Strategic un-management for densification:
the values behind abandoning public space

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Unmanaged places showed by children aged 10-11

" I think that this type of place is more fun… because here I think that you can do so much more still… it is just to come up with things to do."

''when you come to a forest you have for example been to one place and then you go further out and then end up in another place all of a sudden."

"it is a bit difficult to walk, but at the same time hadn't it, if it would have been all perfect then it would not have been a ghost forest… so it is still quite good."

(Jansson, Sundevall & Wales, 2016)

Values of varying management levels

- Child-friendliness

- Biodiversity

- Variation and multifunctionality

- etc

Management levels and densification plans

- In the case of Rosengård, Sweden, <u>management issues were used to frame planning problems</u>, as "*unkempt green spaces were no longer seen as mundane areas easily improved by modest design interventions, but rather as 'unused places and surfaces' requiring radical transformation to reshape the entire area's typology*" (Zalar and Pries, 2022, p. 62).

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Unmapping green space
Discursive dispossession of the right to green space by a compact city planning epistemology

Alva Zalar and Johan Pries

In this article, we study the ongoing redevelopment of post-war, modernist residential area Rosengård, located in Sweden's third biggest city Malmö. We show how a planning and design strategy for this area has come to focus on a 'compact city' typology in line with Malmö's strategy for creating a 'near, dense, green and mixed city'. Such compact city typology emphasizes high density, urbanity, proximity and mixed-use as key values for renewal, but also threatens the green spaces in areas designated for densification. This article illustrates how renewal plans for modernist residential areas with generous green space provision also ensure dispossession of residents' rights to green space. Our analysis

Exploring management levels in two separate case studies

Two areas affected by densification processes:

- a <u>city district</u> studied through mainly <u>online questionnaires</u> to residents

- a <u>small town</u> studied through mainly <u>child-led walks</u> with groups of children aged 10-11
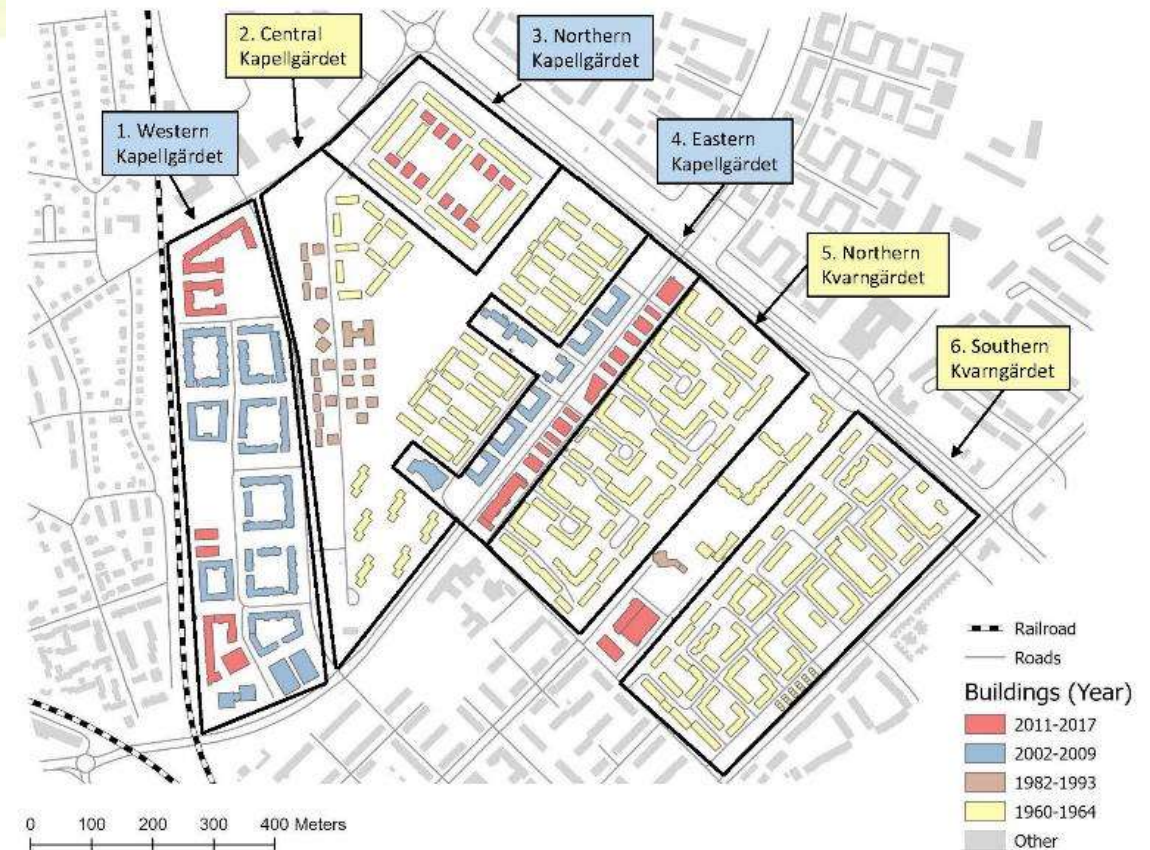
The city district

- Developed mainly in the 1960s as a materialisation of the welfare ideal

- Densification through infill planned from 2002 onwards, affecting sub-areas differently

(Jansson & Schneider, 2023)
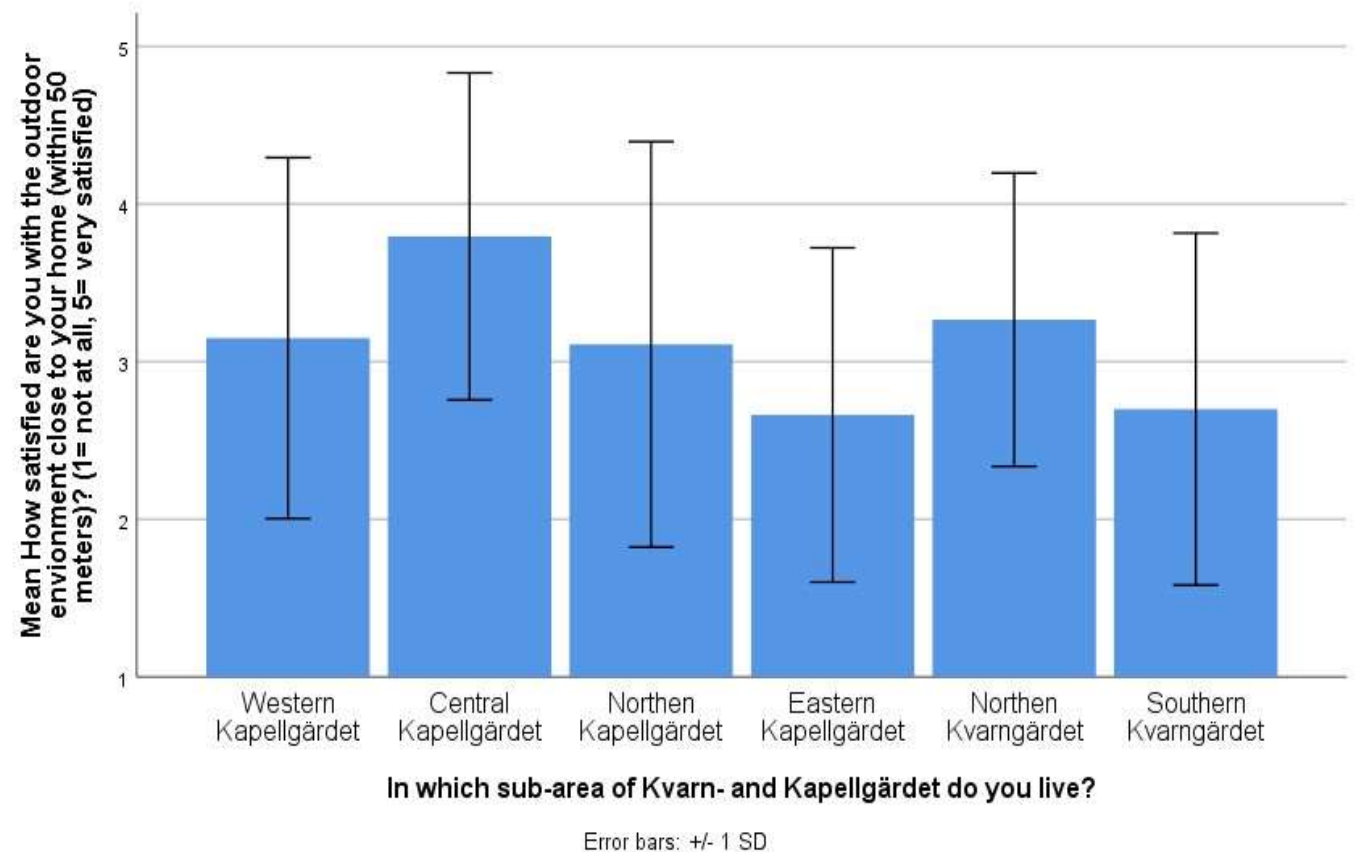
Results city district - overview

In the city district, residents described:

- the current development as very negative, with shrinking open spaces, more car traffic, noise and low perceived safety – but high maintenance level seen as positive
- Low management levels as a problem, in particular in non-densified sub-areas
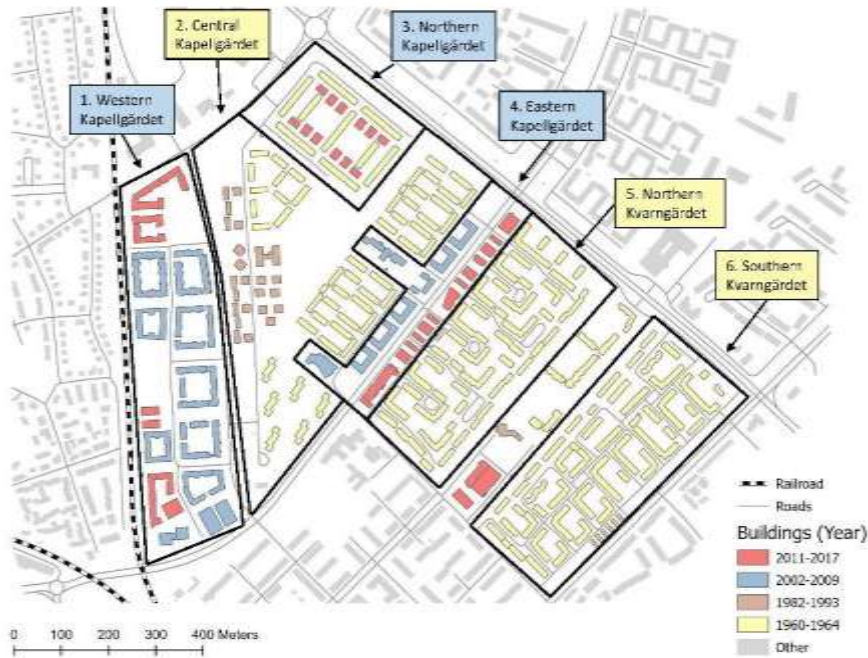
Results city district - Satisfaction, perceived qualities and uses

- <u>Statistically significant differences</u>, where residents in non-densified areas found:
  - Higher levels of satisfaction
  - More various perceived qualities
  - More various uses

In which sub-area of Kvarn- and Kapellgärdet do you live?

Error bars: +/- 1 SD

Results city district –
Sub-area 6: Southern Kvarngärdet

Open space maintenance in this sub-area
was described as, e.g. "a total catastrophe"

"Please do not remove any more green areas, they are needed" *Resident area 6*

"It has changed for the worse, with much worse maintenance and it always looks dirty and unkept" *Resident area 6*

"Very neglected outdoor environment, the landlord does not maintain. Mostly weeds, gives an abandoned, impersonal impression." *Resident area 6*

Area 6: Gärdets bilgata 22,Google street view 2017

The small town

- Developed based on ideals of a welfare landscape in the 1960s, further expanded in the 1990s

- Rapidly growing through densification, infill and sprawl, starting around 2012

(Jansson & Sunding, 2024)

Results small town –
Places shown in 2014 and 2019

Playgrounds

Green spaces and parkland

Abandoned places

Playgrounds* (coded)

Sport facilities* (coded)

Urban spaces

Green spaces and parkland

Abandoned/unfinished places

Results small town – Space and places for children's activities

- importance of having sufficient space, be able to get away, finding room for activities and not having to compete with others

- various types of places – including management level

- <u>finding less informal places</u> (compared to in 2014) and <u>asking more for formal places</u>

In summary

Two separate case studies both give

- a mainly negative view upon densification projects for residents, diminishing the values of open spaces

- Connection in between (densification/infill) planning and management levels

Reflections

- Low management/maintenance levels can be used as arguments for densification, resulting in the removal of open spaces and their values.

- **How strategic is this mechanism?**

- How to implement more varying levels of management, increasing values, and also safeguard sufficient and high quality open spaces?