postmodernism. Pakarinen and Jencks both think that postmodernism is a new street language in the cities of the late twentieth century (Pakarinen, 1988).

In its infancy in the 1960s, Postmodern culture was radical and critical, a minority position established, for instance, by Pop artists and theorists

against the reduced view of modern art, the aestheticism reigning in such institutes as the Museum of Modern Art. In architecture, Team Ten, Jane Jacobs, Robert Venturi and the Advocacy Planners attacked orthodox Modern architecture for its elitism, urban destruction, bureaucracy and simplified language.

By the 1970s as these traditions grew in strength and changed, the movement became more conservative, rational and academic. The term postmodernism was not coined as a term for a variety of trends. Many protagonists of the 1960s, such as Andy Warhol, lost their critical function as they were assimilated by the art market or commercial practice. In the 1980s the situation changed again and postmodernism was finally accepted by the professions, academies and society at large (Jencks, 1987:5-6).

According to Jencks, the symbolic end of modernism and its passage into the postmodern occurred at 3.32 p.m. on 15th July 1972, when the Pruitt-Igoe housing development in St Louis (a prize-winning version of Le Corbusier's "machine for modern living") was dynamited as an uninhabitable environment for the low-income people it housed (Harvey, 1989:39).

In 1955 a vast housing project called Pruitt-Igoe was inaugurated in St. Louis. The design, by Minoru Yamasaki, architect of the World Trade Centre, won an award from the American Institute of Architects. Yamasaki designed it in classic Corbusier-style, fulfilling the master's vision of high-rise hives of steel, glass and concrete separated by open access spaces with green lawns. The workers of St. Louis were, of course, in no danger of getting caught in Pruitt-Igoe. They had already decamped for the suburbs. Pruitt-Igoe was filled up mainly by recent migrants from the rural South. They moved from areas of the US where the population density was fifteen to twenty people per square mile and where one rarely got more than ten feet off the ground except by

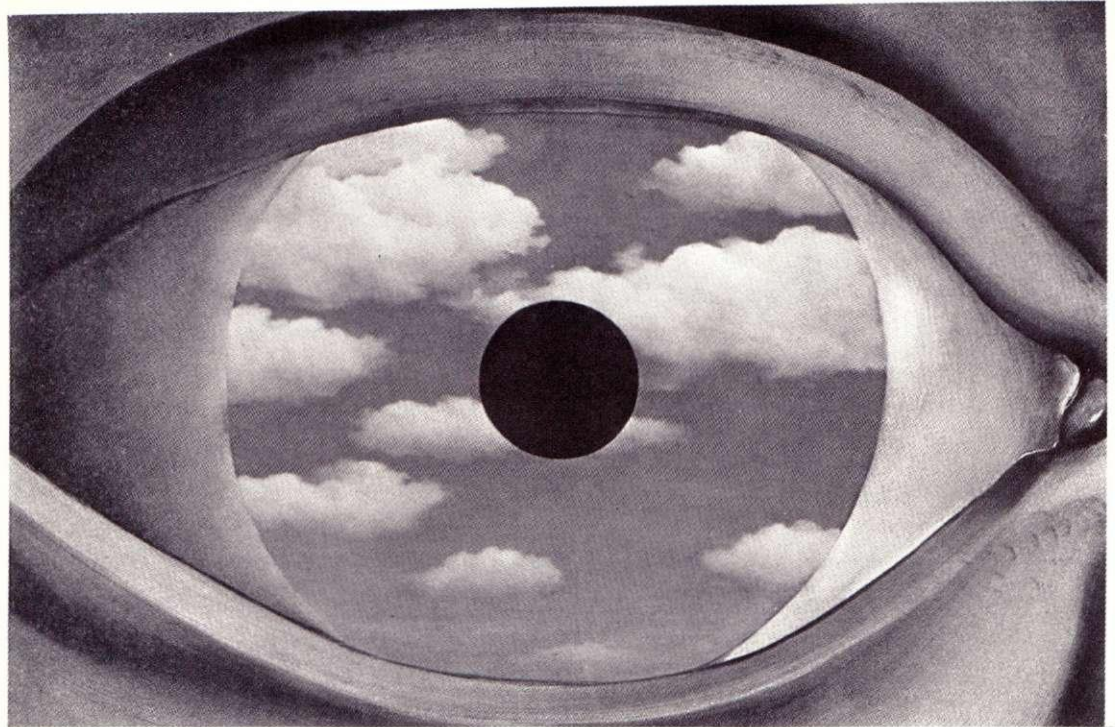
climbing a tree, into Pruitt-Igoe fourteen-storey blocks. On each floor were covered walkways, in keeping with Corbusier's idea of "streets in the air". Since there was no other place in the project in which to sin in public, whatever might have taken place in other places now took place in these streets in the air. (Wolfe, 1981:80-82).

By the mid-1970s such demolitions became a frequent method of dealing with the failures of modernist building methods: cheap prefabrication, lack of personal defensible space and the alienating housing estates (Jencks, 1987:15).

Thereafter the ideas of the CIAM, Le Corbusier and the other apostles of high modernism increasingly gave way an onslaught of possibilities, of which those set forth in the influential *Learning from Las Vegas* by Venturi, Scott Brown and Izenour (1972) proved to be but one powerful cutting edge. The point of that work was that architects had more to learn from the study of popular and vernacular landscapes (such as suburbs and commercial strips) than from the pursuit of some abstract, theoretical and doctrinaire ideals. It was time, they said, to build for people rather than for Man (Harvey, 1989:39-40).

The "death" of Modern architecture and its ideology of progress, which offered technical solutions to social problems, was seen in a vivid way (Jencks, 1987:18). Postmodernism has been used as a strategy of communication on various levels at once. Postmodern architects as Robert Venturi, Robert Stern, Michael Graves and Arata Isozaki use both popular and elitist signs in their work to achieve quite different ends and their styles are essentially hybrid. Pluralism is a significant part of postmodernism; the idea that the architect must design for different tastes, cultures and for differing views of the good life.

Charles Jencks defines postmodernism as a movement starting roughly in 1970 as a set of departures from modernism. Key definers are a philosophical and stylistic pluralism and a dia-



In the painting "The False Mirror" by René Magritte the reflected eye privileges the almost nuclear act of relationalism over the warring polarities of representational of experience (Kroker 1988:85).

lectical or critical reaction to a pre-existing ideology (Jencks, 1987:22-23).

Lytard employs a lengthy metaphor of Wittgenstein's (the pioneer of the theory of language games) to illuminate the condition of postmodern knowledge:

"Our language can be seen as an ancient city: a maze of little streets and squares, of old and new houses, and of houses with additions from different periods; and this surrounded by a multitude of new boroughs with straight regular streets and uniform houses" (Harvey, 1989:46).

Postmodernism seeks out pluralistic and organic strategies for approaching urban development as a collage of highly differentiated spaces and mixtures. Collage city is the theme and urban revitalization has replaced the vilified urban renewal schemes (Harvey, 1989:40).

### **Postmodern Consciousness**

The modern person wanted to break down all taboos, to deny myths and undress the artificial. He or she wanted to be free of the superstitious. Modern people regarded enlightenment as the continual breaking down of boundaries. But, after breaking through one limit, it is obvious a new boundary always emerges.

Jallinoja outlines three consecutive forms of modernism in interpretations based on empirical sociological research of modernism. It started in the 1950s and led to the deduction that rationality and hedonism are consecutive mentalities. The foremost conclusion is that the way modern life is interpreted in research changes; whereas at the start it is seen as rationality, later it is regarded as hedonism. Individuality is understood to grow deeper in the hedonistic phase, which thus is a maturer phase.

Rationality and hedonism are the key concepts of phased change, but in addition another concept of modernism can be outlined. Because of its nature it can be called liberalism, where the forbidden transforms into the accepted. It does not emphasize the individual's practical freedom of choice, on which hedonism is usually based. Both logically and historically liberalism seems to fit in somewhere between rationality and hedonism (Jallinoja, 1991:50-51).

A major shift in paradigms occurred in the sciences in the late 1980s. Quantum physics holds a purely relational world-view: random and unpredictable movement of quarks from one energy level to another are its principle of action; purely contiguous relations of a spatial order across bounded energy fields its horizon; structural relationships of similitude and difference its basic geometry; and its central canon is an infinite regression of all matter, from the hyperdensity of black holes to the purely disintegrative world of supermolecular particles (the high-energy physics of bosons, leptons and quarks) in the creation *ex nihilo* of unified field theory. It now contains a fifth force – the hypercharge – which is the postmodern contribution to the old physical world of gravity, electromagnetism, weak and strong forces (Pulkkinen, 1987).

Quantum physics gave us a world which is a matter of probability, paradox and irony, where singular events – with their representational logic – dissolve into relations across unbounded energy fields. The dualism of classical physics is rejected in favour of structural and morphological relations of identity and similitude. The world of quantum physics is what Jean Francois Lyotard described in *La condition postmoderne* as the age of the death of “*the grand recites*”.

In Edward Hopper's painting *Rooms by the Sea* two rooms are linked only by an aesthetic symmetry of form (the perfectly parallel rays of

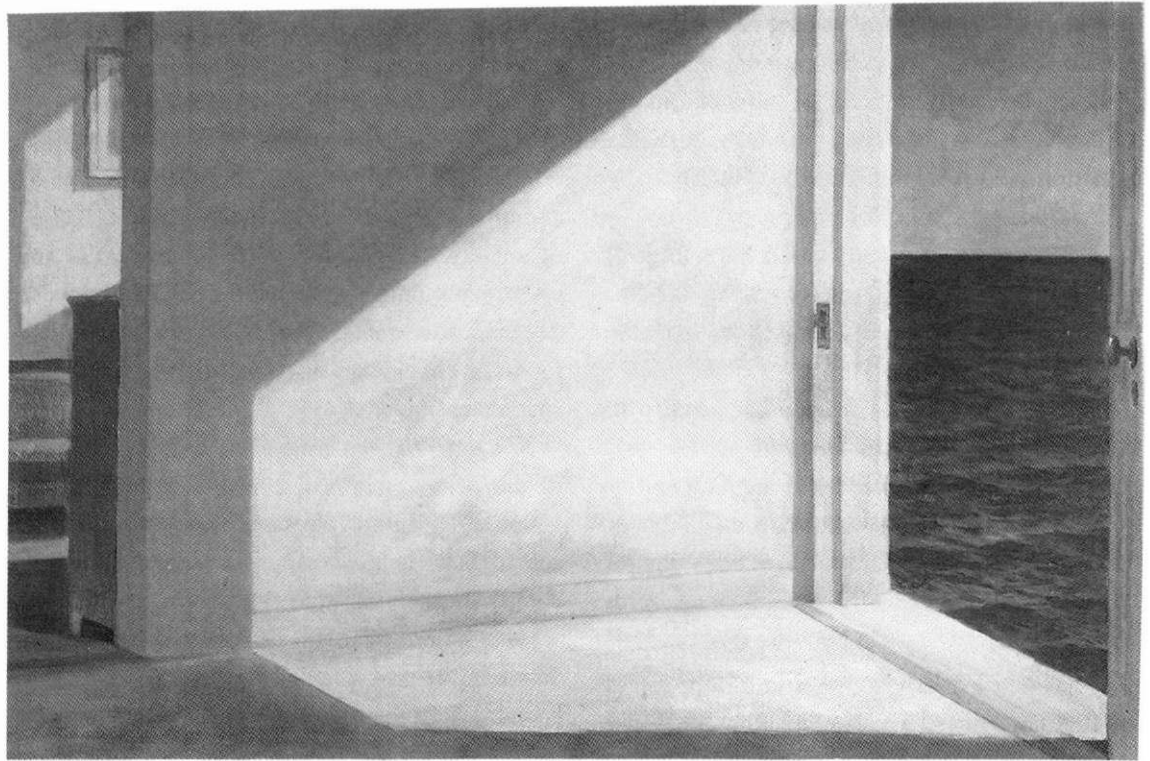
sunlight); emptiness (there are no humans present); and perfect stillness (the vacancy of the sea without is a mirror-image of the deadness within). Everything in the painting is transparent, nameless, relational, and seductive and for that reason, the cumulative emotional effect of the painting is one of anxiety and dread. *Rooms by the Sea* is an emblematic image of technology and culture as degeneration: nature (the sea) and culture (the rooms) are accidentally linked in a field of purely spatial continuity.

*Rooms by the Sea* is a precise, visual depiction of the postmodern world in the disintegrative vision of quantum physics; a world in which science is the language of power. Edward Hopper could paint technology as deprivation, because he was the American artist who first stumbled on the new continent of quantum physics as an exact, social description of the dynamic centre of advanced modernity (Kroker, 1988:246-248).

After new insights came the consciousness of pure relationalism. The postmodern consciousness realises that despite breaking down taboos and undressing the artificial, it is impossible to find the real ego, the true individual. Endlessly a new surface emerges.

This the postmodern consciousness knows and so will deliberately dress itself in the artificial. It is also aware that after one limit there is another limit, that it has to live at the boundary and nobody knows what will happen tomorrow. But a feeling of irony and paradox gives us the possibility of living in this age, so full of threats and catastrophes.

Thomas Ziehe (1989) defines the new generation as living in the present moment. The question is, whether it continues in the future. Consciousness is changing, to become more reflective. The postmodern person is fast moving forward. A new issue is also the spontaneous “no future”.



"Rooms by the Sea" by Edward Hopper.

### **Postmodern Culture and Bourgeois Identity**

We note an elective affinity between postmodern culture and bourgeois identity. In this we draw on Pierre Bourdieu's notion of "habitus". To understand habitus and thus identity we draw on Durkheim's "conscience collective", which itself has two components: (1) a component of "group", which defines identity in terms of in-group and out-group, in terms of the boundaries between the individual or collective actor and those that differ from, and often stand in opposition to, the individual or collective actor; (2) the component of classification. Part of our identity is determined by how we classify. We classify individuals into genders, age groups, ethnicities, social classes and status groups. To classify is necessarily at the same time to evaluate and make invidious distinctions. Different social classes and class frac-

tions, observes Bourdieu, have different systems of classification.

New, post-industrial middle classes, with bases in the media, higher education, finance, advertising, merchandising, and international exchange, provide an audience for postmodern culture. The populism and image-centeredness of postmodernism is more appealing to these new groupings than to the old elite.

Postmodern culture thus can be seen as a set of symbols and legitimations which promote the ideal interests of this new "yuppified" post-industrial bourgeoisie. It is partly constitutive of identity for this grouping (Lash, 1990:19-20).

### **City Cultures and Postmodern Life Styles**

Briitta Koskiahho (1986) connected the concept of way of life to an analysis of the period of cultural

criticism in the 1970s. By examining their way of life, researchers wanted to find out how people really live. They used both objective observation and subjective experience. Their main goal was to map individuals in their social and physical surroundings, as historical beings and through their set of values.

In his project, Roos examined the ways of living of people in the Finnish capital of Helsinki and in northern Karelia in 1981. The study showed that it is important to understand the varied circumstances and backgrounds that people have, because from these follow a different logic of life. According to Roos, it is important to distinguish between two things in the way of life: firstly, the realization of life, in which are included life's outer and inner control and, secondly, the basic and open life experiences. Roos examines the way of life through negation and from the standpoint of surviving and displacement. He does this by finding out if there is any helplessness, poverty or deprivation (meaning divergent behaviour) in a person's life. Life's inner control may express itself as more or less genuine "taking one's life into one's possession". Genuine inner control is an expression of a person's autonomic state, the ungentle is not.

The special features in a person's way of life are connected to different histories and fortunes of life as life styles. In this case one speaks of life styles as persons', families' and groups' way of living in their communities. Koskiaho regards Roos' concept of way of life as, in this sense, determining research on different life styles, where a life style is defined by the community.

The way of life means the totality, in which the lives of community members are divided both into functions of everyday life and into thoughts, values, ideals and social morals. Koskiaho, however, sees a human being as a creature with a will of his own, who will change the world with his mind. She presumes that research on life styles relates to the subjective concept of goodness, in

which the role of different views of the world should be taken into account more than before. She thinks that research on life styles should try to find out how a person's basic needs can be satisfied in the future. The meaning of work, relative to the use of time and as the basis of material well-being, will change, which will affect life styles. In addition, the opportunities available to a person to change his life are still a central problem in research on well-being (Koskiaho, 1986:87-90).

J. P. Roos has defined the concept of way of life in an article in 1990: "*The way of life is formed by all those repeated activities, which fill a person's everyday life: work, living, leisure and family life.*"

The way of life is often compressed into one dominant feature (food, training, music), but more importantly, the way of life is always a conglomerate of its qualities. The way of life is a wholeness, a certain system, the opposite of the mosaic of separate life activities.

J. P. Roos uses "habitus" to describe the life styles of people. He calls "habitus" the internalized rules of choices. Habitus is a "collection" of the principles of life styles. People can change their way of talking or dressing, but it is not as easy to change one's habitus.

The issue of life style has been discussed by philosophers, psychologists, economists and other scientists for a long time. In the Marxian order, life style is a phenomenon determined primarily by an individual's objective position in the production process, that is, in the structure that loosely shapes values and attitudes and determines critical life experiences. Max Weber is more directly concerned with life style. He uses the term "status honour". Status honour is usually expressed as a specific style of life that, above all else, can be expected from those who wish to belong to a particular circle (Weber, 1954:69; Dunin-Woyseth, 1989:6). Bearing in mind all our definitions of life style, we should emphasize the last, and call life

style a person's pattern of choices or freedom to choose. Life style is a characteristic of a person, a group of people, or a society, who can afford free choices.

Life style thus results from peoples' values and options.

The life style innovation lies in the growing degree of freedom given to individuals to organize their lives and to choose their life styles (Dunin-Woyseth, 1989:7). How are we to understand the recent growth of interest in city cultures and urban life styles, asks Mike Featherstone (1991). He recognises that cities have always had cultures. We can take this to refer to two senses of the term: culture as a way of life (the anthropological sense); and culture as the arts, spiritually elevating cultural products and experiences (high culture). According to Featherstone, there has been a blurring of the boundaries between these two senses of culture. This has been accompanied by a shift in attention from life styles conceived of as a relatively fixed set of dispositions, cultural tastes and leisure practices, which demarcate groups from each other, to the assumption that, in the contemporary city, life styles are more actively formed. Hence the researcher's focus turns away from life style as class- or neighbourhood-based, to life style as an active stylization of life, in which coherence and unity give way to a playful exploration of transitory experiences and surface aesthetic effects.

The extension of the range of cultural and leisure pursuits has not only extended the range of leisure life styles available but has also resulted in some qualitative shifts. There is a tendency on the part of some groups (especially the young, well educated sectors of the middle classes) to take a more active stance to life style and the pursuit of the stylization of life. Here we can point not only to the imitation and popularity of the life styles of artistic subcultures (bohemians, avantgardist) in contemporary metropolises, but also to what has

been referred to as artist of life, the painters who do not paint but adopt the artistic sensibilities in order to turn their lives into works of art. The concern with fashion, presentation of self and display by the new wave of urban flaneurs point to a process of cultural differentiation, which in many ways is the obverse of the stereotypical images of mass societies, in which serried ranks of similarly dressed people are massed together. If the contemporary age can be characterized as an era of "no style", to borrow a phrase by Simmel, then it points to the rapid circulation of new styles (fashion, appearance, design, consumer goods) and the nostalgic invocation of past ones.

Here is a further convergence in the process of the stylization and aestheticization of everyday life, between the popularity of artistic life styles and stylistic presentation and display, and the development of a differentiated and sophisticated range of consumer goods, leisure-time pursuits and experiences, which incorporate a high input of design, style and artistic current (such as dadaism and surrealism). Postmodernism in the 1960s wanted to collapse the boundary between art and everyday life to show that the most banal objects of consumer culture and the kitsch and detritus of mass culture could be aestheticized and introduced as the subjects of, or incorporated into, the formal structure of artwork. Postmodern art also focused upon the body, living art and happenings.

Hence we have an interchange between a number of currents: a greater input of style, design and cultural imagery into consumer goods, localities for leisure and consumption, and the fabric of the city; an expansion of artistic professions, intermediaries and ancillary workers, with the growth of specific artistic enclaves and neighbourhoods; the move towards postmodern art with an aestheticization of everyday life and mass consumer cultures; the growing prominence of social agglomerates which show a concern with stylistic display, fashionable clothing and presentation of



self, as people move through city spaces and consumption, leisure and entertainment sites (Featherstone, 1991:95-96).

### **The Value System of a New Generation in Finland**

The new generation growing up in Finland in the 1990s is historical in the sense that, for the first time in Finnish history, most young people are born in cities. In the 1950s only 20 per cent of Finnish people lived in the cities, compared to about 70 per cent of the population today. The "Great Migration" occurred in the 1970s when many people moved from northern to southern Finland. Simultaneously many suburbs were built on functionalist principles. People disliked them and expressed a great desire to move back to the countryside. The new generation in Finland, however, no longer has any direct connections to the countryside. It is creating an urban culture with its centre in the cities. What does this mean? What kinds of life styles and system of values does this generation have?

In Finland, as in Sweden, it is obvious that urban life is experiencing a revival. As Olof Wärneryd, Ann-Karin Bäcklund and Anders Löfgren write, many preach about the advantages of the urban milieu. Encounters of many people create new ideas, a new enterprising spirit, inventive power and social mobility (Wärneryd & al., 1990:116).

Businessmen on the same street collaborate and arrange joint activities to attract customers. New physical features in urban centres include indoor shopping streets. Hotels offer weekend rates for visitors from the countryside. A rich flora of shops, small bakeries and exclusive restaurants have reestablished niches in the centres. Furthermore, there has been an almost explosive increase of the outdoor cafes so common in the rest of Europe, and until recently unknown in Scandinavia.

Cultural events such as concerts, theatre performances and exhibitions are more widespread than ever. To celebrate an event publically is high fashion. Another phenomenon is that many, particularly young people, have found jobs within this rich spectrum of new activities.

The youth – are they an urban avant-garde? Youths are heterogeneous. Within any delimitation of youths as a group is found a broad diversity of life-prospects, socioeconomic situations and especially "life styles".

Mainstream youth are sometimes invisible because they adhere to the predominant norms of everyday life and have a rather conventional approach to life-projects and life style. The more visible subcultural life styles are sometimes considered to be deviant, but of course, deviance in this respect must be linked to the different cultures in a working-class or middle-class context (Wärneryd et al., 1990:116-118).

J. P. Roos writes that there is not only one Finnish life style, except in a very general sense, when we can speak of life style as a synonym of culture. Roos also says that life style is connected to group membership. Through their life style people define the realm they would like to regard as their own territory. Culture plays a dominant role in life style. According to Roos, there are two dominant cultures in Finland, the agricultural and the middle-class. There are large differences between women and men, though both have to give up their previous life styles when they get married. Usually the life styles of the middle-classes are more important to the wives (Roos, 1991).

Mervi Ilmonen (1991) writes that there are two groups of youths in Finland at the beginning of the 1990s. One group has what she calls environmental competence and the other has not. The first group can enjoy urban life, but the other can not. In Sweden most youths seem to favour inner-city life during the years between childhood and adulthood. These years of experimentation in

style, life-patterns, norms and culture have been prolonged in the post-war period, thus increasing the number of people who can be defined as youths. The new urban life styles are those individual experiments made common.

Urban life is defined by stressing diversity, pluralism and creativity in life-patterns, as opposed to the more conforming suburban patterns cast around family life, commitment and regular working hours. Industries prospering from these urban life styles are in the youth business: popular music, movies, magazines, clothes and the manufacture and distribution of make believe and urban mythology.

### **A Study of Life Styles**

My study is about urban life styles in Finland. As my research has only just started I will preview some points and preliminary results. The features of urban life styles the study concentrates on are:

EXPERIENCING THE CITY;  
MOVING IN THE CITY;  
ACTING IN THE CITY;  
ENCOUNTERING IN THE CITY.

The interview themes with which urban life styles will be described are:

The structure of everyday life;  
Social interaction;  
Consciousness;  
Values;  
Leisure;  
Ways of consumption;  
Demands.

The people already interviewed are young urban professionals, a middle-class group. The values in this study have been measured by a model devised by Shalom Schwartz (1990). There are some directions of the system of values by young urban people born in the 1960s. I call this generation "a new generation". They do not share the same beliefs and truths as their elders.

The MONITOR study, a sample of 2,000 Finnish people interviewed every second year, shows that the direction in which values are moving is away from tradition, security, conformity and benevolence towards more self-direction, stimulation and hedonism. Those participating were born in the 1960s, did not yet have children, and worked in the centre of the city of Helsinki.

In this study the young urban professionals thought that the most important values were freedom, intelligence, health and self-respect. But the results were not simple. They respected family security and inner harmony and put a high value on meaning in life, honesty and self-respect. "Accepting my portion in life" and "devout" were rated lowest. Public image and detachment were also quite low.

This large MONITOR-sample is moving towards more self direction, stimulation and hedonism. The German sociologist, Ulrich Beck (1987), discusses the development of the welfare state, which has led to a situation in which everybody has acquired more in a collective sense. This leads to the so called "lift-effect". As everybody has more, the subcultures of social class, class identity and class formation have become thinner or have dissolved. The value system of individualism is founded on a new kind of ethic, which is based on the principle: most important is your duty to yourself. As a result of the "lift-effect" and the special development of individualism, everyone has more choices than ever before. You can choose your own life style, if you want.

### **Leena, 31, a Currency Dealer from Helsinki**

Leena does not exist as an individual. She is a prototype of a typical urban single woman and her values and actions are derived from five different interviews with young urban females. Leena's parents are lower middle class and have lived in

Helsinki all their lives. Thirty years ago they graduated from college.

Leena works in a large bank as a currency dealer, buying and selling money. The life style of an independent young woman focuses mostly on herself and her job. She wants to be successful in her profession, take care of her looks and have fun. There are not many routines or boring domestic tasks in her everyday life. Leena is not married and though she has a boyfriend she does not live with him. She lives alone in a small flat in the centre of Helsinki. She does not have to cook daily, because she can lunch in the bank cafeteria. She does not have to buy groceries every day or start another working day as soon as she gets home. She likes to go out with friends and have a beer or two after work. Only on weekends does she cook with her friends. Then they watch video tapes and sometimes play squash or swim. She does not, however, go in much for sports. She concentrates on being good at her profession and collecting skills that may prove useful in her job.

### **Values**

Health plays a central part in her set of values. She fears for her health though she has never been seriously ill. Because of increasing pollution, she is afraid of bacteria and unknown diseases. She does, however, not want to eat bean sprouts and other things that health freaks normally do. If something affects her health, she believes oatmeal porridge will cure it.

She does not have any special feelings towards the ill and the poor and does not think she has any obligation to help them. She does not like to make sacrifices. She wants to make it on her own and to look after herself only – if someone can not manage, that's his problem. The concerns of the third world do not move her at all. Environmental issues do not interest her enough so that she would be prepared to give up something for their benefit. As she cares only about things that make her own

life more difficult, she is unwilling to go to extremes to save our environment.

Security and tradition rate very high in her set of values. She does not care for the behaviour of the bohemian life style. She hopes that, when she one day decides to have a family, they will lead a quiet life. She has a boyfriend, likes intimate relationships and tenderness, but despises the mundane routines so much that she is not prepared to tie herself down for good just yet. She hates the idea of daily having to drag her children between day-care and home before and after work.

Not long ago a bachelor girl in her thirties did not command any respect, but nowadays there is not that kind of social pressure. In Finland one can be an independent single woman and be respected if one has a good and highly paid job. It is not easy to afford a car and a house. By the age of 25 Leena has both and is very proud of this achievement.

### **Style**

Leena regards her clothes and her own style as important. She is aware of the designers whose clothes she wears and has many of her clothes custom-made. She gets fashion ideas from international magazines and buys many clothes in her travels abroad.

She can not wear some Finnish clothes because she does not like the designer. If people see her wearing them they could misinterpret her image. She is conscious of what fits her style and is "in". She likes some expensive Finnish designer clothes and buys furniture by Artek and crockery by Arabia. She knows she has to be elegant because of her job. She often meets foreigners and has to look presentable.

Leena often dines in expensive restaurants with business guests, but meets her friends in the same restaurant. She can always get in, even if the place is full. She likes her living environment very urban and lives in the centre of Helsinki. Often she walks around the city window shop-

ping, visits the marketplace and new shopping-centres. Money and consumption are most important in her life.

Culturally Leena is average. She wants her movies entertaining and undemanding and does not care much for theatre or opera. She watches a lot of television and listens to pop music programmes on the radio. She does not read much.

In Finland women often work and are very independent compared to many other countries. Because of their economic independence they can easily devote their lives to themselves. A woman who is successful at work is also treated as an independent person. It is possible for a woman to free herself from paralysing mundane routines, if she wants to and to live freely, without a care in the world.

The negative side of this way of life is indifference to others and the environment, a kind of modern morally acceptable selfishness. Everyone knows that only a few can live their lives in this way. One must possess education and know-how – only they can guarantee a good place in the business world. Such a life is possible only in economically expansive times and will change during a recession, but no one knows how. Leena's life is an adventure, full of possibility and happy experiences.

### **The Postmodern Way to Plan**

Can one talk of postmodern consciousness in Leena's case? In some ways, yes. Powerful hedonism and the need to live for oneself, having fun and consumerism are parts of the postmodern life style. But Leena is also very traditional in the way she respects security and family ties. In one way she is a conservative, as she is not postmodernistic in an artistic way. She is more part of the new Finnish middle class. What is new is that now a woman, too, has a chance to live alone and be free, up to the point she has children.

As Featherstone might say, the aesthetization of everyday life is important to her. Her life style comes from consuming the right things. The city is a stage with different kind of theatres, where she can display clothes and other possessions.

As values and life styles changed, the business world caught the ideas faster. But people also need something other than consumerism. What else can cities offer the new middle classes who live in the postmodern culture? What can planners do?

When people live alienated in functionalist cities, the time has come to find a sense of place. Jonathan Raban in *Soft City* (1974) has written about living in the city. He thought that in practice the city produces signs and images. His description of the soft city can be more real than the one located on the map and in statistics.

It is important to take city space and urban scenery into consideration in planning, likewise man's experience and the effect of symbols of the city on his identity. The postmodern way of planning tries to include the space, experience and history of our environment.

How can the planner find out about these things? The phenomenological method is helpful here: one has to describe the everyday life of urban inhabitants from their own point of view. Planners should try to understand the language of symbols, in order to understand their message.

When surveying the structure of a community prior to making plans, one must examine the city's historical, material and physical structure, what people talk about, their life styles, homes, experiences and conditions for action and, finally, the power-structure there. It is important to improve the academic level of planning research. This "onthological" way of surveying may help to identify new planning methods in the postmodern time. To planners the only way to follow the process of development is to deepen their knowledge of the everyday life of the residents of the city.

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Denna artikel har granskats vetenskapligt av minst två av de lektörer som anges på sidan 172.

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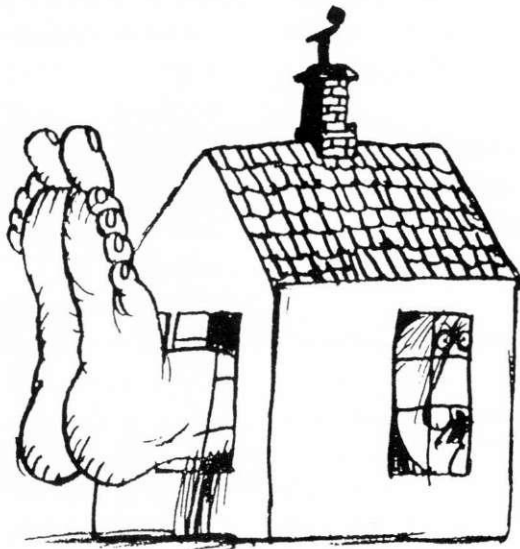


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Samlade Tankar från Roten.