TO PLAN FOR THE UNPLANNED
AND THE ROLE OF ARCHITECTURE AND URBAN FORM
WHEN WORKING WITH SPATIAL SEGREGATION
FIELDS OF INTEREST.


The political. The paradox. The difficult.

KNOWLEDGE.
Knowledge transaction. Knowledge transmission. Tacit knowledge. By who? For whom?

All very pretty words. How do they relate to architecture?
A possible dystopian future scenario for our cities, society and urban life:

The socio-economic differences between groups will become even greater, the class-society will be cemented. The concept and perception of fear and safety will influence urban life and form even more than it is today. The “island urbanism” where we construct walls and barriers (imaginary or real) will contribute to an architecture of fear and the metropolis will the claustropolis.

Our society is changing fast due to political and economical conflicts and interests, climate change and natural disasters. More and more people are living in urban areas. Municipalities have a problem with coping with the high number of people moving in to a city, as well as they are having a problem with maintaining a good sustainable environment for people already living in some areas of the city. Segregation and integration is a growing problem in the world and most definitely in some cities in Sweden. And cities has yet not managed to find solutions to the problem of segregation. Instead they continue to construct islands/enclaves of housing estates targeted to certain demographic and socio-economic groups, and at the same time other groups are left behind. The city builds for the ones they want to live here, not the ones that are in fact already living here.

There is a strong debate about segregation and exclusion (“utanförskap”) in Sweden at the moment. Segregated areas doesn’t just arise over night, it is a complex intersectional problem. And the consequences of the planning of the post-war housing estates with its mono-functional purposes is becoming clearer. So it is possible to assume that the answer has to be either complex and/or intersectional.

So what can the role of the architect and the architecture be in this field? The built environment has a huge impact on all of our daily lives. And if you widen the meaning of the word architecture you might possibly find interesting answers to that question.
The purpose of this diploma work is to discuss the existing and possible urban public life in relation to planning within (and the politics of planning of new) spatially segregated areas. And to try to talk about the built forms impact on segregated spaces. Furthermore, to question the need of the extensive planning practice we see today.

I will do so by investigating three connected topics:
- the architects, and the architectures, role in working with spatially segregated spaces.
- the public spaces and places that were the outcome and consequence of the functionalistic urban planning that resulted in a sort of island urbanism - an archipelago of mono-functional suburbs that are poorly connected to each other.
- the so called SLOAP areas (spaces leftover after planning), i.e the areas in between the enclaves/the islands. Which can be said to be the negative/inverted shape of planned architecture. Or the *Terrain Vague* as the Spanish architect de Sola-Morales called them.
The post-war mono-functional suburbs that were intended as housing estates for the worker of that time was intended to be spatially segregated. Work and living shouldn’t be mixed, instead it was the idea of the neighbourhood that was strong. Social sustainability was only achievable if people from the same class and socio-economic group lived together. Small centers in each suburb was suppose to provide the everyday services needed.

This ideological standpoint can be said to have backfired. The areas doesn’t work like that and instead they have become more than just geographically segregated.

They have become residential areas for people with very few resources in many cases, and at the same time islands/enclaves for upper- or middle class has emerged. (Or maybe it has always been there?).

So what we have is islands that are poorly connected to eachother, the city and region as a whole. The differences is in the power to choose and the amount of networks the inhabitants have outside of their living area.
ARCHITECTURES NEGATIVE SHAPE – THE UNDEFINED SPACE

The functionalistic planning ideal with islands and enclaves based on an idea of mono-function has created inbetween spaces. The surroundings - the planned physical urban forms effects how these inbetweens/loopholes exists and what is the essenses of their existence. They could have an direct identity that is created by everyday activities that takes place, and that isn’t planned for.

Examples:
abandoned industrial areas between housing estates
abandoned gardening allotments
abandoned/not used plots
nature areas
areas alongside highways and train tracks
areas in between housing blocks within the estate area
parking spaces
and so on

These places are usually very vague in its programme, the use isn’t obvious, which sometimes is its quality. Cities, architects, planners and investors usually see these areas as possible future exploation areas. Instead of seeing the actual use that is happening now. The places doesn’t have to be empty at all, they can play an important role in creating a place for different stories then the ones that has a place in the official public rooms and arenas. But they are seen as unsafe by many people. Lefebvre talks about appropriation.
Segregation

Segregate = to divide

If one doesn’t place any social value or stigma to the term, it simply means spaces (if considering architecture) that are physically separated from one another. Sometimes that is a big advantage and what is sought after by many, and sometimes it is extremely negative and can have far reaching consequences on a society as a whole. And most of the time it is both.
Not only for the inhabitants in so called segregated areas.
The segregated area is a product of something else (a segregated room) or a room that isn’t suppose to be segregated creates a segregated space. Its negative/inverted room has either defined functions or it can be a vague space but that still is used.

But! It is impossible not to place any value in the term, since segregation is a form of discrimination as well as it discriminates. Segregation is a complex problem that has evolved because of many factors. It is an intersectional problem, and therefore one can argue, that it needs intersectional actions.

The common way of describing segregation is:
residential segregation: groups of people of different class, ethnic background or age, living spatially separated from each other in the urban landscape.
Factors that influences segregation:
Socio-economic factors like employment is considered the number one factor which in turn has many consequences on the surrounding environment.
Boverket says that the ones who have the possibility to choose where to live do so. And thereby they choose for the ones who can’t.

Segregation of choice.

Segregation of coercion. (Even though this might not always be true, people choose to live with relatives or friends for example, but the choice of physical environment is not always an option).

The weakest and the least powerful depend on the local public environment much more then people with jobs, education, higher income etc. People with resources usually overcome spatial segregation by having established networks globally in the city etc.

Interplay segregation - The Ph. D student Ann Legeby (KTH - architecture and built environment) talks about this concept in relation to co-presence, co-awareness and/or interaction as key factors. Furthermore, she talks about the concept of tacit knowledge in relation to public space and co-presence. The transmission of a culture’s and society’s “unwritten rules” can be seen in public space. A place where everyday practices can take place and be shared.

If one discusses spatial segregation solely based on the physical space, it becomes a problem when discussing the areas based on the composition of the residents. Because this doesn’t say anything of the physical environment, Ann Legeby argues. Her results show that Swedish post-war suburbs in general (even though they are very different spatially) has very poor spatial preconditions for a well-functioning urban life.

So how to deal with the issue?
There are many ways of course, but these 3 could be seen as possible ways of attacking the issue in this diploma work:
- taking a political-housing standpoint and discuss the apartments, tenures, sizes and talk about densification of the area: i.e. to draw new suggestions on how the areas could look.
- to talk about exclusion (utanförskap) and see what kind of attractors that is needed, like youth centers, and then problematize the design and draw that.
- to talk about the segregated rooms and spaces in relation to the inbetween vague spaces that were the outcome of the functionalistic planning. To talk about island urbanism.

This last idea sounds the most interesting and appealing to me.
Segregation is such a vast topic which means I have to narrow it down in order to be able to complete this diploma work. I have decided to focus on Södertälje as a city and the city parts Hovsjö and Pershagen to narrow my work even more. Hovsjö is thought of as a segregated and exposed area, whereas Pershagen is considered a wealthy, resourceful villa-area. But they both are spatially segregated geographically from the city as a whole as well as from its neighbouring areas.

Södertälje is an interesting city in many ways. It has a lot of problems, with areas with high unemployment rate, organized crime and lack of housing, to mention a few things. BUT it also has a lot of powerful and positive things, the gathered knowledge with people coming from all over the world is big, the many small businesses, the headquarters for an international TV and radio station, beautiful nature, strong local community feeling and so on.

Södertälje would be an interesting city to investigate further, to reveal the systems and the planning and to see cultures and the local community and what projects are about to happen and to make my own picture of the city.

Södertälje has a very well integrated city core, but it has many islands/housing estates around it that are not well integrated. 4 of these areas is considered as segregated areas by the state and are thus in focus for some planned actions that tries to solve some of the problems in the area. The local municipality is also talking a lot about these issues and are trying to tackle problems from different angles. One way is the creation of Telge Hovsjö, the city’s housing company that operates in the city part called Hovsjö. They work after a model where local commitment and participation is important. They have been focusing on social activities and actions mostly so far, to get a strong local engagement.
QUESTIONS AND PROBLEMS

One question I believe is very central when working in this field is to not only think about buildings or urban planning. But to understand the politics, the economics and the societal responsibility that lays behind the notion of segregation. But my aim is to talk about the urban form connected to segregation. A problem might be to keep focus on the architecture.

How to do this without losing track of the main point? Is it a problem that I have many topics and inter-related ideas? Do I have to narrow down further? Is it possible to study both the islands and the inbetweens and to draw something in two areas? The main thing I’m interested in are borders and walls. Maybe I should reformulate the topic? If my project turns out to be that I “only” create pedestrian/bike paths to the city and through the area etc. is that not complex enough for being a diploma work?

I believe that the local community has a lot to offer in many ways, specially in terms of knowledge, and the ideas and initiatives has to come from them in order for change to be successful. But at the same time, the top down urban planning is also needed. Specially since segregation is a faults in various systems, not a problem coming from people in a certain area. Cities do huge investments and decide on infrastructural work and other political things that might lead to a better environment. So a question and a problem here is how the architect can position herself in order to be a part of, and understand, both perspectives.

Paradox - if cities have to densify, how to do that and still keep the creative urban loopholes, the inbetweens? How to plan for the unplanned without repeating the functionalistic planning ideals errors?
I am not sure at this moment on what the drawn or built project would be. I do not want to state something definite here since that would mean I already have a lot of knowledge of the city, the different sites, organizations and so on.

One idea on how to proceed:
- Discuss and investigate the topic of “island urbanism”, “architecture of fear”, “inbetweens” and “barriers” in relation to Södertälje and to the specific areas. Try to bare in mind to focus on the architecture and urban planning all the time.
- This will be a theoretical discussion on planning, the unplanned and how to relate to the idea of a world where walls are being constructed. Then form an opinion on how to act. And this attac will be in drawings and models and an architectural project.

But I can of course imagine million different things happening. It could end up being a school, a university, a knowledge gallery or a broadcasting center in Södertälje that has an outlet on Sergels Torg. Or a movable theatre going across the country. Or getting sponsorship on some of Scania’s trucks and buses and create moveable public squares. Or maybe a module for a physical notice board that will be in every center in Södertälje?
VERY ROUGH STRATEGY AND TIME PLAN

January
- Continue/start dialogue with the organization Architecture for humanity.
- Investigate the systems, the structures and the politics. Keep talking to Bengt Andersson at the city planning office.
- Literature studies.
- Talk to PhD student Ann Legeby at KTH.
- Initiate contact with local organizations and actors, gather information.

February
- Decide on forms of action. Which means defining the outcome of my diploma work. Hopefully with good contacts with organizations and others, so the project could end up being realized. I am aiming for a small intervention, not to present a big urban planning scheme on the future of Södertälje.

March
- Working on the project, I am sure I will face a lot of problems at this moment. In the beginning of March there is a mid review. So the goal is to present a coherent, but not finished, project at this time. If I manage to act on site I would be in Södertälje a lot. So my documentation might consist of films, animations, drawings, models, and other type of communication and visualization tools.

April & May
- Final seminar, final work & presentation
REFERENCES AND THEORY

Architecture for humanity, Cedric Price and the artist Katerina Šeda are some of my architectural references at the moment.

Is there a building and a public place that doesn’t have an authoritarian system? That allows for individuals to change it? Cedric Price and his Fun Palace shows great belief in new technologies, and specially cybernetics. A system that is in constant change where knowledge is produced and a feed back loop is created which in turn enables new processes and new change, etc.

“The philosophy of enabling” (theoretician Royston Landaus notion about Price’s ideas). Price also talks about how architecture can be directly harmful to people.

Price wrote:
"A greater awareness in architects and planners of their real value to society could, at the present, result in that rare occurrence, namely, the improvement of the quality of life as a direct result of architectural endeavour.”

Which also shows that he at the same time has a very strong belief in architecture. It just has to be done right.

The concept of strategy and tactis are also something I bear in mind during the process, a strategy is something that official and professional or political bodies draw up, decide and plan. A tactis is the inhabitants, the locals, why of reacting and acting upon this strategy.
Tactical urbanism is of interest and a concept that could be studied, for reference and ideas on how to challenged official strategies. Here the actual design and planning of smaller local interventions is participatory to its nature.

In the Fun Palace you could interact and participate, but the architect had set the framework on how, why and when.

The artist Katerina Šeda works with neighborhoods in a participatory way to talk about locality. And she does it in a very interesting, low key, way.

Self construction is interesting. DIY action. Urban games and collective storytelling for creating an identity connected to the place and space is interesting as well.

Writer that is also the founder and editor of the magazine Glänta. This book, about secret cities and fear, is relevant and interesting in many ways. What he calls secret cities can be further divided, according to him, into:

SJÄLVPÅ T AGET HEMLIGA STÄDER (self-imposed secret cities, my translation): cities or parts of a city that actively chooses not to be a part of the urban public life. For instance gated communities or upper-class areas with (usually) ethnic homogeneity.

HEMLIGHÅLLNA STÄDER (cities that are being held a secret): cities or parts of a city that are being kept secret because someone other then the inhabitants there wants them to be.

He has an interesting discussion about control related to planning. He says that the traditional inner city like structure (Stockholm) has a higher amount of possibilities for control of the people than a sprawl-like urbanism. When the city has multiple cores/nodes the ways for the municipality/local government to control all is decreasing. So he sees sprawl as a way of giving some control back to the people. He doesn’t say it’s a good way of building and planning, it’s just a discussion he holds. The discussion goes on about the relationship between the inner city core and the suburbs, he argues that nothing is produced in the center anymore, it is just consumed. He says that it is in the inbetweens that most of new creative things are being produced. Since the mid 1990’s more than half of Stockholms inhabitants have been living, working and shopping in outside of the city center. Outside of “tullarna”.

The discussion about fear is interesting in relation to a Swedish context when it comes to the way people act and make decisions about their life. Where and how to live. He talks about panopticon and how Foucault talks about the concept of control and being seen and being able to see. Dahlberg talks about our days type of control and uses Christoffer Kullenberg and Karl Åalmås concept of panspektrocin (a surveillance that is based on registration and storage of human behaviour, and algorithms that recognizes patterns. Like FRA, Echelon, Google etc. Dahlberg also talks about fear of the other, and this is interesting when it comes to city planning and gated communities and so on. And just to mention a few more things; he talks about privatopia, niceness = whiteness, clausotropolis as the new metropolis, how cities are planning new housing for people they want to live there,
not for the ones who are actually living there. And finally, he refers to an inquiry that Tyréns made called “Botrender 08” with 5000 participants. And the results show that 1/3 wants to live extra safe, preferably in a gated community. Out of these people, 26% were families with young children, 41% were young adult single households...


I'm not reading his book as a manual on how wide streets etc should be, but I like his way of reasoning about public space.


Etnoglogist that has written a thesis about the creative and urban loopholes within urban city life. And the importance of these loopholes for the individual person as well as for the society as a whole. Furhter more, can be said that she emphasizes the importance of seeing the pieces instead of the constant want of seeing the whole and complete picture. She talks about the relation between the material physical order and the way people act and react, she refers to Michel de Certeau’s concept of;

PLACE: the physical environment
SPACE: how this environment is used by the individual as well as the collective
She writes that the loopholes are important to appropriate and manipulate slightly, in order to create spaces that might not fit into the planned public life in squares and shopping malls. The concept of fear is also addressed, and she notices some similarities between Kapstaden and Möllevången.

- Jane Jacobs, The impact she has had when talking about the sidewalk and the urban city life is interesting

- Henri Lefebvre, concepts of perceived space, lived space and conceptualized space, among other things


A Ph.D. student at KTH that has made extensive research in the field of spatial segregation and how the physical form and the configurational relations between built form has an impact on segregated areas and if segregated areas has good possibilities for local and global urban life based on this configurational relationship, among other things. Her thesis and other papers and articles focuses on Södertälje.

- Ignasi de Sola Morales, “Terrain Vague” - An essay from 1995. I am just borrowing the title though, I haven’t read the essay yet. A quote from a summary of the essay: “When architecture and urban design project their desire onto a vacant space, a terrain vague, they seem incapable of doing anything other than introducing violent transformations, changing estrangement into citizenship, and striving at all costs to dissolve the uncontaminated magin of the obsolete into the realism of efficacy.”
The concept of knowledge:

Text from Wikipedia.com:
Knowledge acquisition involves complex cognitive processes; perception, communication, association and reasoning etc. The knowledge that sometimes is the most valuable is difficult to quantify and document on paper, film, books etc. You need the meeting and other people to be able to transfer and process.

EXPLICIT KNOWLEDGE - Knowledge that has been articulated, codified and stored in certain media. For example the information contained in encyclopedias.

TACIT KNOWLEDGE - The kind of knowledge that is difficult to transfer to another person by means of writing it down or verbalizing it. With tacit knowledge people are not often aware of the knowledge they possess or how it can be valuable to others. Effective transfer of tacit knowledge generally requires extensive personal contact, regular interaction and trust. This kind of knowledge can only be revealed through practice in a particular context and transmitted through social networks. The key to acquire tacit knowledge is shared experience.
Examples:
a surgeon's awareness that hers/his student now is ready to perform a surgery of hers/his own.
to learn to speak a language, doesn't matter how much you study grammar, a different kind of knowledge is needed to learn how to ride a bike