

Abstracts

Cityfenomena in villageresearch - a theoretical survey rooted in postmodern characteristics of modernity

By Katja Hellman

The author of this articles calls attention to some urban characteristics which have been interpreted as being post-modern, in an attempt to discuss how they can be adapted to an analysis which might be carried out in the context of a small Finnish town. The many aspects of the town's size and scale must be taken into consideration when one studies phenomena and processes of an urban environment which are characteristic of the period, even if such phenomena and processes seem to be common to both smaller towns and larger cities. When analyses based on models and theories taken from large-city contexts are made in small-town environments, the local historical and cultural context must be a self-evident point of departure for the study, even though the global information society has led to cultural concepts and impressions being communicated regardless of expanse. Even though such points of departure have been considered in previous research, they have not been discussed in any pronounced and problematizing way. Small towns are also included in contemporary networks and can thus be made more able to exhibit characteristics which are recognizable in larger towns and in other contexts than the local or regional. The effects of globalization and networks can thus be seen as background factors in an analysis of a small Finnish town. Increasing demands for being seen and heard in various channels of information and being able to capture both tourists, permanent residents and businesses, especially in smaller towns, can lead to concentration on the construction of a distinct image and the strengthening of local identity.

"There's a place where it can all come true" - Planning and practice in an American leisure- and experience-scape

By Carina Ren

This article examines the planning, staging and subsequent use of public space in a leisure

and tourism context. The article demonstrates how the ski resort of Breckenridge, Colorado, has been constructed, not only physically but also discursively, to create a perfect frame for recreation and consumption. This construction has been carried out in two phases. The first has involved a stressing of certain moods by marketing the town's leisure space as authentic, active and secure using advertisements, local awareness campaigns and workforce training; the second has carried out a staging of the town according to an explicit place-making strategy focusing on walking paths, dwelling places, history, nature and culture.

This study shows that the strategy has had both an enabling as well as a restricting effect on both local residents and tourists. Many of the local residents are provided with jobs because of the tourist industry, while all locals can enjoy an extensive range of leisure-time activities. Visitors' holiday ambitions are fulfilled by the town when they can walk or hike on foot, and enjoy the scenic vistas and the historic downtown – things that are not part of everyday life in American suburbs for most people. The creation of this spatial and discursive frame around Breckenridge has made leisure practices possible, and thus created ways to experience 'the good vacation'.

Planning does, however, have a downside as the town reveals itself as being not quite 'for everyone' – in spite of slogans stating the opposite. Tourists are instead identified and targeted as families or as middle-aged 'baby boomers', as active, and as adventurous. They and their moods and cultural preferences are subsequently catered to almost in exclusivity. Because leisure-time activities simultaneously move towards an increasingly higher degree of commodification, packing one's leisure time with adventure and activity becomes a considerable expenditure. These aspects function jointly to make Breckenridge leisure, the 'Breck experience', not only culturally but also economically unavailable or undesirable to many.

Finding alternative and free-of-charge activities become difficult in this seemingly unconstrained, yet highly structured and commodified leisure space. The author contends that both researcher, planners and politicians must, therefore, acknowledge not only the transformative and integrative possibilities of leisure, but also the power structures and hegemonic tendencies working against the heterogeneity of leisure practices. Focusing on and attesting to a multitude of alternative leisure cultures is important, not only for the sake of heterogeneity, but also for the better understanding and addressing of the working of hegemonic culture and power.

How does one manage the past? Ideologies concerning the Finnish woodtownpolicy

By Sanna Lillbroända-Annala

The author of this article opens by asking two questions: what have wooden cities and towns experienced because of ideologies and attitudes, and whose values have been emphasized during the different periods of time? This approach assumes the inherent value of wooden buildings in wooden towns in that they are the oldest form of town building, and that preservation therefore ought to be considered an important communal task. The importance of the wooden towns to the composition of the modern city thus relates something of the attitude towards

the wooden town which either has considered them as being worthy of preservation or of being replaced with modern buildings.

The historical wooden towns' transformation from being threatened, decayed town environments to becoming valued environments of great cultural heritage can therefore be seen as a development in the value discussions about wooden towns. The previously old-fashioned wooden buildings have now become highly valued. The neighbourhoods are usually lived in by a heterogeneous group of people of different ages. Interest in wooden-house environments is expressed there in the increasingly improved houses and neighbourhoods. This development has led to new ways of utilizing the historical wooden towns in city promotional campaigns and as a way to entice both new inhabitants and tourists.

Changes for the worse have, however, also taken place. The modernization of towns and cities in the 1950s was based on an intense ideology stating that the modern town should be built up with modern architecture. This was the basis for the never-ending discussions of whether an old building should be torn down or allowed to stand.

Movements of population to the towns and cities, and the lack of modern houses, led to a relentless modernization of dwellings during the 1950s. Architects' absolute influence in the planning of the modern city and their negative attitude towards old buildings meant that the culture of historical buildings quickly became threatened by demolition.

The policy decisions in cities during the 1960s were based on society's needs and not on the needs of the individual city dweller. The building of new city environments was based on quantity instead of quality, and the standardization of building culture became an important starting point. Reconstruction plans based on replacing the old stratum of buildings with new ones were developed in many cities.

In the 1970s, planning officials realized that the building of the modern city had failed to create environments in which city felt comfortable. The conference on wooden towns and cities held in Norway in 1972 gave rise to the idea that older town buildings could also be considered a resource for the city of the future. Inspired by the conference message, planning work began to be characterized by a humanistic philosophy which emphasized the individual person's significance and a respect for environments' immaterial aspects. Preservation plans were worked out for the cities' oldest sections and the preservation of entire neighbourhoods became more emphasized.

The so-called golden years of town planning during the 1960s and 1970s had destroyed much of the historical building culture of our cities. Starting in the 1980s, the remaining old buildings began to be considered as being valuable, resulting in the adaptation of preservation plans for the oldest sections of cities. During the 1990s, interest increased in the value of our wooden towns which were upgraded to be residential areas. Various projects for increasing their attractiveness were initiated while development of the wooden towns became regarded as providing desirable residential areas and tourist attractions.

In the course of time, both city officials and individual city dwellers have come to realize that demolition is not the only way to solve the meeting between old and new. A combination of continuity and change in building culture, which modernization ideologists had opposed during the past decades, has now begun to thrive. The will to preserve built-up environments is

thus a reflection of the value attributed to older residential districts and local history.

The ugly city

By Jeppe Høst og Mads Holme

Since the early 1990s, the urban policy of Copenhagen has shifted from having an introverted to having an extroverted perspective. From being a policy that has concentrated on the welfare state's basic ideals in order to guarantee a stable Copenhagen and Denmark, the policy has begun to focus on growth. From having regarded Copenhagen as a city in Denmark, Copenhagen is now regarded as being in a position of competition with Hamburg, Stockholm and Berlin.

Taking a pilot project for Copenhagen city as their point of departure, during which the authors have cooperated with the Plan and Architecture Unit responsible for overall city planning, they use this encounter between a cultural-historical and an architectural praxis to discuss how the overall visions for Copenhagen are expressed in actual city planning. In doing so, they assert that the present city planning is directed by a specific comprehension of beauty which they find incompatible with the city's creative strategy.

By including the cultural-historical viewpoint in planning processes, the authors contend that the city would be better equipped to comprehend cultural-historical diversity as a value and a resource. Such inclusion would be beneficial not only on a historical-philosophical level, but also in relation to meeting some of the city's creative goals.

The city and the stranger - on metropolitan fragmentation and the strangers sociocultural construction

By Pia Kirkegaard

This article deals with the tendency towards segregation in large cities. It considers the connection between the large city's division into enclaves and the socio-cultural construction of the stranger, based on the premise that the experience of moving about and living in the city is influenced by constant meetings with people unknown to the actor.

The author begins with a retrospective glance at classic urban research and its discussions of the conditions of life for modern people in large cities. This leads to a discussion of the forms for socializing created by the modern large city in the early twentieth century and how the traditional ghetto arose as a canal into large city life.

The large-city dweller's ability to shape the city's expression is a central point in the discussion. The city's appearance is ascertained as being a result of peoples' comprehension of and opinion about each other, and that a vital point of study must be how people in a specific socio-cultural context comprehend others whom they meet, but do not know, in the urban room. It appears, in fact, that anxiety for meeting the stranger in the urban room can lead to a division of the city into homogeneous enclaves, leading to the upper class barricading itself

behind walls and barbed wire in attractive districts, while the poorer lower class assembles in ghettos where violence and criminality are the order of the day. The wealthy residents are suspicious of the poorer town dwellers, while these last regard each other with suspicion. This becomes a problem for the cohesive power of the city. The negative opinion of the stranger must, therefore, be altered so that all town dwellers can meet each other with confidence, and integration and democratic development can be brought about in urban space. The author concludes her article by contending that one must first understand how town dwellers in a given socio-cultural context consider their meeting with the stranger in a large city, if city planners and local politicians are to be successful in hindering the establishment of ghettos and the segregation of the city.

Nostalgic memories from Viborg

By Monica Ståhls-Hindsberg

What meaning and function does the past have for us? The author of this article investigates the importance of collective memories in relation to a collective identity, just as a locality's importance for the common identity can have to do with a locality that has been lost in childhood. Representatives for different language groups describe such memories from their childhood in this article, and also just what these memories signify for their present identity. The author's informants all spent their childhood in the city of Viborg in Finnish Carelia, a region that Finland was forced to cede to the USSR in connection with the terms of the peace treaty of 1944. They were interviewed in 1995 and 1996 in connection with the project "Life and destinies in Viborg".

Death and the Evil in Finnish Belief Tradition

By Kaarina Koski

In Finnish folk belief tradition, the dead and the devil have both acted as interested parties, which punish wrong-doers. In legends, supernatural beings that represent death are often identified with devils or connected with sin. Nevertheless, in Finnish belief legends, death is not always linked with this Christian concept of evil.

Christian concept presents evil as an absolute threat to the eternal soul and personifies it as the Devil. Ethnic concepts of evil, in turn, tend to be more concrete, relative and ambiguous. They can be compared to the vernacular sacred, i.e. that certain phenomena are regarded harmful and dangerous in one context but beneficial in another. Death is a threat to human life and welfare, but in cyclic time-conception an end is simultaneously a beginning. Thus, through regeneration, death has been considered also a source of fertility. In magic, its destructive power could as well be used for one's own benefit.

In pre-Christian Finland, the dead functioned as an important authority with an impact in the livelihood. The Catholic Church did not entirely brake the ancestor cult but strongly shaped it, still allowing the possibility for the living to affect their deceased loved ones' afterlife. Lutheran Church, in turn, aimed at breaking the ties beyond the grave and emphasised the injurious effects of contacting the deceased. The Church kept the dead and the harmful effects in its own control. Consequently, in the Finnish folk beliefs the supernatural powers of the church and death were connected together. Churchyard-väki, a supernormal force or a crowd of beings that represented both the church and the dead, was both feared and used in magic and healing.

Christianity had a great impact in conceptions of haunting, mainly in the explanations why some souls did not rest in peace. In fertility-centred religions, haunting could be a consequence of an abnormal way of dying. It escaped the society's ritual control, which aimed at regeneration, and it meant a loss in the society's life energy. Such a bad death was, in Christian view, a consequence of a sinful life. In Lutheran view, it only damaged the sinner him/herself. Legends functioned as warning examples, urging to a pious life.

In some cases, especially in legends of poltergeist-like haunting, the Finnish word for "devils" was sometimes used to denote supernatural disturbances or harmful beings, which were actually not interpreted as devils. Such phenomena were frightening and highly undesirable, but they were not always conceptualised evil in a Christian way. Even though the Christian concept of evil was common in Finnish folk belief tradition and even though it was frequently connected to death, we must avoid generalization and also recognize the ethnic ideas on death and evil.