

MAGNUS NILSSON

FROM "INDUSTRIAL" TO "COLORFUL"

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Abstract

In this article I analyze the representation of the Swedish city Malmö, on the local authority's website. The most important theme in this representation is that Malmö, because of economic re-structuring and immigration has become a post-industrial city characterized by a high degree of cultural/ethnic diversity. My analysis aims at mapping how this representation is conditioned by partly contradictory ideological pressures emanating from global, national, and local economic and symbolic processes. Specific attention is given to the representation of time, and to the history-narrative underpinning the idea about Malmö's transformation into a post-industrial and multicultural city.

Keywords: City representation, Malmö, class, ethnicity, ideology

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Malmö – A Multicultural and Post-Industrial City

Two themes stand out as especially important in the representation of Malmö on the local authority's English language web page. The first is that the city's population has its roots in many countries, and that Malmö therefore should be understood as an international, or multicultural, city. The second theme is the ongoing transformation of the local economy, which is described as a transition from industrialism to post-industrialism.

These themes are established already on the start page, which has the headline "Malmö – a city in transition" (Malmö Stad, 2008a). The short text following this headline begins in the following way:

Malmö is the commercial centre of southern Sweden and an international city. This is expressed, not least, by the fact that Malmö has 270.000 residents who speak some 100 languages and belong to 164 different nationalities.

Malmö is also undergoing a transition from being an industrial city to a city of knowledge. Older industries have been replaced by investments in new technology and training programmes of high calibre. Malmö University, which opened in 1998, is Sweden's latest venture in the field of higher education, accommodating some 15.000 students.

On the right hand side of this short description of Malmö are pictures of some of the city's landmarks: Santiago Calatrava's sky-scraper "Turning Torso," the community park "Folkets Park" with its Ferris wheel, and the square "Lilla Torg" with its many open air-restaurants. Under these pictures is a link to a page with "More must-sees in Malmö" (Malmö Stad, 2008b), which contains pictures of and short texts about some 20 places worth visiting. Here too the story about Malmö's transformation into a culturally diverse and post-industrial city is told. A good example of this is found in the description of "The Western harbour," the district in which Calatrava's "Turning Torso" dominates the sky-line:

The Western harbour was once an industrial area where Kockum's world-famous shipyard operated, now replaced by Malmö University and companies in the IT and telecommunications industries. The Malmö Exhibition & Convention Centre is located in the former Saab factory. The dance company Skånes Dans-teater is based in one of the vaulted halls, Båghallarna, and an exciting specially designed concrete skateboarding arena has been constructed around one of the old ship ramps.

The most important theme in this description is the transition from an industrial (symbolized by shipbuilding) to post-industrial and knowledge-based (symbolized by higher education and companies in the IT and telecommunications business) economy. But this theme is also linked to that of cultural diversity, through the references to both highbrow (modern dance) and popular culture (skateboarding).

Another, perhaps even more telling example of how the themes of post-industrialism and cultural diversity are connected can be found in the description of the inner-city district Möllevången:

The most colourful district in Malmö. The market trade is lively here and the shops and restaurants have roots all over the world. Möllevången was the first planned, large-scale working class neighbourhood in Malmö and the result of the growing industrial city in the late 19th century. The labour movement gained tremendous influence here. The worker's newspaper Arbetet and the cooperative association Solidar were founded in Möllevången, which was also the site of the first Folkets Park ("Community Park") in Sweden.

Möllevången is one of Malmö's archetypical multicultural districts. This is hinted at in the epithet "colourful," and in the description of how "the shops and restaurant have roots all over the world." This present, multicultural, situation is then juxtaposed with a fairly distant past characterized in terms of class politics and industrial production, thus making the contemporary multicultural Malmö the historical successor of the industrial Malmö.

The same themes are highlighted in the description of the community park "Folkets Park," following immediately after the text about Möllevången:

The first Folkets Park in Sweden opened in 1893 and has always been a popular park and entertainment venue for the people of Malmö. At first it had a strong political connection to the Social Democratic Party and it was a model for many community parks all over Sweden. [--] Today, Folkets Park is mainly oriented towards family activities from April-September, a large playground, children's theatre, a terrarium and "miniature farm" with pony rides, fun, entertainment and a colourful flea market.

Folkets Park is situated within the district Möllevången, and the ‘colourfulness’ of the flea market described toward the end of this presentation is a metaphor for its ethnic diversity. This diversity is, just as was the case in the description of Möllevången, juxtaposed with a distant past characterized by class antagonisms, symbolized by the park’s earlier “political connection” to the labor movement.

The relationship between the contemporary, multicultural and post-industrial Malmö and the city’s industrial and working-class past is also an important theme on the page entitled “Malmö – city of diversity and possibilities” (Malmö Stad, 2008c). On this page, Malmö is first described as a city characterized by linguistic and national diversity:

Malmö, Sweden’s third-largest city, is a commercial hub and a cosmopolitan metropolis [...] with a population of 270,000 people who between them speak more than 100 languages and have roots linking them to more than 160 countries [...].

Thereafter follows a brief description of Malmö’s oldest history, immediately followed by a comment on the present situation:

Although much of its history is preserved in its architecture, Malmö is not an “old” city. It has undergone massive change at several levels, and will continue to do so. The most notable of these changes is the city’s transformation from industrial city into a seat of higher learning, technology and modern housing.

The district “Västra hamnen” (“The Western Harbor”) is often used as an illustration of Malmö’s transformation into a post-industrial city. On the sub-section of the webpage dedicated to this district this is spelled out in a typical way under the heading “Visions for tomorrow in Västra Hamnen” (Malmö Stad, 2008d):

The closure of the Kockums shipyard presented real scope for the transformation and creation of a new district in the city – Västra Hamnen, the City of Tomorrow. [...]

One important feature of this district is the university at Universitetsholmen, which in a relatively short space of time has undergone some major changes. [...]

In the former shipyard area, we now see students, business people and residents bustling about their lives and work. These used to be the Kockum workers.

Under the heading “Västra Hamnen – City of Tomorrow” (Malmö Stad, 2008e), the relationship between Malmö’s post-industrial present and its industrial past is once again commented upon:

The City of Knowledge

Västra Hamnen will be a site for a new type of business enterprise. Heavy industries are being replaced by other businesses. The city of knowledge is blossoming and, within a few years, several thousand new people may be gainfully employed within the area in close cooperation with its exciting neighbour, Universitetsholmen and the new university. Character buildings, sites and monuments will be preserved and will form a link between the past and the future.

The use of future tense in this passage is a result of the fact that this part of the webpage hasn’t been updated since 2002, when the transformation of Västra Hamnen had only just begun. Nevertheless, the story told here is the same one that can be found on more recently updated pages, namely that about the arrival of the post-industrial economy.

For a final illustration of how Malmö is represented as a culturally/ethnically diverse and post-industrial city, I would like to give a summary of the document “Malmö 2006. Facts and Figures” (Malmö Stad, 2008f), published on the local authority’s web page.

The first piece of information presented in this document is an ultra-short description of Malmö’s oldest history: “Malmö is first mentioned as a town in 1275. In 1437, Malmö received its own coat of arms. Malmö became Swedish for good in 1658.” Thereafter follow some figures about the city’s population. It is stressed that 26% of the population is foreign born, and that 10% are foreign citizens. There is also a list of the ten largest groups of foreign-born persons. After this some information about “Trade and industry” is presented. The presentation opens with a diagram showing the development of employment in different sectors. According to the diagram, employment in the sector “Manufacturing, Building Industry” has dropped from 50% in 1960 to under 20% in 2003. During the same period employment in “Private services” has increased from close to zero to just above 25%. The corresponding figures for “Public Services” are below 5% and 30% for the years 1960 and 2003 respectively. Employ-

ment in the sector “Trade and Communications” has been stable around 25% throughout the entire period.

That the information about Malmö in this document is focused on the nationally/ethnically diverse population, and the transformation of the local economy, shows that even when it comes to statistics, Malmö is represented, on the local authority’s webpage, as a multicultural and post-industrial city.

The Global, National, and Local Conditions for the Representation of Malmö

In *Migrant Incorporation and City Scale: Towards a theory of Locality in Migration Studies* Nina Glick Schiller and Ayse Çağlar (2007, pp. 4-5) argue the importance of taking into account the “specificity” or “significance” of “the local,” when analyzing urban phenomena. At the same time, however, they insist that the analysis of the local must be connected to global conditions.

Glick Schiller and Çağlar (2007, p. 12; See also Glick Schiller, Çağlar and Guldbrandsen, 2006) propose *scale theory* as an approach appropriate for analyses striving to encompass both local and global conditions. The central premise of this theory is that “all cities are global but differentially positioned in terms of globe spanning hierarchies of economic and political power” and that “the scalar positioning of cities reflects their relationship to global, national and regional circuits of capital.” Thus a scalar perspective makes it possible to “analyze the dynamics of locality in interaction with power hierarchies,” and to “incorporate the uneven character of globalization and its dynamics” into the analysis.

The hypothesis, that the representation of Malmö on the local authority’s webpage should be conditioned by global economic processes, is worth trying. As David Harvey (1990, p. 295) has showed, the transformation of global capitalism during the last decades toward more flexible modes of capital accumulation has had immense effect on the representation of place. One of these effects is that the “active production of places with special qualities becomes an important stake in spatial competition between localities, cities, regions and nations,” and that cities, therefore, strive to “forge a distinctive image and to create an atmosphere of place and tradition that will act as a lure to both capital and people ‘of the right sort’ (i.e. wealthy and influential).”

The local authority’s web page is a medium well suited for marketing Malmö. Since it is produced by the authority itself, the representation of the city can be constructed according to its wishes, without interference from others.

That one of these wishes is to present Malmö in a way that will attract investments, and that the representation of Malmö thus is conditioned by global economic processes, is obvious. As has been pointed out by Glick Schiller, Çağlar, and Gulbrandsen (2006, p. 616), several scholars have noted that, “increasingly, local officials must work to attract foreign capital and market their cities by recasting their localities as centers of knowledge, finance and tourism.” These themes reverberate in the descriptions of Malmö as a city whose economy rests on higher education, the private service-sector, and new technology, and where visitors can enjoy spectacular architecture. Thus an image of Malmö as a place already integrated in the new, flexible economy – and hence suitable for both visits and investments – is created. The repeated allusions to Malmö’s culturally diverse population can also be seen as a product of this strategy. As has been pointed out by Çağlar (2007, p. 1071; See also Glick Schiller and Çağlar, 2007):

Many cities today highlight their cultural diversity as part of the struggle through which they (re)position themselves in relation to other cities both within and across state boundaries. For this purpose, cities [...] are drawing attention to their capacity to mobilize human resources with intercultural competencies, to their diverse ethnic composition, and to their respectively emigrant/returnee and immigrant populations. Migrancy, cultural diversity and the strategies of place marketing become intimately intermeshed.

When analyzed in this context it is hardly surprising that it is Möllevången, with its many ethnic restaurants, which is put forward as the city’s archetypical culturally diverse district. Sharon Zukin (1995, p. 283) has shown, that when the highlighting of cultural diversity is used as a marketing strategy, the appreciation of this diversity “is limited mainly to ethnic ‘color’ and remains on the level of cultural consumption by eating ethnic dishes.” This can, in turn, be linked to Zukin’s (1995, p. 155) more general observation about the role of restaurants in the marketing of cities: “[R]estaurants are linked to the arts and tourism, to the ‘quality of life’ a city offers corporate executives and those who eat out on expense accounts, and to a city’s image as a culture capital.”

The spatial competition between cities, which has been the result of the emergence of the regime of flexible accumulation, doesn’t constitute the only link between the representations of Malmö as a multicultural and postindustrial city and global economic processes. The *ideological* agenda set by the triumphant global capitalism in the post-1989 era is equally important.

As Nancy Fraser (1997, p. 1-2) has argued, “the general horizon within which political thought necessarily moves” in our era, is characterized by “the absence of any credible progressive vision of an alternative to the present order.” This has, in turn, led to the bracketing of “the question of political economy” and, as a consequence, to “the rise of ‘identity politics’” and “the decentering of class.” A similar line of argument is pursued by Walter Benn Michaels (2004, p. 24), who argues that “the end of history” – the global triumph of capitalism – has resulted in a transformation of how differences are conceptualized: “[T]he real effect of the end of history had not been to get rid of difference but to transform it, to replace the differences between what people think (ideology) and the differences between what people own (class) with the differences between what people are (identity). Only at the end of history could all politics become identity politics.”

The representation of Malmö as a post-industrial city, characterized by cultural diversity, can be seen as an expression of the ideological tendencies described by Fraser and Michaels, since it constructs cultural difference as the city’s fundamental organizing principle, while confining the category of class to the city’s (industrial) past. But even if the representation of Malmö as a culturally diverse and post-industrial city clearly can be understood against the background of global economic and ideological processes, it would be a mistake to leave the national context – and Malmö’s specific position within this context – out of the analysis.

In response to socioeconomic developments during the last decades – such as the flexibilisation of capital accumulation, the dismantling of the welfare state and the membership in the European Union – a new Swedish self-image has been constructed. As I’ve shown elsewhere (Nilsson 2007; Nilsson 2010), this self-image is centered on the idea that immigration has radically altered social relations, and made ethnic/cultural difference the central dividing line in contemporary society.

The highlighting on the local authority’s webpage of Malmö’s multicultural character can, of course, be viewed as an expression of this emerging self-image. At the same time, however, it could be argued that the theme of multiculturalism is somewhat downplayed on the webpage. While it is often accentuated in general over-view descriptions of the city, it is seldom mentioned in presentations of specific districts. In fact, it is almost only in the description of Möllevången that *ethnic* diversity is highlighted. In the presentations of Västra hamnen – which is the district given most attention on the web page – on the other hand, almost no references to this phenomenon are made. That a high percentage of the students at Malmö University come from other countries than Sweden or have immigrant

background, is, for example, not mentioned. Nor is the fact that the street life in this district is almost as “colourful” as that in Möllevången commented upon.

This relative downplaying of the theme of ethnic diversity might appear to be somewhat surprising when analyzed in the context of the hegemonic Swedish discourse about multiculturalism. As Behschnitt (in press, p. 2) has pointed out “the official policy and public discourse take a positive stand towards cultural diversity, immigration etc.”

This brings to the fore Glick Schiller’s and Çaglar’s (2007, p. 10) insistence that it is necessary to challenge the all too common conceptualization of “the relationship between the city and the nation state [...] as a metonymic one with the locality viewed simply as a container of national processes.” The representation on the local authority’s webpage of Malmö as a multicultural city constitutes a good example of the dangers in viewing a specific city as a “container of national processes,” since it is obvious that there is no direct causality between the positive attitude toward ethnic diversity and migration in official (national) policy and (national) public discourse and *local* representations of these phenomena. The main reason for this “mismatch” is that there is another aspect of the Swedish discourse about migration and ethnic diversity, which is hard to ignore when discussing Malmö, namely, the tendency to connect these phenomena to social problems.

Ylva Brune (2005) has described this tendency in her study of the construction of immigrants in Swedish news media, where she argues that the word “immigrant” has been connected to social problems since it was first introduced in public discourse around 1970. Another description of this connection is given by the cultural sociologist Mats Trondman (2006, p. 433), who argues that in every-day discourses in Sweden, “to be an ‘immigrant’ is to be a representation of social problems.”

Malmö is a city, which because of the large percentage of foreign-born inhabitants *is* characterized by national, linguistic, ethnic etc. diversity. Therefore it has often come to function as a metonymy for the new multicultural Sweden. But Malmö is also a city heavily marked by the social problems that has accompanied the socioeconomic changes during the last decades. In the footsteps of the flexibilisation of the local economy has followed a (relatively) high rate of unemployment, a high rate of people living on welfare, and the collapse of public welfare institutions, such as schools etc. On the local authority’s Swedish language webpage (Malmö Stad, 2008g) readers are reminded that in 1995 Malmö had the highest unemployment rate and the lowest relative employment rate in the country, at the same time as the local authority struggled with an

enormous economic deficit and a rapidly decreasing tax base. The result of this development has been that Malmö (together with cities such as Södertälje, known for giving refuge to more Iraqis than the entire United States and for experiencing the same socioeconomic difficulties as Malmö) has come to function as a metonymy for the connection between immigrants and social problems described by Brune and Trondman. A good example of this can be found in Trondman's (2006, p. 432) own description of the city:

The city is post-industrial (jobs in industry were lost), multicultural (more than 50 per cent of the city's children and youth were born or have parents who were born abroad) and segregated. There are areas where 90 per cent of residents are immigrants, where over one hundred languages are spoken, where 70 per cent of residents are on social allowances and where half the children do not receive passing grades from comprehensive school. The city's state welfare institutions have been characterized by unstable finances and cutbacks for slightly more than ten years.

Malmö's status as metonymy for the connection between immigration and social problems – which becomes visible only if the presumption that Malmö could be viewed as a mirror of national conditions is abandoned – has great impact on the possibilities to represent Malmö as a multicultural city. Because of the emerging national self-image of Sweden as a multicultural country, and Malmö's status as a metonymy for this multiculturalism, the population's ethnic diversity cannot be ignored. At the same time, however, the socioeconomic problems experienced during the transformation of the local economy during the last decades, in combination with Malmö's status as a multicultural city, brings to the fore the ethnification of social problems for which Malmö also functions as a metonymy. Thus a need arises to control or manage the possible connotations of the representation of Malmö as a multicultural city.

The Ideological Function of Atomized Time and Space

One highly interesting aspect of the representation on the local authority's webpage of Malmö as a multicultural and post-industrial city is the organization of time and space on which this representation rests. And what make the spatial and temporal dimensions of this representation interesting are, primarily, their connections to the need to manage ideologically problematic aspects of the representation of Malmö as a multicultural and post-industrial city.

On the local authority's web page Malmö is seldom treated as a totality. Instead the city is presented as a collection of unique locales that are relatively separate from each other. Thus, the representation seems to be congenial with its medium. On the webpage, most of the information about Malmö is presented on sub-pages devoted to specific themes or places, and few attempts are made to make connections between these. The effect is that the image of Malmö as a multicultural and post-industrial city, to a large extent must be constructed by the reader – pieced together from bits of information found in different places.

The theme of ethnic diversity, for example, is accentuated in descriptions of Möllevången, whereas it is almost totally absent from descriptions of Västra hamnen. In the latter case, it is instead the themes of post-industrialism and the flexible local economy that are emphasized. This representational containment of immigrants to certain districts brings to the fore one of the “cultural strategies” described by Zukin (1995, p. 274), namely the one deployed to manage social diversity by “allotting each group a piece of the visual representation of a city or a region.” On the local authority's web page immigrants are allotted the district Möllevången, whereas Västra Hamnen is represented as a district dominated by university students, people working in IT- and other high tech companies, and cultural workers. Thus possible conflicts between the representations are avoided.

This atomized representation of city space has a structural similarity to the representation of the city's history, which also focuses more on demarcations than on connections. The representation of Malmö as a post-industrial and multicultural city rests on a history-narrative which constructs the Malmö of the second half of the 20th century as an industrial city, characterized by class conflict, and the contemporary Malmö as a city where the fundamental division – as a result of both socioeconomic restructuring and increased immigration – has become that between different cultures (ethnicities as well as life styles.) This narrative functions as a technology for turning class, and class-conflict into historical phenomena, and appointing identity the status of “key code” for understanding the present.

This can be illustrated by the description of Möllevången, where the district's working-class character is placed in a distant past by way of two rhetorical maneuvers. The first one is the mentioning of “the late 19th century,” which places the time when Malmö was an industrial city and Möllevången a working-class district over a century ago. The second maneuver is the reference to working-class institutions, which have in common that they have disappeared, such as the social democratic newspaper *Arbetet* (which went bankrupt in 2000), and the cooperative

association Solidar (which nowadays operate according to capitalist principles). When it comes to descriptions of the contemporary Möllevången, it is the ethnic restaurants that are in focus. Thus the description of Möllevången is underpinned by the history-narrative about Malmö's transformation from an industrial to a multicultural city.

As has already been pointed out, there are ideological hazards involved in making identity-categories such as ethnicity the key code for understanding the contemporary Malmö. One of these is that the highlighting of the ethnically diverse population risks evoking the connection between social problems and non-Swedish ethnicity. There is, however, also another hazard, which seems to emanate from a contradiction inherent in the history-narrative underpinning the representation of Malmö as *both* a multicultural and post-industrial city, namely that the status of ethnicity as key code for understanding contemporary conditions is challenged by the re-appearance of class as an analytical category

The history-narrative underlying the representation of Malmö as a multicultural city is one that describes how a culturally homogenous city, because of immigration, has become culturally diverse. This narrative produces a "strong" picture of the present, one that can easily be used to interpret everyday experiences (Nilsson 2010, pp. 64-65). But at the same time it produces a rather "weak" picture of the city's past. (In fact, it is only in populist right-wing circles that the idea of a culturally or ethnically homogenous past seems to make sense.) The main reason for this is probably that Malmö has been a city characterized by immigration – mainly labor migration from southern Europe – for several decades. Thus it is hard to make sense of the city's past with point of departure in the idea about cultural and ethnic homogeneity.

To some extent the representation of Malmö as a post-industrial city solves the problem with the weak picture of the past generated by the representation of the city as multicultural, since the history-narrative underpinning this representation produces a much stronger picture of the past. That the local economy used to be dominated by industrial production is an idea that few people would challenge. At the same time, however, the picture of the present generated by the representation of Malmö as a post-industrial city is relatively weak. One of its weaknesses is that it is mainly constructed in negative terms – as *post-industrialism* – which gives it a somewhat vague character (Nilsson, 2010, p. 64). Another problem is that the symbols for the post-industrial Malmö – higher education, IT-companies etc – might appear slightly abstract for that majority of the city's population whose daily activities do not always take place near the academic and technological front line.

The weak picture of the present produced by the representation of Malmö as a post-industrial city might, paradoxically enough, highlight, rather than obscure the category of class. The reason for this is that the concept of class, during the era of social democratic welfare capitalism, was very much repressed in Swedish public discourse. As Mikael Nyberg (2001) has showed, the hegemonic Swedish self-image during the decades following the Second World War was one according to which the fundamental antagonism between capital and labor had been neutralized by social engineering.

If the representation of Malmö as a post-industrial city gives a weak picture of the present, at the same time as it gives a strong picture of the past – the picture of Malmö as an industrial city characterized by class conflict – there is an obvious risk that people will try to make sense of their present experiences by extrapolating their understanding of the past. Thus there is a risk that the representation of Malmö as a post-industrial city breathes life into the concept of class, which used to be effectively confined to the dustbin of history.

The way out of this ideological quandary is, of course, to combine the representation of Malmö as post-industrial with the representation of the city as multicultural, since the latter representation's appointment of cultural (ethnic) identity to key code for understanding differences, produces a stronger picture of the present, and thus might act counter to attempts to understand the present in terms of class. But this solution has, as has already been pointed out, a distinct weakness, namely that it runs the risk of bringing to the fore the discursive connection between immigration and social problems. This risk limits the possibilities of making up for the weak picture of the present generated by the representation of Malmö as a post-industrial city by stressing the city's multicultural character.

This ideological quandary, once again, brings the question of scale to the fore. The representation of Malmö on the local authority's web page as a multicultural and post-industrial city is clearly conditioned by global economic processes. It is therefore not surprising that this representation resembles the self-representation of numerous other cities (See for example Glick Schiller, Çağlar and Guldbrandsen, 2006). For, as Harvey (1990, p. 295) points out, whereas heightened "inter-place competition should lead to the production of more variegated spaces within the increasing homogeneity of international exchange," cities often end up reproducing "already known patterns or moulds places almost identical in ambience from city to city." But in the case of Malmö there are tensions between the rhetorical models used worldwide and local/national ideological conditions. In particular, the attempt to attract capital by marketing the city as multicultural

risks clashing with the discursive connection between immigration and social problems. And as an effect a highly paradoxical situation emerges, namely one in which the triumph of global capitalism – and the resulting hegemony of an ideology which insists that identities, such as ethnicity, are more important than classes – might actually, on a local level, be less efficient when it comes to repressing the category class than was the self-image of the social-democratic welfare state.

History as Simulacrum

The solution to this potential ideological problem – which arises from a contradiction inherent in the history-narrative underpinning the local representation of Malmö as a both multicultural and post-industrial city – is a transformation of the very concept of history. This is a major theme in the literature dealing with city representation in relation to global capitalism. Zukin (1995, p. 274), for example, shows how the past is often romanticized in contemporary city representations. “Every group,” she writes, “can have its visible recognition, even a visual acknowledgement of past oppression. The emphasis is on ‘past’ oppression, for establishing a visual order of cultural hegemony seem to equalize by identifying and making formerly ‘invisible’ social groups visible, at least in their previous (sometimes romanticized, sometimes not) incarnation.” Harvey puts forward a similar but more far-reaching argument. According to him the “assertion of any place-bound identity has to rest at some point on the motivational power of tradition.” At the same time, however, “the flux and ephemerality of flexible accumulation” has made it difficult to “maintain any sense of historical continuity”:

The irony is that tradition is now often preserved by being commodified and marketed as such. The search for roots ends up at worst being produced and marketed as an image, as a simulacrum or pastiche (imitation communities constructed to evoke images of some folksy past, the fabric of traditional working-class communities being taken over by an urban gentry). [...] At best, historical tradition is reorganized as a museum culture [...] and integrated into a long-lost and often romanticized daily life (one from which all trace of oppressive social relations may be expunged). (Harvey, 1990, p. 303)

Harvey’s argument is heavily influenced by Fredric Jameson’s ideas about the post-modern treatment of history. Jameson (2003, p. 7) argues that some works of high modernism have a profound connection to history

since their interpretation requires that “some initial situation out of which the finished work emerges” be reconstructed. Such works invite “*hermeneutical*” readings “in which the work in its inert, objectical form is taken as a clue or a symptom for some vaster reality which replaces it as its ultimate truth.” Post-modern works, on the other hand, resist such readings. When analyzing Andy Warhol’s *Diamond Dust Shoes*, for example, Jameson (2003, pp. 8-9) argues that the shoes depicted in this work are a “fetishes,” and that there therefore is “no way to complete the hermeneutic gesture and restore to these oddments that whole larger lived context of the dance hall or the ball, the world of jetset fashion or glamour magazines.” What the viewer encounters when looking at Warhol’s work is thus a “new kind of flatness or depthlessness, a new kind of superficiality in the most literal sense,” which, according to Jameson constitutes “perhaps the supreme formal feature of all the postmodernisms.”

It is against the background of this flatness or depthlessness that Jameson introduces the concepts of pastiche and simulacrum that Harvey uses to describe the post-modern treatment of history in the quote above. Pastiche is defined by Jameson (2003, p. 17) as “the imitation of a peculiar or unique, idiosyncratic style, the wearing of a linguistic mask, speech in a dead language.” What distinguishes this practice from parody is, however, that the pastiche doesn’t have any of parody’s “ulterior motives,” that it is a “neutral practice” of mimicry.

“Simulacrum” is a term used by Jameson (2003, p. 18) to describe the post-modern conception of history. The meaning of term is defined as “the identical copy for which no original has ever existed,” and Jameson argues that history under post-modernity has become “a vast collection of images, a multitudinous photographic simulacrum.” As a consequence of this, “the past as ‘referent’ finds itself gradually bracketed, and then effaced altogether, leaving us with nothing but texts.”

The description of Möllevången constitutes a good example of the post-modern treatment of history characteristic of the representation of Malmö on the local authority’s web page. The representation of the district’s working-class past leaves little space for reconstructing a historical situation. On the contrary the description is dominated by references to trade marks, such as “Arbetet” and “Solidar,” which stand in for, rather than evoke, history.

This brings to the fore Jameson’s (2003, p. 19) assessment of the representation of history in so-called nostalgia films: “[T]he nostalgia film was never a matter of some old-fashioned ‘representation’ of historical content, but instead approached the ‘past’ through stylistic connotation, conveying ‘pastness’ by the glossy qualities of the image, and ‘1930s-ness’ or ‘1950s-

ness' by the attributes of fashion." This is exactly the effect of the use of old trade marks as symbols for Möllevången's working class history. Their function is to connote a romantic "working-classness," thereby canceling out history proper. Thus a commodified picture of history – a picture that can be used to market Malmö to those tourists and investors who have a desire for historic ambience – is constructed. And at the same time the risk that representation of Malmö's industrial past might breathe life into the category of class is eliminated. When working-classness – a way of life symbolized by trade-marks connected to such practices as shopping or reading the newspaper – replaces economic exploitation as the linchpin of Möllevången's working-class past, when history proper is replaced by pastiche and simulacrum, then the history-narrative underpinning the representation of Malmö as both a multicultural and post-industrial city ceases to be ideologically problematic.

The representation of Malmö's history in the descriptions of Västra hamnen can be analyzed much along the same lines as the description of Möllevången. Here too, history is obscured by simulacrum and pastiche. Here too, nostalgia stands in the way of the reconstruction of historical social conditions.

A good example of this is the description of how "students, business people and residents" are now "bustling about their lives and work," in a district formerly dominated by ship yards. By presenting the transition from industrial production to the regime of flexible accumulation in terms of a change of *people* – as it says about the students, business people, and residents: "These used to be the Kockum workers" – the huge differences in terms of *activity* are made invisible. That the ship yard-workers weren't exactly "bustling about their lives and work" in the same way as today's visitors to Västra hamnen, but engaged in hard and often dangerous labor, is obscured by this representation. Thus the "links between the past and the future" mentioned on the web page appears to be little more than links between images without any historic context.

Conclusion

The representation of Malmö on the local authority's webpage constructs the city as post-industrial and culturally/ethnically diverse. This representation can be seen as a response to global economic processes – as a stake in the spatial competition for investments generated by the flexibilisation of global capitalism. It is, however, also affected by ideological conditions, some of which derive from the global hegemony of capitalism, whereas others are constituted on a national or local level. In some cases contradictory pressures are exercised from these different levels. My main example of such a case is the construction of the history-narrative underpinning the representation of Malmö as a both post-industrial and multicultural city. Because of Malmö's status as metonymy for a national discursive connection between immigration and social problems the representation of the city as ethnically diverse becomes problematic. This, in turn, has as a result that the "strong" picture of the past produced by the representation of Malmö as post-industrial risks "spilling over" into the present. The cultural strategy deployed to solve this problem is a representation of history as simulacrum.

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