Urban territoriality
and the residential yard[1]

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This paper essentially deals with the connections between people and place. Its specific focus is the context of residential yards in Swedish rental housing areas and processes in which tenants are involved in the management of these spaces. This is a specific type of setting, where the yard constitutes many important functions as everyday life environments and arenas for social interaction. Before the residential yard specifically is analysed, however, some more general theories of place will be introduced. The paper will begin by discussing some of the basics of human territorial functioning. Thereafter, a number of debates and concepts on urban socio-spatial orders will be presented, focusing especially on the semi-public settings of multi-family residential areas. Finally, the residential yard will be defined as a specific type of space and some of its characteristics and functions will be explored.

Territoriality as urban order

Place, in the sense of the physical environment around us, is an essential dimension of being. Exactly *how* essential it is can be discussed. Organisational and technological developments, from postal services to online communities, have successively opened more and more opportunities for distant or in other regards off-place communication. The human mind has always been able to break place barriers and escape from constraining physical settings. The idea of place-free, i.e. metaphysical, existence is probably older than civilisation. However, even ghosts, angels, demons and gods receive their meaning only when they interact with the humans and their physical realities, and we tend to project them as bodies in places. Similarly, the rapidly increasing amount of 'virtual worlds' are place-based at least in the sense that they do what they can to mimic place attributes – for example, you can design your own house or go to the local bar to meet new people. For some, the virtual reality of *Second Life* or other Internet-based forums becomes more primary than the normal physical reality they depend on to give their bodies nutrients and sleep. Still, they need the food and they need the physical rest, and overall it is hard to

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[1] This article is published as a 'thematic paper' in Castell (2010), *Managing yard and togetherness: living conditions and social robustness through tenant involvement in open space management*, Chalmers University of Technology, Göteborg.

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imagine a life without the place we relate to with both body and mind, sense with all our senses and cannot escape by unplugging a cord.

In many regards, the relationship between people and place looks quite different today than in the past. Tiiu Soidre-Brink (1987, p. 75) states that "production and consumption were organisationally and spatially interlinked" in the pre-industrial society. In other words, living and work were integrated and took place in connection to one's dwelling. Even towns and smaller cities in Sweden 150 years ago were "agrarian by their character", and "land ownership was regarded as the basis for all activity" (Soidre-Brink, 1987, p. 77). Magnus Bergquist, using the words of Christina Redvall, explains that it is not a coincidence that the Swedish words for 'resident' (*boende*) and 'peasant' (*bonde*) are so similar – originally, dwelling, preparing a home and cultivating the land were dimensions of the same complex meaning of living (Bergquist, 1989, p. 58). Or, as Sam B. Warner (1987) entitled his community garden history book: *"To Dwell is to Garden"*.

As society went through the industrial revolution and adopted a capitalist system, living came to be separated from work; first organisationally, then spatially (Soidre-Brink, 1987). Further on we have also seen a spatial division between functions such as recreation, shopping, entertainment, transportation, education, etc., in the city. Referring to Lynn H. Lofland (1973), Ralph B. Taylor (1988, p. 167) argues that one of the most central sociological changes in the modernisation process is the transition from a 'people order' to a 'place order', which means that social groups and activities, in the past segmented by class but taking place in geographical proximity to each other, are now to a great extent segmented by location. However, both the people order and the place order indicate the need for a social order, which is fundamental for coexisting, according to Lofland:

> City life was made possible by an 'ordering' of the urban populace in terms of appearance and spatial location such that those within the city could know a great deal about one another by simply looking.
> (Lofland, 1973, p. 22; quoted in Sampson & Raudenbush, 1999, p. 603)

Acknowledging the fundamental role of place in this social 'ordering' of the world, the notion of 'territoriality', introduces an interesting perspective on the relation between human societies and the places they inhabit.

Human territoriality

In his useful review of how the term territoriality has been used as a scientific concept, Mattias Kärrholm (2004) identifies three main themes, which in turn can be divided into seven sub-themes. Two of these sub-themes are particularly relevant here: territoriality as a defence and an active control of a certain area; and territoriality as the tendency to feel emotionally attached to or identify oneself with a certain area. Both these sub-themes are connected to a tradition in which territoriality is analysed as a behavioural pattern. In this tradition, Ralph B. Taylor (1988, p. 81) defines *human territorial functioning*[3], which is also the title of his book, as:

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[3] Taylor uses the term 'territorial functioning' instead of 'territoriality', but the two terms can be considered synomyms.

…an interlocked system of attitudes, sentiments, and behaviours that are…

…specific to a particular, usually delimited, site or location, which,…

…in the context of individuals in a group, or a small group as a whole,…

…reflect and reinforce, for those individuals or groups, some degree of excludability of use, responsibility for, and control over activities in these specific sites.

Although these formulations may give a sense of human territorial functioning as something very abstract and complicated, the phenomenon as such should not be difficult to recognise: *people make territorial claims* of different kinds. While Taylor concentrates on an informal, small-scale, social network-based level – typically neighbours on a street block watching strangers and guarding local behavioural norms – it would be possible to also include more large-scale and formal structures in the definition of territorial functioning: Territorial claims may be organised in property registers and handed over through formal market transactions; Property ownership may be reinforced by walls and security systems; There are often complex and discriminatory procedures for travellers who want to cross national borders; Without money, you will be directly excluded from many popular places in the city; An important strategy for establishing and maintaining the spatial order is the abundance of signs telling us where we are and are not allowed to be, as well as how to behave in certain places – 'Ladies', 'First Class Only', 'No Playing Ball, 'Private Road', etc. Other types of territorial functioning are more informal and sometimes less tangible: You may be stopped at a restaurant door if you happen to be wearing inappropriate shoes; Women avoid walking through dark parks at night more often than men do; For members of the youth gang, the secret writings on the wall may indicate territorial borders which should not be trespassed; You automatically evaluate the clothing and body language of fellow passengers before choosing seat on the bus; etc.

Taylor applies a Darwinist evolutionary approach to territorial behaviour among humans. As one point of departure he has reviewed ethological research on the behaviour of other species (different types of ants, birds and primates). He concludes from the ethology review that territorial functioning exists among some species but not others. The assumed explanation for this is that it depends on how stable and predictable the primary food resource is; territorial functioning is appropriate only for species which can rely on local resources. While some ants, most bird species and the howler monkey put effort into defending their territories against intruders, other species, such as the mountain gorilla, do not seem to bother much about claiming territorial integrity. The mountain gorillas move around in small groups in the same territory with other groups, and what they do sometimes defend is just their temporary home base (Taylor, 1988, pp. 23-33). Based on these observations, Taylor argues for the evolutionary advantage of defining group territories. He illustrates the argument through fictive stories and a figure (Figure 4.1, p. 52) of how resources become depleted if there is no assigned 'ownership'. The argumentation is reminiscent of Garreth Hardin's (1968) theory of the tragedy of the commons[4]. Just like Hardin, Taylor does not anchor the hypothesis in

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[4] The tragedy of the commons and other theoretical social dilemmas are introduced in the thematic paper on participation published in the same dissertation.

empirical findings. Instead, he refers to other theorists' mathematical models and lets a "hypothetical working example" guide the reading of how human territorial functioning may have evolved and been transmitted as a cultural heritage from generation to generation (pp. 63-66). In the hypothetical working example, one of our ancestors invents the "signpost" ("a cross between totem poles and street signs"), which in combination with lethal traps helps the tribe keep neighbouring tribes away from their territory.

Another point of departure for Taylor is C. Owen Lovejoy's (1981) theory of *The Origin of Man*, presented in Science 1981. Lovejoy argues that the success of early hominids was not primarily owing to tool-making skills or larger braincases, but was first and foremost a result of their *social organisation* and their role division between females and males. Drawing from archaeological studies, Lovejoy assumes that our ancestors ten or twenty million years ago lived in small groups, with males out hunting while females took care of the offspring. The evolutionary advantages of this model of social organisation, as summarised by Taylor (1988, p. 41), "include reduced exposure of offspring to predators, more time for parenting, and decreased hazards from travelling." However questionable it may be to use theories of Mesolithic life forms as the basis for analyses of today's social functions, it is still interesting to note that the social organisation *per se* has been acknowledged as a primary factor for survival and progress.

To return to a modern urban context, Taylor suggests that territorial functioning is still a fundamental mechanism in society. He points at five important consequences of the small-group informal territorial functioning he has studied:

Psychological consequences:

(a) It may reduce stress in the home as it controls the activities outside

(b) It serves to individuate the individual or the household from the surrounding context

Social psychological consequences:

(c) It is an expression of group solidarity and cohesiveness

(d) It is a means of group norm reinforcement

(Socio-)ecological consequences:

(e) It maintains behavioural settings, e.g. through keeping certain groups out

The last three of these consequences connects to the debates on social capital and the role of collective action in governing the commons[5]. These issues will be discussed further below, and in the following section in relation to publicness, appropriation of and exclusion from urban open spaces.

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[5] For an introduction to social capital theory, see the thematic paper on the Community Quest. For an introduction to collective action, see the thematic paper on participation. Both are published in the same dissertation as the current paper.

Appropriation

In his exploration of the relationship between architectural form and function, Kärrholm (2004) proposes a conceptual framework of four forms of territorial production (see Figure 1). The model is based on distinctions between intentionality and non-intentionality on the one hand and territorial control with and without claims of active 'ownership' by individuals or groups on the other.

	Impersonal control	*Personal control*
Intended production	territorial strategy	territorial tactics
Production through use	territorial association	territorial appropriation

Figure 1. Four forms of territorial production (Kärrholm, 2004)

Kärrholm's territoriality concepts are useful in sorting out different types of discussions about territoriality. The city council deciding to remove a park bench on which homeless usually sleep is an example of a territorial strategy which can be compared to territorial tactics such as a group of neighbours deciding to fence in their community garden. Other forms of territorial production are not explicitly intended as such, but are rather relatively unforeseen by-products of other actions, which Kärrholm calls "production through use". Here he differs between territorial association, which is the establishment of conventions of how a place should be used, and territorial appropriation, which refers to when an individual or a certain group unintentionally makes a place 'their own'.

Appropriation is also a central concept in Henri Lefebvre's theories about the social production of space. For Lefebvre, appropriation is the urban inhabitants' resistance to the power elites' faceless domination of urban spaces – it is when they claim their right to the city and create places out of abstract spaces. The phenomenon of tenant involvement in open space management can be idealised as a typical example of this kind of territorial appropriation (see, e.g., Modh, 1998). However, as will be discussed, appropriation may also involve exclusion.

Between the public and the private

"Ever since the rise of the city", Ali Madanipour (2003, p. 1) writes, "public–private distinction has been a key organizing principle, shaping the physical space of the cities and the social life of their citizens". This distinction hence concerns the spatial form of the city as well as questions about how we think,

behave and share our thoughts with others, and the spatial and non-spatial dimensions are intimately connected. Although the distinction between public and private has always been important, the ways in which it takes form and how it affects society differ from place to place and change over time.

The public space

Many authors have described the trend during the latter part of the 20th century of losing urban meeting places. In his book *The Great Good Place*, Roy Oldenburg (1999) writes nostalgically about old English pubs, French cafeterias and Turkish tea-houses –kinds of places he claims are largely absent in modern North American cities. What characterises these places is that they constitute a third spatial arena for our everyday lives, where the first is our home and the second is our work. The *third place* is thus an arena for meeting and knitting ties, a public place for networking "at the heart of a community" (Oldenburg, 1999).

Oldenburg's book is as nostalgic and idealising as the title proposes, and it is worthwhile to reflect critically on just how public yesterday's public places were, or rather what we mean by public. Ideally, 'public' would mean 'for everyone', but is it actually for everyone in reality, and is it for everyone on equal conditions? Don Mitchell has been sceptical about the romantic idealisation of the urban publicness of the past. Throughout history, he maintains, public domains have been spaces of exclusion, and the "inclusion of more and varied groups of people into the public sphere has only been won through constant social struggle" (Mitchell 1995, p. 16). Still today, there are ongoing struggles whereby groups who feel excluded fight for their right to the city's spaces in rich, democratic countries. Mitchell takes his departure in an infected struggle over the People's Park in Berkeley, between the authorities who wanted to 'clean up' and develop the park and a citizen group who claimed their right to use it as they wanted. The park was a refuge for homeless people, which was both the city's incentive for its renewal and the activists' motive for preservation. Homeless people are a group who get pushed back, to 'keep spaces safe and secure for the public'.

The anthology *Variations on a Theme Park: the New American City and the End of Public Space* (Sorkin, 1992) is a rather depressing outlook on an emerging urban order with little authenticity, equality or openness. The eight essayists efficiently capture many urbanists' frustration over late-modern 'commoditisation' and 'Disneyfication' of the cities and the question of whether we are seeing the beginning of "the end of public space" constantly hangs over our heads. However, this is an invalid question as long as the meaning of public space is not problematised. Just like Mitchell (1995), Carina Listerborn (2005) also highlights that there is no historical 'point zero' when urban public spaces were equally accessible to all. Instead, she suggests, the public spaces of typical European cities are probably less exclusive now than ever. Her question "How public is public?" leads the discussion to the fact that there will always be excluding contexts of some kind, and she concludes that "even commercial spaces can be emancipatory to some people" (p. 382).

Certainly, the role and function of 'public space' have changed, involving social as well as (physically) spatial transformations. A very influential source of critical analyses of social transformations is Jürgen Habermas' theories of

the public sphere (Habermas, 1962/1989). Habermas' public sphere conceptualised a culture of open and reflective intellectual exchange among the bourgeoisie of Western European countries during the 18th and 19th centuries, which he argues was a cornerstone in the development of modern democratic welfare societies. The public sphere theory has also been extended to a more general discussion about the role of public meeting places in political movements and democracy (see, e.g., Fraser, 1990).

The authors of *Variations on a Theme Park* (Sorkin, 1992) as well as, e.g., Don Mitchell (1995; 2003) show that what we usually regard as public urban spaces are not neutrally public or politically unmediated arenas, but are rather largely 'privatised' by commercial interests and cultural sub-groups. In his book *The Right to the City*, Mitchell (2003, p. 148) emphasises the importance of different 'public space movements' such as 'reclaim the street' campaigns or grassroots opposition to building and renewal projects. According to Mitchell (1995, p. 128), "it is by struggling over and within space that the natures of 'the public' and of democracy are defined".

Whether publicness and appropriation are conflicting or synergic notions is a tricky question. According to a Lefebvrian tradition, appropriation can be said to be a means of creating public places out of abstract spaces. On the other hand, appropriation can also be seen as a threat to publicness, if one group's appropriation negatively affects the accessibility by other groups. Lina Olsson (2008) therefore suggests that there is a difference between appropriation which adapts to the public order and allows for public use, and one which questions it. This distinction, however, is not very developed and appears hypothetical, especially if 'the public' in itself is a utopian construct.

Between the public and the private

In one of the most radical modernist visions (manifested, e.g., in Le Corbusier's *La Ville radieuse*) the urban landscape consists of a vast public land, on which the 'living machines' of private dwellings stand like landed rockets from the sky. Some of the settlements constructed during the Million Homes Programme era in Sweden came close to this vision, and examples can be found all over the world. In these urban environments, there is hardly any intermediary zone between the vast public and the intimate private – when stepping out through your door you enter the public domain, moving anonymously even in your own neighbourhood. A similar relationship between private and public space also exists in denser urban grid settings. As described by Swedish historian Bosse Bergman (1985, p. 66) in his analysis of Manhattan's urbanity:

> The passage between the private and the public was sharp, short, dark and filled with bustle, jangle and cry. The street was the primary place of urban life.

Although Bergman's descriptions of Manhattan and its street life are far from an idealisation, it is clear that he takes the same position as Jane Jacobs, generally seeing advantages in dense and mixed metropolitan cities. "In the small town", Bergman asserts, "the condition for a tolerant, searching and creative publicness is missing: a sharp and absolute separation between the common/public and the private" (p. 75).

Arguably, this urban ideal of an abrupt border between the private and public is a design of a Gesellschaft city, as there is no space for Gemeinschaft and community building[6]. Gemeinschaft is connected to another type of urban space, those that are 'commonly owned', where you move on a daily basis and repeatedly meet the same people, so that weak ties and social capital can develop. However, the issue is complex. As has already been discussed, Jacobs' appealing vital city vision is largely based on great interaction and development of Gemeinschaft-like social norms and ties, although she also strongly emphasises the importance of Gesellschaft-based integrity and independency.

Actually, Jacob's ideal street life bears a lot of the same qualities that Jan Gehl focuses on in his urban design manifest *Life Between Buildings* (1971). One of Gehl's most important design aspects, which he develops in several later publications (e.g. Gehl, Brack & Thornton, 1977; Gehl, Kaefer & Reigstad, 2006), is that the *interface* between the privateness of the buildings and the publicness of the streets should be given more attention. A vivid street life is the goal[7] and the more people move on a street, stop, talk to someone, etc., the better it is. The empirical studies of Gehl and his co-researchers show that design may play an important role: visual variety, small-scale business, visual contact between interior and exterior, benches, etc. facilitate the street life, while straight, monotonous façades without windows or entrances kill it.

In a housing area context, Gehl supports a 'soft interface' with a semi-private zone such as a small front yard creating a less abrupt transition between the private and public zones (Gehl, Brack & Thornton, 1977). Olsson et al. (1997, p.83) define the gradient between the private and public in four steps:

1. Private spaces, accessible and controlled by the individual household, notably the apartments

2. Semi-private spaces, accessible and controlled by a group of households, e.g. a stairwell or closed courtyard

3. Semi-public spaces, belonging to a group of households but accessible to the public, e.g. an open yard

4. Public spaces, belonging to the public, often with little control

In their study, Olsson et al. show how some housing blocks have well functioning social life, while others lack it. Partly, they conclude, this is connected to the spatial design. It seems that the 'group-controlled' spaces, i.e. what they define as semi-private, are most important for supporting a well functioning social life. Their worst case among the seven yards studied is a house of eight storeys with two stairwells, lacking all attributes that would encourage meetings – a cold and clean atmosphere, sharp acoustics and no sitting places – and the yard itself is not used by the residents, partly due to the fragmenting influence of a public pathway crossing through it. In other words: The potentially semi-private staircase and the potentially semi-public yard are not functioning as social spaces as they are not appropriated by anyone.

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[6] For an introduction to the concepts of Gemainschaft and Gesellschaft, see the thematic paper on the Community Quest published in the same dissertation.

[7] It should be noted, though, using Gehl's own words: "But activity, life and motion are not a goal in themselves. They offer a necessary condition for people to be able to function together with other people. But they get their value by virtue of their opposite: quietness, solitude, peace and harmony." (Gehl, 1971, p. 195, own translation)

The physical form *per se* naturally constitutes a fundamental condition for how spaces may be used. However, as discussed above, the functions and meanings of a space are also defined by social and cultural patterns. For example, the great differences in how the four case study yards in Angered Centrum were used cannot be explained only by their designs; it also cannot be explained only by the individuals living there, but rather local cultural patterns must also be brought into the analysis, such as local networks, habits, norms and forms of involvement in the management (see Castell, *submitted*).

The appropriation of near-home spaces by the residents, i.e. making these spaces semi-public or semi-private instead of public, is a key issue in discussions about the sense of safety in residential areas. This is the foundation of the 'defensible space' theory, stemming from Oscar Newman's (1972) classical book on how neighbourhoods should be designed to facilitate social control and impede criminal activity. Although the discourse is despised by many (perhaps influenced by Newman's way of connecting safety with conservative family and community ideals), and some studies show ambiguous results, there are also studies that show clear connections between the sense of safety and residents' appropriation of their near-home spaces (see, e.g., Brunson, Kuo & Sullivan, 2001).

Besides the mere safety perspective, the spatial dimension of *community* – i.e. the basis of development of local social networks and norms – doubtless implies a domain which is neither private nor public, but in between. The community space is appropriated and controlled, at least to a certain degree, not by an abstract distant public society but by a present local community – it is a 'group-owned' territory. Madanipour also discusses this in terms of *interpersonal* spaces, in contrast to personal and impersonal spaces, and sees neighbourhoods as "intermediary levels of organizing space, reducing the effects of a dichotomous divide between the public and private spheres" (Madanipour, 2003, p. 162).

A central idea underpinning the 'neighbourhood-unit' philosophy in urban planning and design – from the garden city movement pioneers of the early 20th century, through the large-scale modernist housing areas of the 1960s and 70s, to current New Urbanism developments and gated communities – has been that social community-building reciprocates with the sharing of space among a limited number of neighbours: the spatial semi-publicness or semi-privateness of the neighbourhood (see Figure 2).

The small neighbourhood and the erosion of Gemeinschaft spaces

The 'right to the city' debate as picked up from Henri Lefebvre by, e.g., Don Mitchell (1995), Mustafa Dikeç (Dikeç, 2002; Dikeç & Gilbert, 2002), Richard Van Deusen (2002) and David Harvey (2003; 2008), is mainly about the right to a 'free' public domain – free from exclusion and control by commercial or dominant political interests. It is about the right of all citizens to urban spaces belonging to everyone and no-one, where one can move as strangers among strangers and attain the freedom of anonymity. A human right to space, which is arguably denied many socially excluded groups living in Western cities – homeless people, illegal immigrants, households without consumption means, etc. – is further threatened by things such as the commoditisation of previous public goods, more repressive police control, new technical systems of surveillance and more walls, gates and locks.
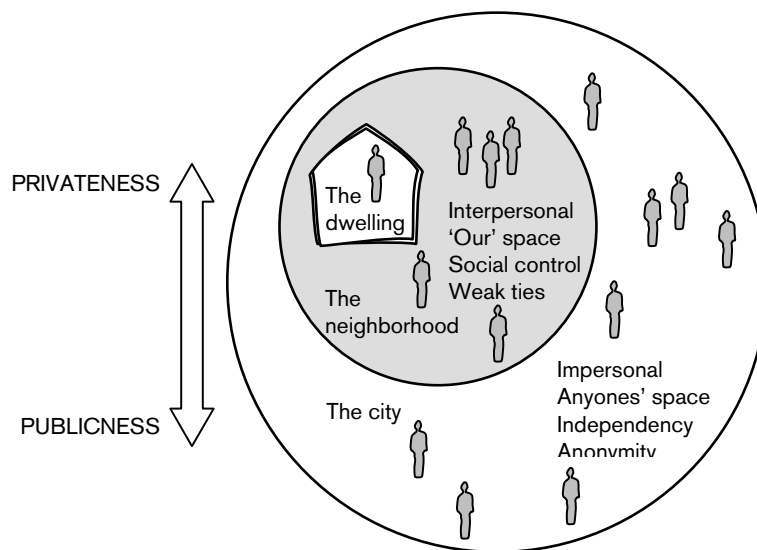
Figure 2. Some characteristics of the neighbourhood space as a domain between the privateness of the dwelling and the publicness of the city.

There is a tendency to contrast this 'free the public space' discourse not only with neoliberal market-oriented ideologies and punitive protection policies of conservative power elites, but also with communitarian ideas of strengthening informal local social networks, trust and norms. However, Lefebvre's idea of 'the right to the city' concerns not only 'emancipatory' metropolitan freedom visions of non-excluding public realms, but also a deeper and more intimate relationship between citizens and their local places, which actually leads to a renaissance of appropriation of the urban public into self-organised local neighbourhood realms. This paradox is also discussed by Madanipour (2003, pp. 182-186) – the urban public space serves as a refuge for the individual from oppressive collective control, but at the same time is also an arena where collective opinions and networking develop and where social control is practiced.

One typical example of urban 'Gemeinschaft spaces' or appropriated local places is what Sören Olsson has coined *the small neighbourhood* (Olsson, 1985; 1990; 1991; Olsson, Sondén & Ohlander, 1997). Olsson's small neighbourhood refers to a person's closest neighbours and the common spaces near the dwelling. Within this socio-spatial sphere, frequent spontaneous meetings take place, opening for contacts, mutual recognition and respect, development and maintenance of local social norms, and informal social control. Deeper relationships may develop, but this is not necessary for the small neighbourhood; rather, more intimate contacts are avoided as they threaten its stability. Olsson (1991, p. 69) notes that many earlier functions of the local community domain (i.e. activities taking place in the small neighbourhood) have been transferred to the private domain: As people get larger and more well-equipped homes, they no longer need to leave their dwelling to do laundry, perform simple repairs or participate in other activities that were formerly arranged on common grounds or with the help of social support systems. Similarly, as Gunnar Persson (2001, pp. 149-150) discusses, the devel-

opment of modern home information and communication technology, from television and telephone to computer games, chatting and Internet shopping, are resulting in more time spent in the privately controlled domain of the home. Parallel to these 'privatisation of personal time geography' trends, there is also the opposite direction. Olsson (1991) mentions that the whole welfare-system ideology entails a huge transferral of responsibilities from the 'primary groups' (which may be the family or the supportive local community – see Cooley, 1902) to the public government. Another trend pointing in a similar direction is the ongoing centralisation of commercial services – e.g. that we increasingly make our purchases at large external shopping malls instead of smaller local shops (Persson, 2001, p.148).

Anthony Giddens discusses these trends in broader and more theoretical terms as *distanciation* and *compression* of the *time-space*[8], which is connected to the modernisation process and a transition from Gemeinschaft domination to Gesellschaft domination. Taken together, these trends can be interpreted as an 'emptying' of functions of the city's semi-public spaces, eroding the semi-public domain. On the other hand, there are also trends which can be interpreted as reactions to this process, and which seemingly aim to rebuild or recreate something Gemeinschaft-like or at least Gemeinschaft-inspired in a semi-public realm. The topic of this the present research project – processes by which tenants collectively become involved in the management of common open space resources – is definitely a representation of a trend which emphasises the semi-public neighbourhood domain.

Neighbourhood territoriality and club realms

A number of problems involved with defining publicness have already been introduced. Naming and framing what is between public and private is, not surprisingly, an even more complex task. The notion 'semi-public' is commonly used to emphasise that there are certain qualities of a place which are neither typically public nor typically private. Some authors (e.g. Olsson et al., 1997, presented above) also attempt to distinguish between semi-public and semi-private. Several alternative concepts have been suggested. For example, Lyn Lofland (1998) uses a model from Albert Hunter[9] to analyse urban life in terms of three realms: the private, the public, and between them *the parochial realm*, which is "characterized by a sense of commonality among acquaintances and neighbours who are involved in interpersonal networks that are located within 'communities'" (p.10). To be clear, she continues with a sweeping statement:

> To oversimplify a bit, the private realm is the world of the household and friend and kin networks; the parochial realm is the world of the neighborhood, workplace, or acquaintance networks; and the public realm is the world of strangers and the 'street'. Through the lens of this trichotomy, we can see that tribes, villages, and small towns are composed simply of the private and parochial realms (or, if the group has no conception of private space, simply of the parochial realm).

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[8] See the thematic paper on the Community Quest, published in the same dissertation.

[9] Lofland refers to *Private, parochial and public social orders* by Albert Hunter, 1985.

And then, again referring to Hunter, she concludes that "cities are the most complex of settlement forms because they are the only settlement form that routinely and persistently contains all three realms" (Lofland, 1998, p. 10).

While Lofland devotes her interest to the 'real' public realms of metropolitan city centres, Björn Andersson (2002) has devoted his to the publicness and semi-publicness of the more peripheral urban settings in the large-scale suburban neighbourhood units. He dislikes the somewhat contemptuous tone in Lofland's 'parochial' prefix. Andersson also sees general problems in the way spatial publicness is often discussed. He notes that the 'public spaces' offer possibilities for social networking as well as the anonymous co-existence of strangers, i.e. that there are elements of appropriation and personal relations in even the most metropolitan square. He also notes that in many of the places Lofland views as typical representations of the parochial realm (suburbs, small towns, etc.), there will normally be a mixture of known and new faces. "I believe it is better to see public life as something that exists on several levels in the society and that the dimension known–stranger signifies an existing tension in all of them" (Andersson, 2002, p. 40). Andersson finally chooses to search for a compromise between the metropolitan 'publicness' discourse and the often heavily criticised neighbourhood community ideal by suggesting a new focus on the *neighbourhood publicness*, acknowledging the importance of local social norms and weak-tie networks as well as openness, heterogeneity and tolerance towards strangers.

Another critic of the common dichotomy of private and public spaces is Chris Webster. He proposes that it is often more accurate to talk about the *club realm*, i.e. where resources are shared more or less exclusively by a certain 'collective consumption club' and not equally by everyone. In his prize-winning article *The nature of the neighbourhood* (2003), Webster aims to translate Ronald Coase's famous theory of firms to explain the formation of urban neighbourhoods. With his rationalistic economic view, he states that "Transaction costs are at the heart of all urban dynamics" and that "Residential neighbourhoods emerge as households seek to minimise the costs of searching for neighbourhood services and other households with whom co-location yields benefits" (p. 2592). Naturally, these kinds of assertions must be questioned, as they neglect the significance of many other dimensions of urban dynamics – e.g. urban planning discourses, traditions and rigid regulations forming the spatial order; aesthetic, emotional and other 'non-economic' preferences influencing housing decisions; and, importantly, many people's limited options for making active choices due to a lack of economic resources and information. Moreover, I find Webster's (p. 2597) suggestion that Coase's firm theory "can be generalised to apply to all forms of organised co-operation" quite strange, as there is a fundamental difference between firms' overall purpose to maximise the profit for the owners (not the workers) and member-based organisations' overall purpose to generate benefits to or guard the interests of the members. Reasonably, internal and external transaction costs mean something quite different in a tenant involvement group than in a joint-stock company.

Nevertheless, Webster's theory about club realms and neighbourhood formation still deserves some attention as it proposes some useful concepts and models for analysing urban territoriality. One interesting model, illustrated in Figure 3, describes how public resources over time tend to be privatised as a

natural effect of urban congestion. *Pure public goods*, i.e. where there is no rival demand, is more a hypothetical point of departure when it comes to spatial consumption. As soon as there is congestion, which is an essential urban condition, there will be spatial rivalry and thereby the consumption will be connected to competition costs. Webster uses the term *local public goods* for this kind of common goods. However, as congestion proceeds and competition costs increase, there will be exclusive claims on the goods. Through governmental policies and market mechanisms, non-exclusive local public goods will transform into *club goods*, which are exclusively accessible to a limited group. If maintained within an exclusive and limited group, there will be no rivalry between club members, thus avoiding competition costs. However, if congestion within the 'club' leads to rivalry, the club goods will eventually transform into *private goods*.
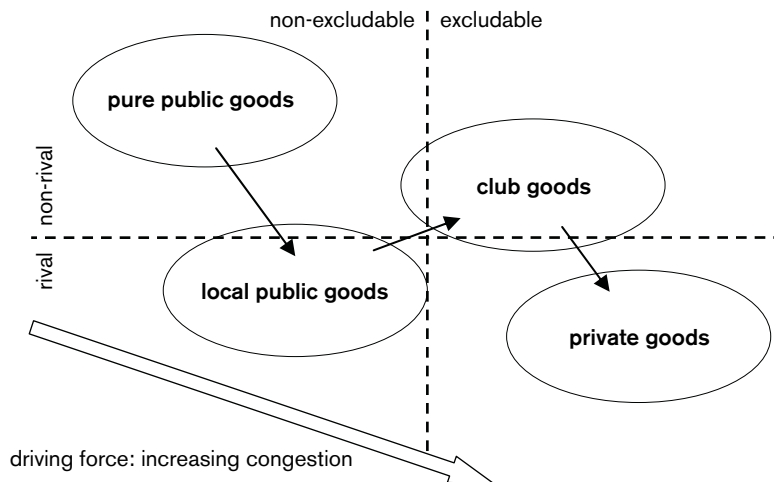

Figure 3. Webster and Lai's evolutionary model of consumption characteristics (drawn from Webster 2003, pp. 2598-2599; also compare to Ostrom, 2005, p. 24)

Although the evolutionary determinism in Webster's model should be a question of concern, the dynamic in transformation of local public goods into club goods fits well in the analysis of spatial appropriation processes in urban neighbourhoods. In an article analysing the club realm, Webster (2002) maintains that "inclusion and exclusion are facts of urban life" (p. 409) and that "cities naturally fragment into many small publics, each of which may be thought of as a collective consumption club" (p. 397). As Webster argues, most of what we normally regard as public could more accurately be regarded as club realm, where legal, economic or cultural institutions are employed to exclude certain groups. Gated communities are a particularly obvious manifestation of the club realm – providing legal and physical protection of economic rights to shared neighbourhood attributes. However, Webster points at the existence of club realms also in non-gated communities. The gated communities, he argues, merely "formalise the neighbourhood institutions which, in one form or other, govern, frequently less efficiently, the club realms of all cities" (p. 409). He thus sees gated communities as a natural response in order

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to make neighbourhood attribute sharing more efficient through reducing transaction costs, which in this case may include, e.g., efforts to upheld behavioural norms and protect residents from crime.

A hierarchy of nested urban communities

As described by Margarethe Kusenbach (2008), the fact that individual residents may describe their neighbourhood bounds in very different ways has been noted ever since urban communities and place-based identities became the subjects of ethnographic exploration in the 1950s. Kusenbach gives specific credit to Albert Hunter for his contribution to the theoretical advancement when he suggested that several nested layers of communities of different scales may coexist in a spatially hierarchal structure, an insight she argues has received insufficient scholarly attention. Based on Hunter's framework and informed by an extensive review of neighbourhood studies from past decades as well as her own recent empirical inquiries, she develops a model containing four scales of local urban communities: enclaves, walking distance neighbourhoods, street blocks and microsettings.

(a) *Enclaves*. The larger housing area, district, or neighbourhood 'enclave' is a domain where identities may be based on names, landmarks, important commercial and public service suppliers and ritual events. Sometimes, 'peer networks' form within the enclave as people with similar lifestyle or socio-economic status choose to settle in the same areas. People emphasising their enclave belonging often do so on the basis of such 'cultural identities', especially minority groups such as gays or Jews.

(b) *Walking distance neighbourhoods*. The geographic limits set by normal walking distances (typically around fifteen street blocks), are often of significance for shaping community identities. Residents who walk on daily basis – with their dog, for their own recreation, to the bus stop or supermarket, etc. – may recognise each other and establish a 'nodding habit'. Many neighbourhood associations and institutions such as local newsletters and events also have the walking distance neighbourhood as their domain.

(c) *Street blocks*. The street block (or similar unit) is often a natural domain for a more general sense of mutual responsibility and commonality, even between culturally heterogeneous neighbours. Even if acquaintance and friendship are not developed, block neighbours often know each other by both name and face, and may exchange services and mobilise for common interests when needed.

(d) *Microsettings*. Within the street block there may be some who develop slightly deeper ties, due to shared life situations, interests or activities. Typically, "a number of adjacent households whose members share a sense of connection, engage in specific patterns of interaction, and occasionally participate in collective events" (Kusenbach, 2008, p. 232).

Although the characteristics of these four types of communities sometimes intersect, Kusenbach claims that she can distinguish them in the narratives of her interviewees. One important point is that there are significant differences

in how individual residents value different community levels. While some respondents see the microsettings as most important, others may instead value the enclave as the most influential neighbourhood identity. Moreover, Kusenbach's research confirms previous conclusions by Guest and Wierzbicki (1999) that there is a competition between local and non-local social networking: Urban residents increasingly 'specialise' in either neighbourliness (social networking primarily with neighbours) or non-neighbourliness (social networking primarily over long distances), and certain groups – notably seniors, the unemployed, housewives, families with many children and the less educated – are more likely than others to orient toward neighbourliness within the small community (Kusenbach, 2008, p. 244).

As we are 'scaling down' in this subsection towards the residential yard, it is particularly Kusenbach's last two community levels which are of interest. It is also on these levels that personal social ties are important. Olsson's small neighbourhood, discussed on page 10 above, actually corresponds to both the street block level and the microsettings level, or perhaps it could better be described as a kind of hybrid: It occurs on the scale of the microsettings, but is more reminiscent of the street block when it comes to its social functions. Kusenbach's clearest specification for distinguishing the two domains is that social interaction on the microsettings level may be *proactive*, while on the street block level it is typically *reactive*, which indicates different depths of social engagement and relational intimacy. For example, typical street block behaviour would be helping a neighbour on request, or reacting to witnessing a car burglary; while microsettings behaviour would allow for more proactive interventions such as offering help or investigating if one notices something odd at a neighbour's apartment.

Concentrating on the social networking more than on the specific spatial territories, it could be suggested that Kusenbach's difference between a street block community and a microsettings community is equivalent to that between a normal well-functioning, not too intimate small neighbourhood à la Olsson and neighbourhood togetherness as described in Castell (*submitted*). It could also be discussed in terms of the difference between weak and strong ties[10].

To summarise, this section has aimed to position the interpersonal, semi-public club realm of urban neighbourhoods in relation to different discourses of socio-spatial urban orders. In the following section, a specific type of place – *the residential yard* – will be examined further.

The residential yard

Although several dimensions and conceptualisations of the 'neighbourhood' as a geographical and social unit have been discussed, a consistent neighbourhood definition for the purpose of this dissertation has not been offered. However, the attentive reader may have noticed that the overall focus is on a relatively small urban scale, i.e. on an 'estate', 'street block' or 'housing unit' level. Such units, whether denoted as neighbourhoods or something else, are

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[10] The concepts of weak and strong social ties, as well as neighbourhood togetherness, are presented in the thematic paper on the Community Quest published in the same dissertation.

perhaps most tangibly conceived of as a built structure – i.e. as a building volume or a cluster of building volumes. The building volumes contain a number of dwellings, which is important, as their residents constitute the social 'raw material' of the neighbourhood. However, dwellings are not essential in the neighbourhood conception – they belong to the purely private domain which is not a part of the neighbourhood domain[11]. Instead, as Jan Gehl (1971) so effectively expressed it, urban life mainly takes place *between* the buildings. Hence, paradoxically, the buildings *per se* which we often use for conceptualising the neighbourhood (in terms of enclaves, blocks, house rows, etc.) are actually less important, while the spaces *between* them are what constitutes the neighbourhood as a spatial domain. Therefore, Jan Gehl's interface and Jane Jacobs' street neighbourhoods are very important notions which in conceptual terms 'figure the ground' and 'give volume to the void'.

However, while the main interest of both Gehl and Jacob lies in the neighbourhood's role in creating spaces for a vivid 'city publicness', this dissertation concentrates on the neighbourhood domain *per se* and in many housing settings – actually in almost all settings identified in the empirical surveys and case study undertaken here – the 'public-fronting street sides' are subordinated to the 'neighbourhood interiors' (e.g. courtyards, pocket-parks and cul-de-sacs) regarding their role as semi-public neighbourhood spaces. Naturally, there is a scale problem here. For example, there is a continuous spectrum of street types, as well as different types of courtyards and parks, with varying degrees of publicness. The same street may be simultaneously regarded as the public front side of a street block and as part of the neighbourhood domain ('the interior') in a walking distance neighbourhood. However, if the *shared open spaces* instead of the building volumes (or, for that sake, jurisdiction borders, census areas, addresses, school areas, population characteristics, etc.) are taken as a point of departure in the neighbourhood definition, the scale problem vanishes.

Shared open neighbourhood spaces

To summarise the discussion above, the overall and somewhat simplified argument is that the physical dimension of the neighbourhood domain – i.e. the spaces where neighbours meet and may develop networks, trust and norms – can be translated into the shared open spaces between the buildings. This argument is not generically valid. It can be applied only in settings where (a) there is an open space adjacent to residential buildings; (b) a limited group of residents have more direct access to this space than the public; and (c) this space offers the residents certain opportunities or qualities. In addition, (d) if there are common *interior* spaces, e.g. laundry facilities, common leisure rooms or a local galleria, where neighbours can meet on a frequent basis, these spaces must of course be considered parts of the neighbourhood spaces even though they are not outdoor spaces.

Robert Freestone and David Nichols (2004) use the term *internal reserve* for open green spaces shared by residents in clusters of houses. Their main

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[11] Well, every rule has its exceptions, and it has been an architectural fashion for a while to play around with the border zone between private and public, e.g. through exhibiting private home interiors through transparent glass façades. However, this trend has still not overruled the general idea of dwellings' privacy.

focus is garden city type suburban housing areas from the 1920s and 1930s in Australia. In these areas, houses have private gardens and the internal reserves are larger additional spaces, usually managed and owned by the local municipality. In these settings, it makes sense to acknowledge the formally public (but clearly designated for a community of nearby neighbours) internal reserve as the semi-public neighbourhood domain, while the formally private gardens (however able to be seen by others) can be regarded semi-private and not really part of the neighbourhood domain. Freestone and Nichols suggest that the same term, internal reserve, would also be useful for more modern apartment housing estates. However, I find it a bit misleading as the term reserve otherwise mainly refers to the storage of certain resources for presumptive future uses. Looking for better terms myself to describe the wide range of shared open neighbourhood spaces my research deals with, I have also considered *estate grounds* (used in a conference paper by my colleague Therese Lindgren, 2005) and *neighbourhood spaces* (used by myself in an early conference paper, 2005). However, I prefer to use *residential yard* where it may apply, a notion which will be discussed more thoroughly below.

Defining 'residential yard'

In Swedish literature, the term *bostadsgård* (which can be translated as *residential yard*) is widely used. Generally, the word *gård* is at least as broad in its meanings as the English *yard*, used in contexts such as farmyard, shipyard, schoolyard, backyard, prison yard and graveyard, always signifying an open space enclosed by built structures. The prefix *bostads-* simply indicates an association with dwelling. The term *bostadsgård*, hence, would reasonably apply to any yard enclosed by residential houses, or, possibly, any yard which fulfils some kind of purpose or function related to dwelling. However, the term has a slightly different connotation.

First, *bostadsgård* has actually come to signify not only the open space but the also the buildings, just as the Swedish *bondgård* ('peasant yard' in direct translation) means *farm* and thus refers to the property as a whole independent of whether or not the houses form an enclosed yard (see, e.g., Larsvall, 1993). Accordingly, residents in multifamily housing areas usually refer to which *gård* they live on, referring to the houses as well as to the open space between them.

Second, which is interesting, *bostadsgård* does not apply to all yards surrounded by residential houses. For example, it is never used for villa gardens. In fact, examining how the word is used, it seems to apply most appropriately to certain specific types of urban settlement structures where a relatively large and typically rather green open space is surrounded by multi-family residential houses. It does *not*, surprisingly, apply very well to old, narrow inner-city courtyards. However, when planners and architects began to acknowledge the value of larger spaces for play and recreation purposes and started to design larger street blocks with continuous multi-functional open spaces, instead of a matrix of minimal courtyards divided by walls, the new typology was known as *bostadsgårdar* (see discussion in Kristensson, 2003, pp. 45-49).

Third, which is also peculiar, *bostadsgård* seems to refer not only to archetypal enclosed yards, but also to other forms of open spaces which have similar functions but are not fully enclosed. For example, Bengt and Agneta Pers-

son (1995, p. 9) define it broadly as "the grounds in connection to the residential house that the residents experience as 'theirs'". Different types of *semi*-enclosed spaces from the Million Homes Programme[12] era are commonly referred to as 'yards' by residents as well as housing managers and researchers. I have encountered occasional discussions on how 'enclosed' a space must be to be accredited the *bostadsgård* epithet whereby controversies may regard, for example, the unfenced open space between two tower houses or between a single slab block and a street (see also discussion in Kristensson, 2003, p. 44). The issue is highly complex, involving assessments of perceived demarcation (height, materials, density, visibility, accessibility, etc.), perceived ownership (use, 'markers' of appropriation, reputation, exposure to windows, etc.) and eventual connections between the spatial structure, social networks and symbolic community identities (names, addresses, associations, etc.). Figure 4 offers some illustrative examples.

Figure 4. Some examples of more or less typical residential yards: (a) enclosed street block yards; (b) different types of semi-enclosed yards; and (c) open layout 'yard' spaces (from Kungsladugård, Tuve and Bergsjön, all areas in Göteborg).

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[12] See thematic paper on the Swedish suburb, published in the same dissertation.

Changing roles of the yard

Although the elaborations on the concepts and definitions above refer primarily to a modern housing area context, the significance of semi-public shared open spaces for neighbourhood life is not new. Describing the urban life in pre-modern Sweden, Tiiu Soidre-Brink (1987, p. 78) writes: "The basic element in the old city was the yard. [...] The yard constituted a small miniature society where work and consumption were interwoven." The literature she has studied describes marketplaces, workshops, storage facilities, and a vivid social life taking place between the houses in the street block interiors of the Swedish 19th-century city. Until the industrial revolution, gardening also had its natural place in the midst of the city, which is established by Charlotte Horgby and Lena Jarlöv (1991) in a condensed retrospect of urban gardening in Sweden throughout industrialisation and modernisation. Their general image of the pre-industrial street block is one of green interiors, where a peek through a chink in the fence would reveal lush orchards and kitchen gardens. However, as they argue, industrialisation led to urbanisation and congestion: houses were built broader and higher, and additional buildings were even raised inside the blocks on the yards to host the growing population. The previously green and spacious yards were fragmented, and the new, dense 'stone town' offered little space for cultivation in the courtyards – from having been "the green lungs" of the city, they now became its "backside" (Horgby & Jarlöv, 1991, p. 13).

Probably, however, Horgby and Jarlöv's congested yards, floored with stone and gravel, were the same vivid marketplaces described by Soidre-Brink from a quite opposite perspective. And due to congestion, the previously private or semi-private yards took on a more public role in the denser late 19th-century city. However, with increased population densities followed severe sanitary problems. As a response to concerns about the bad health situation, the emerging urban planning discourses of the first decades of the 20th century emphasised spaciousness as well as access to green spaces. As described by Björn Linn (1974) and Eva Kristensson (2003), interest in the semi-public shared open spaces and contact with nature elements in the city continued to grow and the residential yard became a central component in modernist planning ideals. Kristensson (2003, p. 46) even sees the residential yard as an urban planning 'innovation', as a means to solve pressing sanitary, environmental and social problems. Linn's doctoral dissertation (1974) analyses the evolution of the 'large yard block' (*storgårdskvarteret*) in urban planning and design, which can be interpreted as the birth of the residential yard idea.

The 'large yard blocks' were built as a means to give the urban population access to green open spaces – for gardening, for children's play, for light and rehabilitation. When the functionalist philosophy revolutionised urban planning and design practices in the 1930s, the 'houses in a park' vision called for a dissolution of the block structures. However, the residential yard remained an important element in the functionalist planning. As Kristensson (2003, p. 49) points out, the neighbourhood enclaves – which were the model for all housing developments in Sweden during the 1950s, 60s and 70s – had the residential yard as its elementary building block. One typical form of neighbourhood enclaves was designed as a number of residential yards around a service centre and encircled by a local ringway; see Figure 5. On the other hand, many enclaves were built without a clear yard structure, which is also illustrated in the figure.
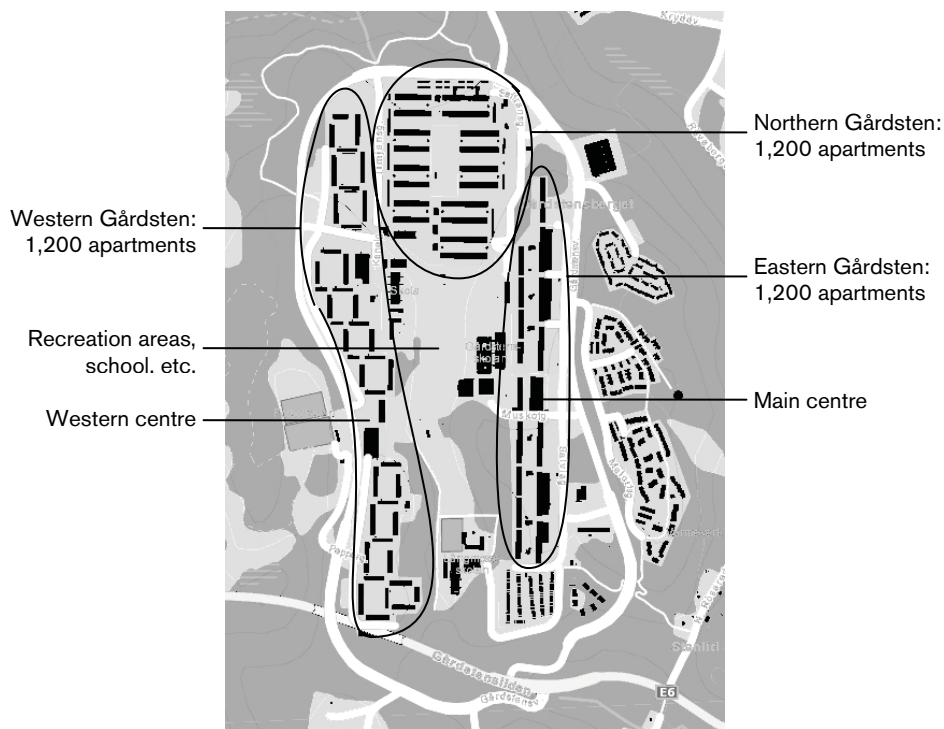
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Figure 5. Aerial view of Gårdsten in Göteborg, which is an archetypal neighbourhood enclave, designed and constructed around 1970. Note the clear yard demarcation on the western side as contrasted to the more 'floating' open space to the east.

Regardless of the form of the residential yards (e.g. the degree of enclosure), building standards prescribed a number of criteria for a well-functioning housing area, which included qualities of the open spaces. General requirements included easily accessible, satisfactorily sun-lit and secure open spaces adjacent to all houses. Opportunities for children's play were particularly subject to quantitative standards. According to one document from 1961, for example, a 100-200 m^2 playground for small children (including a 20 m^2 sandbox, climbing facilities, ball play and biking opportunities as well as benches) should be provided within 50 metres of each entrance and a maximum of 30 family apartments (Kristensson, 2003, p. 54).

Soidre-Brink (1987) discusses how the yards, as well as the homes, lost their roles as places for work and trade during modernisation. Horgby and Jarlöv (1991) discuss how they lost their role as land for cultivation, first due to congestion and in a second phase due to changing lifestyles. Today, other functions of the yard receive scholarly attention, whereby mainly recreational and social values are emphasised. However, there is a wide spectrum of possible functions of shared open neighbourhood spaces, and the future residential yard will perhaps play a different role than what we may expect.

Analysing the residential yard

In her doctoral dissertation, *The Significance of Spaciousness*, Eva Kristensson (2003) criticises the tendency in current housing developments to overly squeeze the size of the yards. In her studied developments from the 1990s, she claims that the ideal of creating a dense urbanity character "has gone hand-in-hand with a limited interest in the practical use values" (p. 465). Kristensson discusses four roles which the well-functioning residential yard needs to fulfil:

(a) The yard as *open space* close to the home; an overall role of the yard, whereby Kristensson emphasises the opportunity for residents to have a moment of recreation

(b) The yard as a *playground* for children

(c) The yard as a *social* arena

(d) The yard as a *view* for aesthetic experiences and nature contact

Kristensson suggests a distinction between *active* and *passive* use of the yard, where active use implies performing activities (including 'passive' activities such as resting) *in the yard*, while passive use means *viewing* it from the apartment or when passing by. The three first roles involve active use and are directly constrained by a limited spaciousness of the yard. The fourth role involving passive use, however, can also be fulfilled at a relatively small yard.

Kristensson also presents a rather complex model of dwelling values, developed by Jan Eriksson (1993). Jan-Erik Lind and Sven Bergenstråhle (Lind & Bergenstråhle, 2004; Bergenstråhle, 2006) use a simplification of Eriksson's model, comprising four categories of use:

(a) *Aesthetic* use: to experience, to beautify; beauty and attractivity

(b) *Symbolic* use: to associate, to remember, to express; meaning

(c) *Practical* use: to utilise; functions

(d) *Social* use: to collaborate, to be together; safety and togetherness

The practical use category may appear rather unclear. As practical use values are discussed by Kristensson (2003), they include activities taking place in the yard which are not primarily aimed at social interaction. Main categories of such activities, in Kristensson's framework, are children's play and adults' recreation. Eriksson's/Lind and Bergenstråhle's social use category corresponds to Kristensson's social arena function, while both aesthetic and symbolic use mainly refer to passive use, i.e. Kristensson's view function (even though beautifying and expressing are examples of active use). Hence, the two frameworks of functions and use values, respectively, seem fairly compatible – functions, use and values are connected to each other. What I find important to comment on, though, is that one activity may arguably correspond to different types of use values, just as the same type of values may be achieved through different types of activities. For example, the building of a sand castle is a typical children's play activity, which involves practical use but indeed also social use as well as both aesthetic and symbolic use of the residential yard.

Olsson, Cruse Sondén and Ohlander (1997, p.211-212), who have looked most specifically at the social use values in their study of seven residential

yards, highlight five aspects of the physical environment as particularly important and which may significantly affect the conditions for social interaction:

(a) *Enclosure and spatiality*. Clear visual demarcations contribute to the yard being perceived as belonging to the residents, i.e. it takes on a semi-private character which allows for surveillance and social control.

(b) *Usability*. The yard encourages use by providing conditions for different types of activities.

(c) *Accessibility*. It is easy to access the yard, and natural movements create meetings.

(d) *Scale*. A very large yard may take on an anonymous and public character, which may hamper appropriation and make togetherness and spontaneous socialising less probable. If the yard is too small, on the other hand, conflicting interests regarding how to use it may lead to divisions and quarrels.

(e) *Aesthetics*. Environments perceived as beautiful and which give a positive identity to the place have importance for residents' attachment and will to engage.

Although applied primarily to analysing the yard's role as an arena for social interaction, the aspects above are highly reminiscent of Oscar Newman's (1972; 1996) principles for designing a safe neighbourhood, i.e. a 'defensible space'. The main problem asserted – either eroding the possibility of achieving a warm sense of cohesion and friendly neighbourliness or risking the infestation of crime and fear – is that the yard will fail in being appropriated by the residents; that it will become too public. This problem formulation is in stark contrast to the concerns of public space defenders who discuss privatisation as a main threat. Partly, the two discussions can be explained as analyses on two different scales. If the context border is set around the particular housing unit and the local residents are made stakeholders, defence and appropriation of the local spaces may appear an important objective to achieve safety and amenity. If instead a wider context border is set and the homeless and other marginalised groups are included as stakeholders with legitimate claims on the urban space, then judicial, physical and social appropriation of potentially public spaces may be regarded as a major problem. Partly, however, the tension between public-access and club-control territorial claims is not merely a matter of scales but rather a tension present in every situation. For example, on the level of a residential yard, as soon as there is a process of spatial appropriation there will also be an issue of dominance and a potential for conflict and exclusion.

Open space management and the social production of the residential yard

This leads us back to the beginning of this paper and the social production of space. Even though the physical design of the yard sets a series of fundamental conditions for how it may be used, it is to a great extent also formed by its use. Moreover, in contrast to many other human-made constructions, open space designs based on living and growing materials (i.e. plants) will adopt very different shapes depending on how they are maintained. In a recent de-

bate article Dan Hallemar (2008) draws attention to this, complaining about the difficulties faced by new landscape architecture projects in receiving their just praise: "While architecture is obsessed with the first shining impression, landscape architecture is the art of profound use." Göransson and Lieberg (2000, p. 90) also use poetic language to pay tribute to the profound art of residential yard management:

> A residential yard can be seen as a brilliant cut diamond. Through planning, design, and development processes a good raw material can be extracted. By help of their instinctive feel, planners, architects and housing companies can successfully make a first rough cut so that interesting forms and features appear. The fine cutting and polishing is performed in the management phase. It is through maintenance and use of the yard that its patina and distinctive character can be shaped. It is in the management phase that the feeling for the yard and its identity, its personality, can be refined and developed.

Göransson and Lieberg seem to discuss the *physical appearance* of the yard and how it is shaped over time by the open space managers. Hallemar also writes about the physical appearance, although he explicitly adds the dimension that a place is also shaped by use. Considering the yard as a socially constructed place, it is also shaped by social conceptions and perceptions: Use and maintenance not only reshape the place's physical appearance but also reshape its social construct. There are plenty of examples in the literature of places which have acquired a totally new identity as a result of residents becoming involved in redesigning them, maintaining them and establishing new ways of using them (see, e.g., Castell, 2009). When a child finds her way in under a lilac bush for the first time, the lilac bush is transformed into a secret castle. When a group of residents bring out furniture to have a dinner party in the otherwise desolate yard for the first time, this directly changes the role of the yard, not only for the dinner guests but also for everyone who sees them or who hears about the party afterwards. Probably, more children will feel tempted to play under the lilac bush and others will feel tempted to arrange a garden party. New use patterns and new meanings are established. It is also likely that the gatherings will lead to discussions on how to improve the yard as well as to confrontations with people who do not want children to break the branches of the lilac bush or do not appreciate loud laughter, music and public drinking in their yard. This is how the yard is constantly reproduced as a social construct – with different meanings for different persons.

Conclusions

The spatial arena for tenant involvement in open space management is the residential yard, which is a type of semi-public urban territory – shared by a limited group of residents. There are differences between different yards, however. Some are publicly accessible and partly used by others than those living in direct connection to the yard, while others are closed and used exclusively by residents. Also within the local community of residents, there may be different spatial claims between different groups and individuals. Use of the yard is connected to a process of appropriation, which will reduce the possibilities for others to use it. The mechanism of appropriation is an integral component of the system of socio-spatial inter-relations we can call human

territoriality, which is an essential part of the societal order. However, socio-spatial orders are dynamic and may always be contested.

The residential yard may have many important functions for residents. Especially for groups with limited options to move – small children and the old – the open spaces outside the homes may provide important opportunities for restoration and play as well as social and physical development. Yard use is most easily conceived of as performing activities in the yard. However, other kinds of use may also be of importance, such as aesthetic and symbolic uses through viewing the flowers or recognising a sense of homeliness.

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