Planning for appropriation: public space led development to integrate a fragmented city

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Introduction
A recent planning trend in Sweden focuses on the idea of ‘stråk’ (Persson 2004), that is, strings of meeting places along paths or routes in the city. Stråk are considered building blocks of the city. The underlying notion is that an interconnected web of ‘stråk’ provides the city with structure in which different parts provide mutual support. The development of stråk is seen as an instrument in urban policy for amongst other things, integrating cities socially. For all the popular novelty of the concept and its native terminology the central idea of stråk is perhaps not unlike Jane Jacobs analysis in which the well-functioning street is the cornerstone of urban life (Jacobs 1961). A well-functioning stråk might also approximate what Kevin Lynch would call a path with attractive nodes (Lynch 19060). There are some aspects of how stråk are conceptualized and how large actors actively attempt to create meeting places or nodes.

The approach that we have called planning for appropriation relies on transforming physical aspects public spaces with simultaneous development of local institutions to govern these spaces. The examples demonstrate the important role of municipal government and the municipal housing corporation in enabling certain groups to appropriate public space to serve both the interests of these large actors but without wresting control from the local residents but on the contrary empowering them.

The set of cases described in this paper are all part of attempts to develop a stråk connecting the lively city center of Malmö and the district of Rosengård, the latter being primarily a residential area and perhaps the most heavily stigmatized urban area in Sweden. The cases thus individually represent approaches in attempting to create meaningful meeting places but collectively represent an approach that seeks to integrate different parts of a divided city.

Planning, appropriation and urban commons
In Henri Lefebvre’s influential conceptualization of urban development, urban planning was largely an instrument of domination by the powerful. Physical structures served certain interests and constrained others (Lefebvre 1991 [1974], Harvey 2012). To a

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limited extent though the acts of ordinary people in the use of space could reshape it to serve their interests, creating a kind of dialectic. The term appropriation in Lefebvre refers to the use of space for alternate social practices and accord with alternate interests. In Lefebvre's conception, and in subsequently influenced marxist theory of space, there is a dialectic relation between planned space, actually lived space related to practice and subjective conceptions of space. Perhaps the approach can be somewhat simply presented as one in which space is critical in shaping (social) relations of production. But space can become a resource for different groups using it for their own practices and who may also reshape it physically to better suit their interests.

For Lefebvre how, and in what interests, physical space was shaped was critical. His focus on the physical basis of social relations provides an important anchoring of urban analysis even when the actual negotiation of space is complex and not clearly the result of one interest or another. In many cases the development of public space is the product of multiple actors in interaction. Mitchell and Staeheli for instance describe a highly intricate negotiation of space in their analysis of the Plaza in Santa Fe (Mitchell and Staeheli 2005). The negotiation of physical characteristics of the space, and thereby its function as a resource for different groups, is played out in interactions between authorities, teenagers, store-owners, vendors and tourists and different ethnic groups ((Mitchell and Staeheli 2005 see also Nylund 2007, Kärrholm 2007, Olsson 2008). This kind of negotiation of space is infused, of course, with aspects of power but neither process nor outcomes can be adequately captured in a dichotomy of domination and resistance. Rather public space is continually created by interactions between different groups (Mitchell 2003). It seems clear that to understand this complex dynamic it is necessary to find a complementary approach that explains for whom, and in what ways, urban space can become a resource.

The extensive body of work that has been done on the governance of shared resources is relevant here (Ostrom 1999, 1994, Poteete, Janssen & Ostrom 2010). This work, although starting for different assumptions, seems largely compatible. The approach highlights the complex interaction of users of a physical resource is critical to governance. Moreover the systems by which users, or appropriators, develop adequate rules for the use of common resource, is in itself a product of complex interaction of physical, political and social factors. In this perspective space as a resource can be understood in terms of a interaction of different local groups developing their own practices in using this space but also in relation to higher level actors. The approach also outlines critical aspects of when such appropriation of common resources is likely to be able to be sustained (Ostrom 1999)

Sheila Foster's work on urban commons highlights this perspective particularly with respect to the governance of public space (Foster 2011). Foster's work illustrates that there are a multiplicity of forms for governing public space that are not strictly private, public or simply mixed. Using examples for instance of community gardens, citizen and private involvement in public parks, safety walks and business improvement districts she argues that complex forms of governance, urban commons, are in fact the ubiquitous and need to be properly understood. Her examples illustrate how collective management by users reshape the space physically and how this in turn leads to new sets of relations between appropriators and ordinary users. As a form of governance,
urban commons are by no means apolitical or unproblematic. They are however a reality both by historical accident and by design.

The concept of urban commons brings some new perspectives on space as a resource. The approach highlights for instance how local collective management may offer new forms for building social capital such as in community gardens (Foster 2011) or simply greater user-input into process of managing and developing a common resource (Ostrom 2000). However collective management does not make power and inequality disappear. Collective management raises issues of accountability, distributive issues and also dynamic issues related to the need for the regulation of space to change over time (Foster 2011). It is important perhaps to underline that in the urban commons studied by Foster there always remains an important relation between different appropriating groups and traditional forms of governmental regulation. Governmental actors significantly enable commons, even seemingly simple ones like community gardens.

In Lefebvre’s view the term planning for appropriation would be something of a contradiction in terms. Planning is part of the collective representation of space and of domination that is distinct from alternate practices that may later reshape a space. We use the term planning for appropriation deliberately here both as a means embracing aspects of Lefebvre’s approach but also to indicate that, at least on a micro-level, there seems to be more complex interaction between planned and lived space, and a wider range of possibilities than the framework initially evokes, including, a loss of meaningful distinction between planning and appropriation. The following cases illustrate this in more detail and also point to the value of a complementary approach using a frame of reference from the governance of shared resources.

A brief introduction to the cases
All of the cases considered below are part of municipal effort to integrate the semi-peripheral area of Rosengård, with Malmö city center. The city center is considered lively and hosts a dynamic diverse interaction. The Rosengård area is predominately residential and although located not more than two kilometers from the city center it is often conceived of in media an by residents as a world apart. The planning initiative Rosengårdsstråket seeks to connect these two worlds by injecting as it were a diversity of interaction along a particular route or path. A key to the long-term development strategies espoused by the municipality and it’s housing corporation lies in the use of public space that in their view should be lively and urban. A key challenge of this effort lies in the process of creating meeting spaces that are economically viable yet accessible and anchored in local needs.

A related aspect of the cases is that the means of creating meeting places does not rely, or does not solely rely, on commercial interaction. Market interaction is supplemented with recreational and own-use (gardening) as a means of bringing people together and creating an urban environment, and distinctly urban means of social control.

In the cases discussed below from the Swedish context, municipal government has taken a lead in enabling certain groups to appropriate space for their own interests by developing physical space and simultaneously facilitating the development of institutions to govern this space. These are commons by design. Each of the cases outlined below has created a set of micro-level interactions about defining the use of
public space and what kind of people can represent themselves in this space (Mitchell 2003, Blackmar 2006)

**Bokal development**
Bokal is a word made from joining the verb ‘bo’ meaning ‘to live’ with an ending from ‘lokal’ meaning workspace. The idea underpinning the development of the bokals has been to take existing apartments of 2-5 rooms and extend them outward to create a space for shops and small businesses comprising not more than 50-75 square meters of shop floor space. In doing so a row of ten semi-public spaces has been created along a path or route extending from the city center out into the area of Rosengård. The creation of this line of shops and meeting spaces was highlighted by a distinctive, orientally inspired design of the roofs that introduces a novel and eye-catching element in areas otherwise monotonous architecture characteristic of mass housing efforts in the early 70s. The storefronts themselves have windows reaching the ground and even when closed some light shines out from the stores from the adjacent living quarters.

Present development of the public space just outside the bokals further highlights the importance of these small shops. The space for meeting has itself has been increased by diverting the bicycling route, it as been made more congenial by providing better places to sit, variations of shade more interesting lighting. The design of the small square that has been formed by these improvements is patterned in such a way as to suggest a carpet-like extension from each shop into the square.

**See images 1 and 2, appendix 1**

**Intentions of planners**
The development of bokals seemed to answer to several needs in the area including creating spaces for entrepreneurs, helping to create a more vibrant and urban atmosphere, providing a sense of direction and connection with the city center and perhaps not least providing a highly visible indication of the housing corporations intent to develop the area. The development thus is multifaceted but a key notion is to enable local resident-entrepreneurs and the same time introduce a kind of actor that is understood to be a key node in local networks and an integral part of developing a lively city space. Quite similar kinds of shops could have been created, and were created, in the area less formally and ostentatiously using basements of houses. This kind of development however would not create a concentration of lively interaction, mutual monitoring and connection with public space outside that the bokal development allows for.

The cost of development of the bokal structures is substantial. These costs are not expected to be recaptured by means of rents from the conjoined apartments and shops-Rather the expectation is that this investment will be recaptured by long-term appreciation of the area, in which MKB owns a very significant portion of the housing. The bokal development must therefore be understood to be a significant and perhaps primarily an investment in public space.

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2Josef Sjöberg importantly contributed to the description of this case by conducting and compiling interview material
That the bokal development is an aspect of reshaping public space is also evidenced in that the municipal housing corporation deliberately selects what kind of businesses can be housed in the bokals. One important criterion in this selection is that the businesses cater tangibly to local visiting customers. Thus the housing corporation has declined proposals to establish offices, a pottery workshop and a daycare center because it was deemed that these activities would not contribute in creating a strong link between in the bokal and the surrounding public space.

**Focal actors**
The focal actor of the bokal development is not perhaps the housing corporation even though they designed and financed the original physical development. Nor is it the municipality even though they control the subsequent physical development of the bokal plaza. While it is true that the architecture of the area importantly contributes to the actions that can go on there and the symbolic value of the space, this is still in some sense the scene rather than the play. The acting, as it were, is done by the resident-entrepreneurs. If the bokal development is not good for the entrepreneurs then it will not, in the long run, be good for MKB or the municipality since the intent to develop an attractive public space will not be realized. The resident-entrepreneurs thus are focal in both the sense of being pivotal for the development but also the most visible actor in the development.

**Institutional development**
By singling out resident-entrepreneurs MKB sought to harness a particular kind of local and almost 24-hour commitment. Creating appropriate institutions for this kind of actor was not a trivial task. New contractual forms had to be established that allowed for a certain residential security while at the same time maintaining a strong link between residence and the business. A compromise was achieved by creating a new contractual form in which it is stipulated that a resident-entrepreneur must give up a bokal, including the residential apartment, if they do not continue running the business but they are guaranteed equivalent housing. The housing corporation also took steps to reduce aspects of financial risk for the resident-entrepreneurs. Notably, the bokals are comparatively inexpensive and the contracts can be terminated on 3 months notice. The particular institutional form developed for the bokals thus requires a high level of continuous local commitment by the resident-entrepreneurs but at comprises a relatively low level of financial risk.

**Space as a resource**
It is clear that space has an interesting complexity as a resource for the resident-entrepreneurs. There have been several cases in which the locality of Rosengård has been a decisive factor for establishing a business and where starting elsewhere was not considered an option. The reasons for running a business in this particular space vary but importantly include a local network that can be drawn upon to help out in running the business for instance in keeping opening hours or adjusting to peaks in demand. The area is also congenial for some because a lack of Swedish language skills is not viewed as problem and skills in other languages can be a considerable resource. Products and services may cater to a specific minority group that is prominent in the
area. The extensive marketing of the bokals by MKB and positive media attention may also work as an important advantage for certain kinds of newly started businesses. A striking aspect in interviews with resident-entrepreneurs is that several state that the type of business i.e. bakery or barbershop is secondary to the place of running a business.

The space immediately outside the bokals is naturally viewed as important for business and the entrepreneurs discuss development of this space and back each other up in perceived conflicts. Methods of dealing with conflicts are often simple and direct. Thus some of the resident-entrepreneurs perceived that mopeds driving past close to the shops made the space unsafe for children and that other customers may also have felt uncomfortable. The response was to develop a form of highly effective speed bumps (These where subsequently removed by the authorities as they were deemed hazardous). There have also been incidents with youth hanging around and causing disturbances. The entrepreneurs have been active in setting limits in these cases. Their power in this sense rests on solid local connections. As one entrepreneur put it: "I know their older brothers and their families and they know that I do". This local connectedness seems to be an important factor for the resident-entrepreneurs. According to several of the resident/entrepreneurs the social control that this enables is far more effective than contacting the police. It would in their opinion be very hard for a non-resident to develop the relevant networks.

Local negotiations of space are complex. One incident demonstrated how a resident-entrepreneur had become a kind of gatekeeper between residents and the police. This then led to somewhat heated discussions with other neighbors about when the police should be notified and what should be considered as acceptable behavior. It is evident though that there is an ongoing negotiation of space the balance may easily be tipped. One entrepreneur has left the bokals for reasons of lack of security, another withdrew their outdoor service due to disturbances that this service seemed to facilitate. A third now keeps a low profile in conflict negotiation outside the shop after retributions directed against his property. Local police corroborate that the threats perceived by some of the bokal entrepreneurs are quite real.

Negotiations of space naturally also take place in relation the municipal housing corporation where the resident-entrepreneurs have advanced common positions on for instance availability parking, loading space, activities that can take place adjacent to the bokals, speedbumps and surveillance. Somewhat ironically, a particularly controversial issue was the temporary dialog center intended to facilitate communication between the residents and municipality. The dialog center took up several parking spaces next to the bokals and was therefore an object of considerable common irritation.

The ongoing rebuilding/creation of a plaza outside the bokals is intended to further strengthen the role of the bokals in shaping space. Architecturally the carpet-like extensions into a kind of small plaza mark it symbolically. Most of the entrepreneurs also have designs to expand their outdoor activities into the plaza and particularly hope that more of the older population and children will be drawn to the area as a meeting point. Overall other residents heard by means of resident associations and in safety walks support these developments. In some quarters though rebuilding the square in front on the bokals is seen as entailing a certain amount of risk. On the one hand it may
facilitate diverse activity in a public space but it may also serve to attract further interest by gangs in marking the territory as theirs.

**Key aspects of the case**

On the whole however there can be no doubt that introducing the bokals has had a profound effect on the public space adjacent to where they were introduced. The bokals very much enable resident-entrepreneurs to appropriate the space and they do take active part in shaping this space physically and socially. Key aspects of the development of this space seem to be a relatively small scale, close interconnection between the shops and a high level of visibility that allows mutual monitoring and connection with the outside space. The institutional form of the bokal development creates an opportunity for resident-entrepreneurs that does not require very much in terms of financial risk but does require a lot in terms of local and continuous commitment. The eye-catching architecture of the space has highlighted the importance of these resident-entrepreneurs and at the same time provides marketing for them. All this is very much in line with the original intentions of the housing corporation. There is of course reason to be wary of this development. Some observers may see in this case simply another example of how formerly unregulated space becomes dominated by private and commercial interests. However such an interpretation would, we argue, be too simple. It is evident in the bokal case that the social and physical changes that this space does not simply pit abstract capital against powerless residents but rather is very much anchored in the local community that continuously exercises a degree of local control. The area itself houses important resources for the resident-entrepreneurs for running the business including connection with employees, financial and other support from relatives and a connection with customers. Diverse local connections locally are also critical for the ongoing development of the businesses in establishing norms of social control and for establishing relations with neighbors. There is thus a very strong level of local control over the development of the businesses and the adjacent public space.

**Community gardening**

Malmö was the first Swedish city to plan for allotment plots in the late 19th century. Since then allotments have been planned for and established in most Swedish municipalities. These allotments are usually owned by the local authorities and leased to individual urban gardeners. The municipal allotment gardens are commonly open for the public, for walking or viewing, but not for anyone to take part in gardening. There are two such allotment areas in Rosengård. The plots are in great demand. Both areas are within a few minutes walking distance to the closest residential area.

No less than five new urban gardens have been established along Rosengårdstråket during 2010 and 2011. Four gardens are not traditional allotment gardens but are run in a more collective manner on sites that are also more public in nature, being close to walking and bicycling paths. The community gardens are small, none larger than 100 square meters. Each of the new community gardens has been a initiated top-down manner, that is, not by the gardeners themselves. Each garden has a slightly different organization and history. Yalla Trappan Community Garden will be outlined in somewhat more detail below to illustrate key issues that are similar but not identical in the the other gardens.
Yalla Trappan Community Garden, is situated on private land owned by the municipal housing company. Many observers probably perceive the land as public since there are few markers of private or semi-private space. In general there are few physical boundaries in the landscape. The main boundaries define the divisions between different types of traffic areas: spaces for cars, bikers, pedestrians and lawns. The surrounding landscape is characterized by large scale, this is in part due to buildings, roads and parking lots, but is also evident in planting design. On the spot where the Yalla Trappan garden is today there was earlier an unused space covered by gravel. To delimit the space as a community garden, it has been fenced in using living willow. The green spaces in the surrounding area consists mainly of monocultures of trees or ornamental shrubs. With exception for the Yalla Trappan Community Garden no greenery is designed to be edible.

See image 3 appendix 1

Intentions of planners
In the beginning of 2010 the cooperative Yalla Trappan, a work integrating enterprise was planning the move to new premises. The place in front of their new premises looked boring and it was suggested that a garden with herbs and flowers would be a good way to beautify the place. The women in the cooperative and many in their network supported the idea. At the time only a few other community gardens had been initiated in Malmö although the notion of community gardening had certainly become interesting (Sjöberg).

Since a garden was an idea that was supported by many different actors and involved a low level of risk the issue was quickly decided. The women in the cooperative were part of the discussion on what to plant in the garden. The residents in the building were informed, but not included in the planning process. The housing company, MKB, that owns the property was very supportive. After the agreement with the MKB the building of the garden started almost at once. A contractor prepared the planting beds. The women and many children from the neighborhood did the planting. A private enterprise, the urban gardening facilitators Odla i stan, have been an important part of the process. They have been part of the discussions on what to grow and why, they supervised the planting stage of the garden and they are supervising the maintenance of the garden. The maintenance of the place, especially daily cleaning is an issue that is taken care of by the women in the cooperative.

Focal actors
The garden is intended for both the cooperative and for the residents. In fact no one is explicitly excluded. But it is not unlikely that many feel hesitant to take part. The phenomenon itself, an open garden, is not an established concept. There are no established rules for how to take part in gardening activities in an open garden. The garden was initiated within the network around Yalla Trappan. and the cooperative can be regarded as the focal actor.
Institutional development
A private enterprise, the urban gardening facilitators *Odla i stan*, were an important part of the process. They were part of the discussions on what to grow and why. They supervised the planting stage of the garden and they are supervising the maintenance of the garden as it is today. They act as a backup if the cooperative does not have time or knowledge enough to keep up with maintenance demands. Thus, apart from designating a new use of the space the introduction of the garden brought in new actors in shaping how the space is to be used.

Space as a resource
The ambiguous space of an open garden in a public space is a palpable deviation from the way public space is normally perceived and used. The usual division between users and maintenance staff is blurred. It’s a shared space not only in the sense of co-existence, but also in co-responsibilities. The idea of growing food in an urban area is also an idea that might seem unusual to some residents.

The community garden has been appropriated by the women in the cooperative. During the first year, 2011, mainly two women from the co-operative took care of the garden. One was a full time employee of the cooperative and the other was working there on time limited basis. According to the gardeners from the cooperative initial interest of other residents was weak and some of the residents in the adjacent building are critical to the garden. This has been expressed in small scale vandalism as well as in words. There are also some signs of the cooperative wanting to keep the garden for themselves as a part of their café.

The residents were not part of the planning process and not surprisingly didn’t wholeheartedly embrace the project from the beginning. It seems that the skepticism has turned into the opposite. According to the chair of the cooperative, the number of residents involved in the garden is increasing and thereby also a level of local participation and control.

Key aspects of the case
Community gardens have been, as it were, strongly enabled by municipal actors along the route of Rosengårdsstråket. The idea here, as in the earlier case of the bokals, is to provide a meeting place of different actors, primarily perhaps residents and people passing through, by means of activity in the garden. The garden itself is symbolic in the sense of providing small scale, cared-for space, that is, intended to invite people to take part. So far, however, this has only meant that some users have started to use the place in a new way. If the new modes of usage will extent to a broad group of residents is still an open question.

This case illustrates a dynamic quite different from what is perhaps normally associated with community gardening which is most often conceived of as a bottom-up initiative of appropriating land. While overzealous attempts by municipal officials to help grass-roots organize may be a distinctly Swedish phenomenon, the case does highlight some micro-political aspects of how public or semi-public space is used and the role of large actors in setting the stage for these interactions even perhaps small gardens.
As in the case of the bokals the community gardens along Rosengårdsstråket are small scale, entail ostentatious use of public space and to an extent symbolic transformation of space. Participation entails little risk but continuous commitment of focal actors. Governance of the space is not ceded but complemented by the engagement of these focal actors. The focal actors do perceive benefits from the gardens and the slowly improving interaction with other residents seems to indicate that the mechanisms intended to help reshape public space are in fact in place. The garden as such is a fragile thing dependent on the goodwill of neighbors and in the long run willingness of others to pitch in and develop it. Yalla Trappan as a cooperative is very much exposed to both local social and market pressure so that the garden is as such a means of developing new connections which in itself is also very much under community control.

Activity Space Development
Our final case exists as yet only as an ongoing process, a municipal plan and as requests for tenders with contractors. Our description of the case takes its starting point in discussions with different groups involved in the development of the activity space that have taken place under the aegis of the municipality.

Physically the place chosen for this development is still a parking lot comprising 47 spaces. The grounds are owned by the municipal housing corporation but have been leased to the municipality on a 20-year contract. There are some physical aspects of importance of the space. Notably, the space is adjacent to a bicycle path and a walkway leading the main shopping center in Rosengård. The place is easily accessible by public transport and has a certain incline so at suggest perhaps a theater like space.

The plan for the activity space details a space that could be used for many different purposes. One central component is a kind of stage, accompanied with dramatic lighting and opportunities to play music. The intent is that the activity space should enable holding cultural events, dance performances or the like.

In discussions with representatives of the housing corporation ideas have also been put forward to use their channels to advertise ongoing and upcoming activities. This could include for instance electronic billboards close to the shopping mall.

See images 4 and 5, appendix 1

Intentions of planners
The development project Rosengårdsstråket, of which the development of the activity space is a part, makes clear that local collaboration is central. The idea is to foster long-term partnerships between the municipality and stakeholders in the district. In the activity space a special focus was on finding ways to engage young people who lived in the district, to take active part in the regeneration process. The physical design of the space is a broad participatory process but the intent has been since the outset that the activity space should attract people locally but also from other parts of city. This is important as the function is to help integrate Rosengård with the city center.
For the process leader responsible for dialogues with local stakeholders the process of engaging youth is envisioned initially as one of increasing participation over time. Thus people in the area will initially be informed, followed by a deepening dialogue of design, participation in the actual construction in some way and finally the focal groups will assume responsibility in collaborative management of the space. However this vision is not necessarily shared by key stakeholders and also faces a number of practical challenges.

**Focal actors**

The development of the activity space quite quickly becomes focused on creating a space for young women aged roughly 16-22. This idea has a ‘norm critical’ basis founded in an observation that much of public space, and particularly in the area, is dominated by young men. The development thus becomes focused on shaping a public space and seeking to enable young women to appropriate the space and for it to become a resource of them. Just as in the bokal case, the idea is not that this group will dominate the space and exclude others, but rather importantly contribute to shaping interaction.

Just as in the other cases however, the success of the development, from the municipal perspective hinges on actions of the focal group. If they do not use the place, or if the place is appropriated by groups other than the intended one, the whole project may seem to have failed.

**Institutional development**

During the initial stages of the project, the process leader together with the project team representing different municipal departments, started to plan how to identify key stakeholders, how to established long-term partnerships with them, and how to commit youth to take part in different parts of the project. This discussion at this stage involves mainly the project team, and city administrators. A number of events and dialogues are subsequently conducted attempting to bring together different stakeholders. While general concept developed for the activity space is well received in many quarters, institutional arrangements for how the activity space is going to be developed and managed are still lacking as it will become evident in the subsequent developments.

**Space as a resource**

During the late autumn several workshops were held with a local youth council. A local youth congress and a workshop for young women was held in November 2010. The project team also organized a public event and used this to inform about development in the area. During these events, the process leader invited participants to mark which places in the district they like, and which places should be developed. They also have the opportunity to present their own suggestions of what should be developed in the area. According to the third progress report from the project team, 1750 people took part in various dialog processes.

During the spring of 2011, a new workshop for the focal group was arranged together with design experts, with a specific aim of designing the activity space, so it would be attractive to the focal group. In this workshop, the participants also discuss what characterizes a public meeting point for young women. One comment was that the space needs to be perceived as a “good” and “safe” place” by parents. Otherwise, they would not be allowed to visit the place. Another participant expressed the need to attract the “good boys” as a way to create a public space with a good reputation. Other participants pointed to the need of engage adult female recreation leaders for subsequent running of the place.
The workshops result in a loose network young women aged approximately 16 – 25. A project assistant was engaged to facilitate communication in this group. The network was given the opportunity to plan test activities during the spring of 2012. These activities were also used as a further opportunity for others to give suggestions about development of the area. The suggestions from the workshops and other events were very general, like “a dance floor”, “a stage for performance”, “possibilities to play music”, “a graffiti wall”, a place for skating”, “play grounds”. Another wish was heated benches (the winter in Sweden could be harsh) and good lightning.

The subsequent development of the activity space takes place in at least three parallel sets of events with a loose coupling between them. The first is a continued and developed dialogue with the focal group.

During the summer of 2011, 13 youth from the network were employed by the city for a month. Their task was to arrange activities on the place, with the intention to further establish the idea of the place as an activity area, and to show that things were going to change in the district. The young women then formed a tighter network called “Engaged in Malmo”. The network becomes an important dialogue partner with the other stakeholders in the area after the summer. In interviews the young women give their views of the events they are planning and subsequent development of the activity space. A general understanding seems to be that the activity space is about counteracting the media influence a small group of young men who cause trouble in the area and attracting others to come to Rosengård. The youth feel confident and secure in the area, and particularly in this area of Rosengård since they each have wide local networks. They believe the event and subsequent activity space will make at difference because it “comes from below” rather than being imposed on the area. It is however not clear how subsequent negotiations of space will be affected by the project. Five of the young who took part in this event planning were interviewed and all strongly affirm that they have learned a lot in the process and also developed their own local networks and not least networks with municipal officials.

In parallel with dialog processes and events, a second process, the formal planning took place. The responsible official at the Department of Streets and Parks expressed the view that the ideas and wishes of everyone could be worth listening to, but he was very clear that he had the last word and the formal responsibility for the design. This stance was due to needs of considering aspects of safety, maintenance, the project budget, rules for contract entrepreneurs for the construction and so forth. Another aspect was the deadline for the project. The space had to be finished in the beginning of April 2013 due to limits on project funding.

A third parallel development concerned discussions of how the activity space was to maintained and developed after the project ended. Two large meetings were held in the summer and fall of 2011 to discuss this issue. The meetings were dominated primarily by actors from different municipal departments. A further meeting was also planned, but the project team canceled this. The motivation was that the key municipal stakeholders; the Environmental department, the City Planning office, the department of Streets and parks, and the City District of Rosengård have to find a common frame of reference before further discussions with external stakeholders would be meaningful. While it is not clear what will be the end result of these discussion it does seem clear that the topic has provoked a substantial internal debate on roles and responsibilities in urban development. An issue facing the
municipality is that the project is both high profile and uncertain. No municipal department seems willing to take on the uncertainty this entails. Furthermore, there is an issue that the municipality wants to have a stable counterpart in the local context, like Yalla Trappan in the case of the community garden, there is however, no obvious long-term partner that could represent the interests of the focal group in this case.

Key aspects of the case
There are important similarities with this and the previous cases. The scale is similar. There is a highly evident transformation of the space inviting ostentatious use which is similar to the bokal case, and of course efforts to enable appropriation of the space by focal actors. The main differences lie in that the development effort has failed in developing forms of low-level continuous commitment by the focal actors. There has also been an underestimation of the institutional development necessary to create adequate communication between the municipality and the focal group.

Planning for appropriation as a development approach and in practice
The approach that we have dubbed planning for appropriation is perhaps most clearly expounded as an ideal by the process leader of the activity space development. The approach stipulates increasing participation and involvement over time in the physical development and management of public space. Thus initially the municipal or large housing corporation presents information on that something is going to be developed and opens up for different inputs on placement and design, this phase then ideally leads to more in depth consultation, dialogue with a focal group, cooperation in development and collaboration in management. A concept developer at MKB who was integral to the bokal development expressed a similar idea. She views the bokals as an instance of urban acupuncture, anchored in local potentials but stimulated by the action of the housing corporation. In her view the important point is the development of a lively urban space by creating a public space that serves both local and also large actor interests.

The general approach of planning for appropriation seems rather innocuous. There are however one or two points on which the approach, even at this abstract level, seems open to dispute. Firstly there is the issue of how much control is given in critical phases of decision making. It would seem that the initiating actor has quite a bit of leeway in suggesting what and where things are to be developed simply by choosing channels of information and in the open process of sifting disparate input. This is perhaps unavoidable. More challenging is perhaps that the approach rather quickly needs to move from general participation to a more in-depth dialogue with a specific focal group. This is a normative decision based primarily on the municipal or large actor's perspective of what is possible and desirable. The enabling a particular focal group to appropriate space clearly has a political dimension (Mitchell 2003). Planning for appropriation, as we see it, is not about delegation or giving away power. Instead it is a conscious way of exercising power, even if it may be in line with the needs and wishes of those concerned.

None of the three cases described in this paper actually happened in the straightforward manner of increasing citizen participation over time. Nor do outcomes necessarily correspond in every respect to initial intentions. The differences between the cases and perhaps particularly their different setbacks in relation to intentions serve to shed light
on important mechanisms for this approach and may also serve to delimit its possible scope of application.

A first practical aspect of the approach is that it involves a small-scale development. In other words the physical development is concerned with a demarcated space that allows appropriator to set limits on their own and others behavior. The small scale allows for mutual monitoring and ease of communication. In this sense a critical aspect of the approach links up with aspects of governing common resources more generally (Ostrom 1999, 1994). All of the cases studied have this small-scale element.

A second, and closely related point, is that physical development of the space serves to highlight the importance of the activity and thus who should represent themselves (Mitchell 2003). This is very much the case with the bokals and the activity space but of course less evidently so in the community gardening. However even in the gardening case the places chosen, a garden is a provocative and unusual feature in public space, and details of the design do set it apart as a particularly sanctioned activity.

Thirdly a key element of the whole approach is to be able to develop appropriate institutional forms along side physical changes. This in turn can be subdivided into three related aspects 1) stipulating forms of continuous low-level commitment by focal actors and 2) establishing adequate contractual and communicative channels between the focal users and the large-scale actors and 3) that the resulting space is under local control.

In each of the cases the challenges of institutional development have been somewhat underestimated. The bokal case is perhaps the most successful because the form of commitment, and the focal group, was reasonably familiar at the outset. Nonetheless the contractual form created to for resident/entrepreneurs has not yet been challenged and tried in court and until it is there is something of a question as to whether the institutional development is finished.

In the community gardening case forms of low-level continuous commitment in gardening was already very familiar. However, a desire to have clear lines of communication for the municipal housing corporation and municipality shifted the emphasis of the garden from being a “community” garden to being something that was primarily the concern of Yalla Trappan. Thus initially, at least, there is a mismatch between the envisioned community garden and the institutional form.

For the activity space there is also to an extent a stipulated form of low-level commitment to the place in the programming of cultural events to take place here. The focal group could in all likelihood be committed to do this programming of the space. The key issue in the activity space is lack of adequate contractual and communicative forms due to the lack of definition of the focal group.

These three aspects of institutional development relate closely to Ostrom’s (Ostrom 1999) suggestion of institutional design criteria for governing common resources. Continuous commitment is an integral part of monitoring by appropriators. Communicative channels and local control are integral to what Ostom calls nesting of levels of governance and enabling self-governance (Ostrom 1999, 2000)
In the cases reviewed in this paper the large actors have absorbed most of the risk of physical developments and other costs of enabling focal actors. It is also clear that in each case the focal actors do perceive benefits from the development. In the bokal and community garden case there is furthermore a large degree of local social control over the further development of the space.

The cases seem to demonstrate that the approach of planning for appropriation is both possible and not entirely trivial. In the cases discussed here there has been a clear intent of the municipality and the housing corporation in reshaping the space and similar means. The approach is not inherently good or bad, but it is an available approach quite different from traditional planning in that it combines physical development with attempts to reshape social interaction by enabling certain select groups to appropriate the area. The cases also demonstrate that there is also room for a certain degree of optimism in that the approach can be applied beneficially if a series of fairly clear steps are taken in the process.

**Conclusions**

By a detailed description of three linked cases we have sought to describe a planning approach that seeks, by means of physical and institutional development, to enable focal groups to appropriate public space. This planning approach is adopted by large actors for different reasons but certainly one of the reasons is simply because it is expedient. The approach appears as the most viable as an investment in the development of a public space and meeting place.

The cases serve to illustrate the intentions of large actors in the creation of these meeting spaces and urban commons. We have outlined at length certain key aspects of the development approach including the importance of small, bounded space, symbolic transformation of physical space, ostentatious use, low-level continuous commitment by focal actors and finally how focal actors communicate with large actors. In each of the cases the intentions of planners critically hinge on local actors, who see the space as a potential resource, and are in turn are subject to multiplex local social control.

This planning approach that we have called planning for appropriation clearly has micro-political implications for who can represent themselves in the resulting space. However given that the approach relies both on intentions from large actors taking risk and local social control it is a complex kind of development not adequately understood simply as domination versus appropriation. In the micro-context of these cases, these two aspects are inseparably intertwined.

In analyzing the cases we have sought to bring together two different research streams on based on Lefebvre and the other on the governance of shared resources. Although these research streams have highly different starting points they are complementary in understanding the way social practice develops and space can become a resource for different users.

Each of the cases treated in this papers is small and in broad perspective perhaps insignificant. However the combined effect of small changes is not necessarily small. Perhaps the metaphor of urban acupuncture is not entirely without merit. If the effects...
of the cases discussed and other interventions along Rosengårdssträket combine to weaken an important divide in a fragmented city then this will have long term consequences over above each individual meeting place. It would be one step in integrating the city in the sense of creating maintaining intense and diverse patterns of interaction and control between formerly more or less separate social spaces.

References


Appendix 1. Images from the case locations

Image 1: Present day bokals

Image 2: Illustration of the planned development of the bokal plaza
Courtesy of the Dept. of Streets and Parks, Malmö
Image 3: Children helping out in planting in Yalla Trappan Community Garden

Image 4: Present day physical structure of the activity space

Image 5: Illustration of the planned activity space courtesy of the Dept of Streets and Parks, Malmö