To Exist Between Frames

- neighborliness, territoriality, in-between areas and their cultural practices

Ida-Maria Classon
Masters Thesis,
KTH School of Architecture
2012
Abstract

Contemporary urban development seems to, globally and simultaneously, aim for the same results; densification, connections and an *active urban life*. In Stockholm this is emphasized through the comprehensive plan, *The Walkable City*. This thesis aims to research the complexities of open space, in-between areas and cultural practices on borders of territories.

I have visited two neighborhoods, one in Stureby, Stockholm and one in Madison, Wisconsin as part of an art-based research where places for cultural practices have been observed and performed by me as a way to investigate in-between areas and what role they take in everyday lives. I have met with inhabitants for observations and interviews as well as performing an everyday life of my own when staying in Madison for two weeks. I have used a few different pictures of neighborliness to see what exist between the frame of the pictures and the situation and related this to Miwon Kwon’s notion about places situated next to each other.

I have also looked into the concept of territory, the ambiguous space between them and the communication that occur on interfaces. Territories are restricted by legal and social factors and are therefore not always possible to define. Through Stockholm comprehensive plan and the research of Alexander Ståhle I see an aiming for densification through connections, e.g. walkability, and emphasize a difference between connections and communication. The difference between occupancy and flow is also related to this through research connected to the concept of landscape as a field of action.

With this thesis I suggest to change the topic of a planning discussion going in on in Stockholm as well as globally, from how to create walkability to how to make use of interfaces of ambiguous open space when densifying cities.

KEY WORDS: URBAN PLANNING, THE WALKABLE CITY, IN-BETWEEN, NEIGHBORLINESS, TERRITORY, AMBIGUOUS SPACE, INTERFACE, OPEN SPACE, R.E.A.C.T. US
Table of Content

List of Figures
Acknowledgments

1. Stepping out of the postcard  
   – an introduction  
   1

2. Out of site, a methodological framework  
   Materials and documentation  
   8
   Expanding site into art  
   10

3. Neighborliness  
   – the cultural practices of borders  
   Grannar  
   14
   Turning to the Situation - Stureby 2012-04-04  
   16
   The Multiplicity of Cultural Practices  
   21
   Mid-April in Madison  
   22
   In the Neighborhood  
   22
   Signs from the front porch  
   25
   Meetings in a Ditch  
   27
   The Cultural Practices of Open Space  
   30

4. Good fences make good neighbors  
   – open space, territories and the borders between them  
   Defining territoriality  
   32
   Communicating through boundaries  
   34
   Urban structure as a clarification of territory  
   35
   To use walking as a connector of open space  
   37
   Open space as a field of action  
   39
5. To exist between frames
-Spill Overs
-It Happens In-between - Separation and Confrontation

References
List of Figures

1. The corner of Jennifer Street and Paterson Street, Madison, WI, pg. 2
2. Diagrams - in-between, connections, communication, pg. 4
3. Diagrams of Madison and Stureby – location and morphology, pg. 6
4. Route 94 leaving Chicago for Madison, pg. 12
5. Art work – by Magnus Bärtås, Granne, 1992, pg. 15
6. Row houses in Stureby, pg. 17
7. Walking path between row houses and open space area, Stureby, pg. 19
8. Diagram - the terrace, pg. 24
9. Political message in the front yard, Madison, pg. 26
10. The ditch between John's backyard and the bike path, Madison, pg. 28
11. Diagram - surface as a field of action, James Corner, pg. 40

All photos are taken by the author.
Acknowledgements

University studies are mainly a chase for answers to a never-ending bunch of questions. It is a frustration but also enjoyment to spend years of dealing with complex structures, abstract reasoning messing with one’s mind. Studying a field not able to limit to one academic discipline can appear rather confusing, and being inter-disciplinary taught expands the number of questions even more. This thesis work is therefore not only a research investigation but also a personal way of dealing with those questions that have bugged and irritated me through my planning and urban design studies. Most of them will never be answered, and some of them will constantly find better ones. My hope is although to never stop looking for new answers and this master thesis is a work done with those expectations; to sum up five years of discussions and intellectual experiments before going into actual practice.

There are of course many people that I met with that have contributed to what I have accomplished through my education, and specially in this thesis work, and I would like to thank the following: first and foremost Lena and Håkan Classon for an endless support and love, and for always believing in me; Emil Bergstén for our always on-going discussions and for never finding the answer to what post-modernism really is; Hanna Fürstenberg Danielson for doing these years together with me, Johanna Andersson, Elahe Karimnia and Nazanin Mehrin, it’s been a pleasure; Chatrin Loov and Anna Rieger for all practical help; Amanda Wredmark and Johanna Haegerström for always being there; Kristen Joiner and the staff at Sustain Dane, Jeanne Hoffman and Steve Steinhoff for their hospitality; Sustainable Sweden and The American Embassy in Stockholm for the opportunity to visit Wisconsin; and also the teachers who I have had the pleasure of being educated and inspired by; Daniel Koch, Catharina Gabrielsson, Tomas Borén, Klas Ramberg, Johanna Wiklander and Meike Schalk. Last but not least I would like to thank Helen Runting for a never-ending engagement, enthusiasm and inspiration, this wouldn’t have been any of it without her doubtless support. It has been my pleasure to, in one way or another, work with all above mentioned.
1. Stepping out of the postcard – an introduction

I’m waiting for the bus at Jennifer Street and Paterson when I take up my smart phone to take a picture of the building across the street. The app makes it look like a postcard and I post the picture on my Facebook wall. I look at the picture and I look at the intersection I just photographed. The picture is so familiar, I have seen this before and it doesn’t say much to me except that there is a beautiful tree blooming next to the house’s façade. It looks nice and is very picturesque. The actual site where I’m standing is though completely different to the picture. This environment is unknown to me and it is hard for me to read. I don’t know how to situate myself here and I don’t get many clues from the physical environment; there is a bus stand where I am told not to bring guns and the coffee place and the bars in this neighborhood look like single-family houses. The whole situation feels very remote to me.

I’m in Madison, Wisconsin for a two weeks stay to gather material for this thesis work and I’m just about to leave my first day at the office that host me, Sustain Dane. The bus takes me from Near East, through downtown Madison, to the Near West where I rent a room. It’s a travel from the gentrified neighborhood of Williamson Street, through the older parts with the Capital State building, further out through the big university campus and out to Monroe Street with all its shops and restaurants and I can’t stop taking in everything that I see. I’m thinking of the difference between the picture I took and the site where I was standing and as this is my first visit to the U.S. I realize that through all my life I have been fed with pictures and images from North America. I have seen them before; either if they’ve been TV shows like Beverly Hills 90210 or Bored to Death, reports from the world’s politics or stories from my grandmother about when her aunt immigrated trans-Atlantic. But I never experienced this environment before in person and that seems to be what distances the picture and the situation from each other, where the postcard has a frame, the site is a wide spread image. The difference in time and space makes the experience of site and picture different.

This is a thesis work of the two contexts of Stockholm and Madison with the aim to use the relationality of place to gather material in order to change the topic of an ongoing discussion in Stockholm, how to create a walkable city, to a discussion about how to develop interfaces from boundaries. Stockholm’s new comprehensive plan, The Walkable City, is a policy document of how Stockholm should develop through densification and connections, where walkability is used as a metaphor for how an active urban life can be created. What I suggest in this thesis is to emphasis how interfaces can create communication on boundaries between territories and how this is a better tool for this aim.

The research moves between the different contexts of Stockholm and Madison, which will be investigated in two scales. One scale deals with planning policies of Stockholm and the
discussion of open space and planning practice of in-between. The concept of neighborliness is an opening for research on a smaller scale looking into what relations there are in these areas. Cultural practices are performed and observed by me in, around and about in-betweens of territories. The research will be operated on two sites; the first is the place of Stureby, a suburb in the south of Stockholm and the second site is defined as travelling to Madison, Wisconsin, U.S. in April 11 to 29, 2012, which add a time and space factor to the research. This means taking the knowledge gained in previous research of the thesis, but also my own context, out of place into an unknown position. The aim is to, through the methodological framework, answer following questions:

How are interfaces creating communication over borders and how are boundaries and their ambiguity influencing the actions of people?
How is the difference between flows and occupancy making a difference when planning for urban development?

Through my education I have always looked into what happens between things; architecture and buildings, blocks, streets, institutions, people, businesses and other actors, life between programs. In Stockholm urban development is now lead by a discussion of how the city should connect different areas and functions into an environment, where movement and interactions are well-connected through the urban fabric. Because of this the new comprehensive plan, The Walkable City, has caught my interest as I perceive it as a story of how to use what could be considered as in-betweens in the urban fabric (Stockholm stad 2010).

I am also in a constant movement between disciplines as I am originally an urban planner with contents from ethnology, science of art, economy and human geography before I ended up at an interdisciplinary masters program at a technical university. The interdisciplinary oscillations are something to enjoy but are also a source to clutter of positions and what views there are on the subject of urban design and policy making in urban development. The interactions offered by urban environments and their connections are though a matter of my attention what ever position I take at the moment.

Stureby is a suburb in the south of Stockholm and in contrast to many other suburbs in the municipality it has an urban structure developed through different time periods, such as single family houses from the 1920’s and 30’s, row houses and apartment buildings from the 40’s and 50’s and some contemporary infill projects. This give a heterogeneous structure where different kinds of urban developments meet. This situation, being developed under a longer time, makes Stureby different from most surrounding suburbs, mostly because it doesn’t have a typical suburban centre with a square with basic services gathered around. Located between bigger, more known suburbs such as Högdalen, Ålvsjö, Bandhagen and Enskede makes Stureby fairly anonymous in its context.
Figure 2: What is in-between and what relations exist on, and across borders?
Madison is the capital of Wisconsin, a state in the Midwest, with about 233,000 inhabitants, where Milwaukee is the biggest city with 594,000 inhabitants (City of Madison 2012). The centre of Madison is based on a land strip between the two lakes Mendota and Monona, a geographical phenomenon called an isthmus, and the absolute centre is the square where the Wisconsin State Capitol building is placed. University of Wisconsin is a renowned university with about 40,000 students, with its campus close to the city centre and is therefore a big part of the social and cultural life of the city. The city is looked upon as liberal and progressive, sometimes explained by the high number of ‘intellectual’ inhabitants, and is also known for the involvement in sustainable development.

The relation between Stockholm and Madison may seem odd to make in the thesis work. The capital of Wisconsin, a Midwest state where so many Swedes settled down about hundred years ago, contains memories of Swedish history and stories about the destiny of the many human beings that changed their lives completely when they went overseas, with the risk of never see their homes and families again. Looking back at history may seem tempting while visiting this part of the world, but with a thesis heading forward, investigating contemporary takes on areas in-between in general, and boundaries specifically, the objectives for my visit are of another character. I want to see how boundaries function as interfaces, in the everyday life of people but also if they can function as a means for urban planning (Madanipour 2003). There is the familiar context of Stockholm in which I am educated, and there is the unfamiliar context of Madison, a trip, an experience and site were I tumble around my understandings of urban planning and design. To use the concept of site specificity to gain knowledge is a well-known method within arts and gives a possibility to move outside the literal site into a site of a discursive character (Kwon 2004). Here I take use of site specificity as the movement created by travelling to Madison shows on complex findings; to use site in this way becomes a tool as it uses spatial prerequisites to acknowledge different processes and understandings of time and space variables. They are basic premises for the research of this thesis and refer to what happens between the site and the picture, what experiences are brought into the situation from time and space. I will through this material move between Stockholm and Madison to explore sites in different layers, in order to contribute with material for a new discussion about urban development, urban structures, densification and people’s ability to act upon their everyday life.
Figure 3: location and morphology of Stureby and Madison
2. Out of site, a methodological framework

To be able to take this thesis as far as possible and reach a process of producing knowledge from the multiple angles brought up here I have taken use of art-based research. Using art-based research allows for multilateral research problems and a heterogeneous view on the essential questions of research: what, how, when and where. Historically this part of science has had little authority, which was dismissed by Christopher Frayling when he argued for the many ways art is a natural part of gaining knowledge in science (Frayling 1993). Art-based research is becoming more and more established in academia and is much useful researching non-linear problems and opens up for knowledge production oscillating between experiments, conceptualization, communication and critical construction, which is why it has been chosen as a framework for this project (Dyrssen 2011). This thesis is dealing with spatial issues on the border of architecture, urban design and humanities and doing interdisciplinary research like this gives the opportunity to gain knowledge from complex information findings. Using art-based research helps me using subjective matters as part of a communicative and explorative research why I can use architectural thinking to find connections between unforeseeable disparate factors (Dyrssen 2011:224-225). This has been of much importance to this thesis as it has followed a road full of unexpected events and spontaneous opportunities for meetings, investigation and research.

So, dealing with spatial issues in an interdisciplinary environment my research therefore finds its roots in various backgrounds. This means that the research questions and problem has been dealt with from different angles. It is my intention to reach a broader understanding of the issues of connectivity, what boundaries are and how human life is performed on borders. I will use existing research to find angles on how territoriality is defined and how open space and green areas function as connections and contribute to social relations and urban life. The issue of sustainability is here given a general role over bridging the research, as it is a self said goal for me as well as for the people I have met with and the researchers I build my arguments around. The research has been performed in different stages where different results will be found: one mapping stage, one exploratory and one critical action stage (Dyrssen 2011:237).

One first step in the research was to map the situation. Considering the first site, Stureby and planning practices in Stockholm, this could be described as something I have done throughout my education, exploring what planning and urban design is about in this specific city, what is considered as important here? But it also means visiting Stureby for the first time, go out for a site as an urban designer but also interpret it as an experience. This means to situate the research problem with the questions of why, what, how, where etc. in mind (Dyrssen 2011:227).

The exploratory part aims to produce statements, suggestions and new input to the research problem. Both stable and temporary results are asked for and help to gather material for
further knowledge production. By travelling to Wisconsin, my previous knowledge became an object for intervention and the stay in Madison was an attempt to explore and act on the previous stage of the research. Dyrssen describes it as performatory research to freely move between the different components of the research and thereby reach a practice that works investigative. Performative actions also have the possibility to collect information on contemporary culture as it gives access to how individual choices are made and what values we share as a society which in their turn gives information on how our common culture is created (Dyrssen 2011:228). Living in Madison for two weeks could be called that kind of performance as it has contributed knowledge about social relations as well as choices and values of individuals, which in combination with observations and interviews has made a big part of my research. Performance as such, has here been useful as it allowed me to take an active part and emphasis the subjective qualities I have as a researcher. Finally the thesis will take a critical action with the aim to bring up new perspectives on contemporary urban design and put light on what alternatives there are in the matter of how we today are dealing with green areas in relation to densification and sustainability. This means both questioning policy and practice, but also my own findings and how they relate to each other and to our time’s urban development of Stockholm.

The methodology allows me to bring in multiple angles and to take use of heterogeneous views to let the thesis contribute with new perspectives to an ongoing debate in Stockholm. It allows binding together complex issues of how human life and urban form are intertwined.

Materials and documentation

To gather information, build my knowledge and to be able to put the bits together I have met with many different people, all of them contributing to the process in different ways. I will in the research bring in this information which is of different character depending on who I met with and in what situation this happened. Methodologically, it concerns observations and interviews, in this process best described by the go-along-method. This means using people’s ability to be in their own situation and in their comfort zone as it in practice means to spend time with someone to get insights about their everyday life or other kinds of information hard to describe or even to remember as it often is looked upon as very self said information by the informants themselves. Walking has been used by several as a method within research, but also for art purposes. Such is Spaziergangwissenschaft, who aims to reach a broader understanding of architecture through what experiences are gained by walking (Spaziergangwissenschaft 2012), but also Chora, who works with walking as a collective fieldwork (Chora 2012) and Hamish Fulton, an artist using walkscapes as an art method (Fulton 2012). Although go-along is implying an act of walking; the possibility to do interviews and observation at the same time is here put in focus instead of the walking itself. Described by Kusenbach, the go-along method is a tool for doing observation at the
same time as doing an interview and has the advantage of both these methods: “Go-alongs require that ethnographers take a more active stance towards capturing their informants’ actions and interpretations” (Kusenbach 2003:463). Other positive outcomes of this method is that it learn the researcher about spatial practices, puts focus on peoples life in connection to site, space and place, reveals connections between inhabitants of a neighborhood and makes it possible to explore social realms (Kusenbach 2003).

The empirical material brought into this thesis consists of meetings with inhabitants of Stureby, a Stockholm suburb, and a neighborhood in Madison called the Near West. In the case of Stureby the research consists of the meeting with the retired couple Tage and Ann-Marie Andersson, one morning of talks, coffee and packing for a road trip showed me very openly their home, habits and everyday life in a row house in Stureby. In Madison, primarily Stephanie has been a source of information to me, but also a subject for observation and interviews. I was for two weeks part of her everyday life and this has been documented through photographs and notes. I also met with her neighbor Maria and her family of a husband and two daughters. We met and talked several times on the street but I was also invited to their home for longer talks. This has been documented through photographs, recordings of our talks, notes and personal artifacts.

My stay in Madison is in general much described as a two weeks long observation through which I discovered everydayness of people in the city, e.g. I used a bike to move around the city to experience the flow of people, but also went by bus and car, I visited a shopping mall to discover habits and routines, tried to do grocery shopping without a car and so on. This also meant meeting with people in spontaneous ways when in action of their everyday life, a way to carry out the go-along method in my research. The interview with John is of such character where a spontaneous meeting occurred and I later on wrote down the observation and interview into field notes. A lot of other meetings are also of importance for my research, such as to meet with my temporary colleagues at Sustain Dane everyday and the experience to have my own desk in their office, but also to meet with my newly found relatives living in Madison.

To be able to gain insights into the American planning process and the planning agenda of the City of Madison I met with key persons at different boards and committees at the city but also at a county level. Jeanne Hoffman, Facilities and Sustainability Manager – Engineering Division and Janet Daily, engineer, both at the City of Madison, providing information on contemporary planning issues as well as on specific projects. Steve Steinhoff, Senior Community Planner at Capital Area Regional Planning Commission offered me insights in the process of regional planning. I also attended different meetings, such as with the steering committee of Capital Region Sustainable Communities which different actors in the planning process attended. Daniel Norlinh, a volunteer at Centre for Resilient Cities, offered me insights in a non-profit organization’s work for a sustainable urban development and how planning in USA is perceived as a Swede. I also met with
Professor Harvey Jacobs from Department of Urban and Regional Planning, University of Wisconsin, who very kindly explained American planning from an academia point of view and especially the concepts of territory and property rights. I also attended the Nelson Institute Earth Day Conference for lectures about sustainability, consumption and storytelling, where especially Julia Alvarez speech has had an impact on this research process. The documentation differs of course between interviews, meetings, coffee breaks and observations of a planning office but all have been carefully written down as field notes, gathered material also consist of planning documents, comprehensive plans, articles, protocols etc.

The research work of this masters thesis in urban planning and design has been dependent on a few different variables to become what it is today, they have shaped its content and directed the process. One such thing is the scholarship, R.E.A.C.T. US, I was given in March, which changed the frames of the research with its possibility to do field studies in the U.S. The research is done under a limited time, from January to May 2012, an actuality that made me have to limit the field of research. As always, when in the act of researching, it is hard to restrict where it starts and where it ends. There are many more aspects of the subject to ventilate but to come to an end limits are needed. I have therefore chosen to use theorists mainly from the urban design field, as that is mainly also my own field. As what is regarded the selection of empirical material it has been a process of the snowball effect, especially in Madison where I was in the hands of my hosts. Because of this there is a risk of me missing out of important events and cultural phenomena, but I see it as a process to benefit from as it often leads to findings out of my own mindset. And I consider the results of this thesis work to be a result of this. It should also be noted that the frame of the empirical material is of the world of certain societal groups, which due to the snowball are under quite similar cultural and economical preferences. My own presupposes, together with the framework of the scholarship, this means meeting with people that all belong to a fairly well educated and affluent group of the society. I consider this as a factor that affect the research, which means that it does not claim itself to be representative for all parts of society. One effect of the snowball is that it catches what is around it, which is seen in the selection of interviewees that all belong to white middle class culture. This proves the point of the snowball and the methods used here. As will be further explained later in the thesis, using my person endows the sites investigated with something unique, but does also put the research in a context of the sites as well as in my own context in a situated practice (Kwon 2004).

Expanding site into art

In urban design, the term site holds a very natural position in everyday vocabulary. When in work, a site is investigated and a subject for visits and analysis, which become narratives to build a proposal on. A site exist first as place and this transformation from place to site
lays in how the narratives are built and how a place is emptied out to be prepared and made receptive for, one by planners or designers organized intervention (Beauregard 2005). Building his understandings of site upon Lefebvre’s interpretation of space, Beauregard emphasis the narrative partly as something a place already holds, either it is by professionals considered as empty or if it has a more known history. When a place becomes an object for intervention there already exist a narrative, a place is never empty (ibid).

A discussion of meaning of place was raised amongst artist in the 1960s and 1970s when site-specific art emerged as a reaction against a commodification of art. Place was no longer, by these artists, considered as a tabula rasa but a subject of meaning adding value to the art-piece. The concept of place is although through different angles discussed within human geography where Doreen Massey stress the relationality of place, e.g. without any constant essence (Massey 2005) and Tim Cresswell emphasize a way to understand space (Cresswell 2004). Within art place became an element when the artist was dependent on something unique and unrepeatable that could not be found within the art institutions and hard to commercialize. A consequence following this was e.g. how art moved out from gallery space, and its physical condition, into a space defined by a socioeconomic system. Site became a base for a whole art movement to ground their art practice in, a practice stepping away from aesthetics and moving into something acting with a critical voice (Kwon 2004:11-24). Although site and site-specific practice has not necessarily have to be bound to locationality, as it could be just as much something that connects to a discursive realm. Miwon Kwon emphasis a “semantic slippage between content and site” that occurs when artists choose to work with site in multiple ways. From this point of view site holds the quality of being both a “site of action/intervention” and a “site of effects/reception”, where the former is a site in a physical and literal sense and the later in a discursive one (Kwon 2004:28-29). Site refers to both the situation and the picture and could be used for either purpose, such as to be able to experience the situation of site or letting a song or an artwork framing it.

In dealing with site, Kwon also differs between the mobilization of site specificity and the artist as a travelling vagabond. As art and artists are dependent on art institutions to get their art and their critical voice out there it emerged a need for compromises when it comes to what role site is given in the art work. E.g. artists of gender oriented art had to weigh between the integrity of the art work and the possibility to up keep a conversation of feminist and gender issues an invitation to an art institution offered. A conversation of much importance for the artist but also for the art in itself (Kwon 2004:33-45). When it comes to itinerant artists site takes a significant role of both something literal and discursive as a narrative runs through the artwork rather than it is a physical piece possible to show in an institution. Initially the work derives from a literal site as it simultaneously generates another site of a more discursive character. The art then consists of stories, histories, and political findings entering the art into a realm of what society is about. The narrative is lead by the artist and the process “[that] make up a nomadic narrative requires the artist as a narrator-protagonist” (Kwon 2004:51). As a narrator-protagonist, the artist steps into the
art and the leading of the process is as much part of the artwork as anything else. It is an ephemeral way of working and the artist her or he “endows places with a ‘unique’ distinction” (Kwon 2004:53). Methodologically this means that the artist takes advantage from its own person and by this generates an unrepeatable and unique product, contributing to a more general discussion or conversation. A comment in the debate is here then a site of a discursive character, and a literal site would be where the imperative part of the art project is taking place (Kwon 2004:46-55). As an urban designer, this way of thinking about site allows me to expand the research to a site into something more than just place, using my person when collecting material. It also allows site to include emotions, interpretations and experiences of place.

This reminds me of Rendell’s way of reasoning when she changes from discussing site to discuss field instead, when it comes to architectural research. As she sees site concerning the architectural or urban design product, field expand to a wider range containing humans, processes and with no clear limits of where it ends as it implicates a dimension of learning. The field is to Rendell a concept that doesn’t limit our thinking and helps the architect to include her or him in person (Rendell 2010). But using the term *functional site*, James Meyer also aims to put the process in focus and turns the site into something temporary, threading meanings into an intertextual construction rather than something spatially (Kwon 2004:29). Opposing this, Kwon points out a risk for instability in how we find ourselves and our personal identity, which is defined by our relationship to places, as well as the histories, culture and personal experiences of places. This instability caused by a romanticizing nomadism, ambiguity and the itinerant artist neglects the socioeconomic realities such a lifestyle requires and leads to a discussion about what right and wrong places could be about. The difference between these two kinds of places has though become less and less important as the relevance lays in the transition between them, in us being out of place. Kwon argues for a relational specificity, a concept origin from Homi Bahbha, where site not is a series of places after another but rather a possibility to decrease differences between such things as persons, places and fragments by situate them next to another. A cultural practice of relative specificity contains the advantage of long-term commitments with irreversible social marks (Kwon 2004:156-166). Through my thesis work the words of the poet Robert Frost have followed me, the American saying *Good fences makes good neighbors* is quoted of one of his poems and indicates to me the human perception of place. Why we live together, next to each other and how experiences and emotions come into the practices of borders and bridges between places (Frost 1914).

According to this discussion I attend to use site in this thesis so it includes not only the literal site, architecture and urban form, but also experiences and emotions. This in order to lift into a discussion about interaction between the frame and the situation.
3. Neighborliness – the cultural practices of borders

Thinking of site as both the situation of experiencing it and as the picture, the intellectual and emotional way of understanding site, relates to Kwon’s discussion about site existing in two levels, as action/intervention and site of effects/reception. Turning the discussion from a methodological view on site, and theoretical insights in territories and boundaries of space, into a conversation about neighborliness allows the discussion to get closer to the situation and to see site as action. It is to strip the picture and reveal the site. It starts with two pictures, both interpretations of neighborliness and continues with descriptions of experiences of the situation. Stories from Near West Madison and Stureby are situations of territorialities, identity shaping and boundaries.

Boundaries that define territory function as a clarification of property when law defines territorialities, although, other situations may occur as territories also are defined by social restrictions, behavior and people’s actions. It is a vagueness and unclarity there that gives an ambiguous space open for social interaction (Madanipour 2003). How this ambiguity influence spaces is a discussion held in this thesis where researchers as Ali Madanipour refers to it as a possibility for communication and Alexander Ståhle argues for it being a space where uncertainties occurs causing empty spaces without interaction (Madanipour 2003, Ståhle 2008). In this research I investigate the situations of the boundaries and borders in the suburbs, between neighbors, buildings, people and the practices of the situation.

Grannar

The picture shows a pink painted catalogue single-family house with a wooden façade. To me, there is something that is tremendously Swedish about it, maybe it is the sign showing that the continuing of the street is only for bikes and pedestrians, maybe something else. In 1992 the artist Magnus Bärtås travelled around the south of Sweden taking photographs of one-family houses in rural towns. Developing them in black and white he later colored them by memory for the exhibition Rooms in-between Rooms at Moderna Muséet, Stockholm. The series was called Granne (neighbor) and the artist used his own memory and experiences of these spaces to describe a reconstruction, or a post-construction, where anachronistic details had been added to the original architecture. Bärtås findings were a seeking for roots and history turning somewhere completely different (Bärtås 2012).

When Bärtås investigated neighbors he turned to the suburbs or to the small towns of the more rural parts of Sweden. Arcade Fire, a Canadian band, has through all their albums searched for an understanding of neighborhood and the neighbor. To them the neighbor also is deeply connected to the suburb and to villa areas. Their songs are always a discussion about the social relationships of the suburb and the neighborhood, mixed feelings.
Figure 5: Magnus Bärtås, Granne 1992
towards the destiny of being born and raised into a dull life on the fringe of the world’s happenings.

“This town’s so strange
They built it to change
And while we’re sleeping all the streets, they rearrange

You started a war
That you can’t win
They keep erasing all the streets we grew up in

Now the music divides
Us into tribes
You choose your side I’ll choose my side” (Arcade Fire 2010)

According to Wikipedia neighborhood is something geographical that contains social relations: “Neighborhood is a geographically localized community within a larger city, town or suburb. Neighborhoods are often social communities with considerable face-to-face interaction among members.” (Wikipedia 2012b). This description contains inner city districts just as smaller towns or communities and suburbs and does not differ between morphology and built environment in the same way as above described interpretations of neighbors and neighborhood. Wikipedia describes it as a, to human, almost universal way of organizing ourselves. But only when it comes to urban areas, neighborhoods do not concern inhabitants of rural areas in the same way. The concept is also touching upon what’s convenient to the inhabitant: what is within your neighborhood is always reachable to you since you are in the neighborhood as soon as you step out of the door (Wikipedia 2012). The etymological explanation of Neighbour is connected to the word neah (near) and gebour (dweller) and Neighbourhood, as in the meaning “community of people who live close together”, was first recognized in the 1620’s in England (Harper 2012 a & b).

Turning to the Situation - Stureby 2012-04-04

It is a sunny day when I am on my way south on the green subway line. My friend Johanna has promised me to meet with her grandparents who live in a row house in Stureby since about 40 years. She has reassured me several times that it is ok, even though they both are over 80 years old and today are about to drive to their country house in Backe in the north. I haven’t spend much time in Stureby, although it is not the first time I am visiting this Stockholm suburb. I went here one Sunday in March, one of those days when the sun comes out for the first time after the winter and the city all of a sudden becomes crowded by pedestrians. The Sunday in Stureby was though quite empty of people, a few dog owners, one dad with two children, one old woman and a couple, probably on their way to a
family dinner, were the only people I met on my visit.

This day I am not alone as Johanna made me company and we walk from the subway station to her grandmother and grandfather at Rothuggsvägen. She has told me before about how she usually pass the single family houses, takes a short cut through a small green area and then ends up on the backside of the row house that faces the buildings with rental apartments. Today we walk the exact same way and in the same time we turn on to the path that takes us through the green area she tells me about how often her grandfather reminds her to not take this short cut when it is dark. But as we walk there, the pine trees almost appears to be a bit seductive as the sun shines through their branches.

We knock on the back door and are greeted by two dogs yelling. Johanna’s cousin Jacob is on a visit and with him he brought Cliff and Burton. Tage and Ann-Marie Andersson have lived at Rothuggsvägen since the 1960’s and it is in this house they brought up their five sons even though it is only the youngest one that actually was born here. Before moving here they lived in different apartments in suburbs all close to Stureby: Örby, Bandhagen and Östberga. Now they have 15 grandchildren that visit every now and then, or that Tage and Ann-Marie visit themselves. Tage takes us into the house and show me around their place. The interior is almost original everywhere and has traces of days children and grandchildren have been in the house. Ann-Marie sets the table and Johanna calls for Tage, it is his assignment to make coffee. We talk over sandwiches, cakes and cookies about how it was when they moved in here. It was quite different then, greener areas and not as many blocks with houses. The apartments on the backside of the house are from the 1940’s so they where already built when they moved here. Ann-Marie tells me about a summer’s house a bit from here that was removed soon after they moved in. When Stureby, a suburb of many villas from around 1920’s was about to expand in the mid 20th century, this was no longer a house that fitted in to the new development. Ann-Marie and her neighbor took the opportunity to take care of what was in the garden and brought home currant bushes and Scillies, which by the way still grows in their gardens. The discussion goes on about the nature in Stureby; to Ann-Marie, who was brought up at Kungsholmen in the inner city of Stockholm, it was important to live somewhere more close to nature. Green areas and a quiet life seemed appealing in this neighborhood where the children could run by themselves and have a short and safe way to school. Today their relations to green areas are changed, they walk through them and use them for short cuts when they go to the convenient store but they claim they don’t spend much time in them. Along Örbyvägen, on the border to Bandhagen, run a field of grass, some trees and a sports field. Ann-Marie says it is most often empty of people but is good for short cuts on ones way to the centre of Bandhagen. Back in time there was more activities on the field, when they made ice on it in wintertime and when children were playing, this even though the municipality recently arranged with a simple playground there. There are a lot of green areas in Stureby but Tage and Ann-Marie only know of one park. It is called Vistavarvsparken and was funded by a private person who claimed the land to always be a park and not be built on in his will.
The park is located not too far away from where they live, just by the villas that was built already at that time when the tram passed Stureby from its way from Södermalmstorg in the city to Örby.

Our talk takes new shapes under other topics of conversation, like stories about their grandchildren and old memories from workplaces and Easter celebrations in the country house before we come back to what happens back home in the neighborhood. There are a few neighbors that still live on the street since it was new, and they do have contact, even though this contact seems to be stronger in wintertime when they are out sweeping snow. Then they find opportunities to talk over fences. It is the people on the street that they know, but they only had a block party once. I ask them if they have any contact with the people in the rental apartments on the back of their house, it’s a small walking path there that borders an area with free standing apartment buildings from the 1940’s. Ann-Marie says: No no no. They don’t know anything about the people who live there, is much more of a circulation there and they don’t really have a reason to take contact either. Tage starts to talk about the two grocery stores that used to be run on the corner but unfortunately don’t exist anymore. One of them is turned into a convenience store which seems to have problem to run the business as it is constantly changing owners and how whole families seems to help out and work there. The supply of articles is quite bad and most of their things they have to get somewhere else. As inhabitants of Stureby they are dependent on that they can use their car and run their errands in other suburbs. They tell me about the grocery store Bea in Svedmyra where it is easy to park and how they have to walk to Östberga if they get sendings by post. Tage jokes about Stureby being the same as Backe, which is desolated and without any services. This is a fact that stops them from moving around in their neighborhood, the car have to take them wherever they need. The only thing they actually do around here is to take walks and sometimes Tage go out for a run. They explain though that it was different before, when the children lived with them, and that families in this neighborhood probably act differently than them and have more contact with other families. The contact Ann-Marie and Tage have with their neighbors build on that they have known each other for a long time, around 30-40 years. They also say it makes a difference that the theatre had to close and that the only café that exist in the neighborhood mostly serve construction workers that just visit the area during day time. The people who live here are only here during after office hours.

We are sitting in the living room and the window view is towards the backside and the green area Johanna and me walked through on our way here. Ann-Marie and Tage turn their eyes there every time someone passes on the walking path and are shortly taking notice of whom it is. Maybe it is someone they know? I take the opportunity to ask about what kind of culture they have here, do people say hi to each other on the street? Tage says no, it is not that kind of neighborhood. Only if it is someone they know. We have sit down for almost two hours and talked over some coffee, and Ann-Marie is all of a sudden in a hurry. She hasn’t even packed her bag yet for the trip. Tage and I stay at the table while
the others move around the house and arrange with different things. I ask him if there is something in Stureby that he misses? He says no, he can’t come up with anything, and the subway to the city is of course always there. The city is close. When Ann-Marie comes back I ask her the same thing, her answer is a bit different. She says; you get use to things, and you learn – you live after the preconditions you are given. Johanna and I have to say goodbye but we always come up with new things to talk about. How far did Tage bike to work in Bollmora? And Johanna should get her Easter candy. But then both them and us have to hurry so we say goodbye and leave Rothuggsvägen.

Johanna wants to show me Vistavarvsparken before we leave Stureby so we take on to another route back to the subway. We pass streets of single-family houses and end up by the building where there used to be a post office and a paint shop. Today it is the location for the neighborhoods only coffee shop and a pizza restaurant. After a few minutes walk we get close to the park but have to pass a fence to enter, it is apparently to keep children from running out on the street. There are swings, a liana and a small pond, the playground is integrated into a bigger green area and it has the character of an English park. This day there are no children in the park so we use the swings for a while before heading back to the city.

The Multiplicity of Cultural Practices

The lives of Ann-Marie and Tage constitute cultural practices performed on a local level. They are local actions, local as in that they take place in this suburban neighborhood, and local as their cultural practices probably also is defined by that they live in this particular building, with a certain morphology and ownership creating connections to neighbors with a similar situation. Their connection to other neighbors in the rental apartments, with another kind of ownership and morphology is low. Although Arjen Mulder points out that no one lives in “a single culture any longer: everyone participates in a multiplicity of cultures” Ann-Marie and Tage situate themselves in their particular street and enhance their disconnection to other neighbors than their geographically closest ones (Mulder 2002:8).

Investigating local culture is to face small worlds of everyday actions but as Constantin Petcou notes globalization has made mass culture homogenized, while local cultures of individuals must be looked upon as trans-locality, they all belong to a rhizome creating a network of trans-local culture filled of heterogenized actions (Petcou 2010). Transferring the scene from Stureby to Madison, Wisconsin, local cultural practices are performed with both similarities and differences relating to a common but geographically disconnected western middle class culture. A transition between the Swedish house Bärtås picture and the borders in North American suburb Arcade Fire describes.
Mid-April in Madison

My first day in Madison is a sunny afternoon and I am exhausted after a long flight from Stockholm. I am showed to the office that hosts me and presented to the employees before the executive director takes me out for lunch. It is a beautiful day as she drives me down town Madison at the isthmus between the two lakes Mendota and Monona. During my stay I’m going to rent a room from a woman in her fifties and I call her to see if she is at home and if I can drop off my luggage. She doesn’t answer so we go there anyway to see if she maybe is in her backyard.

The house is empty and no one answers the door. Kristen suggests that I will leave my stuff at the porch and wait at a café on Monroe St. I look at her and she notice that she has to defend her plan: it’s a very safe neighborhood! Kristen’s phone rings and Stephanie announce that she is on her way; just let yourself in, the door is open. The situation is quite weird. I am in central Madison with an executive director I just met and the woman I will live with for the next two weeks, but has yet to meet, tells me to just enter her house while she is doing her grocery shopping. The words of Frost make an echo in my head: this situation offers no fences at all. We went into the house and carried my bags up the stairs to my new room.

Stephanie is a professor at the University of Wisconsin but is also part of several symphonic orchestras and private projects, a situation that requires her to work most of her time awake. She immediately start to tell me all about Madison; how I can bike around the city and what Frank Lloyd Wright houses I should see when I’m here. She serves me beer before she takes her car and goes on to her rehearsal at the opera house. I try to make myself at home in my new place. Next morning I take the bus from Near West to Near East where the office is. It is not so far but it is raining and I feel insecure about how to find my way there. The bus feels like a safe card this day.

In the Neighborhood

A few days in to my Madison stay I have found my bike route to the office, my favorite place for having a coffee in my neighborhood and a nice route for running. While biking through the neighborhood I every afternoon pass the house across the street before parking my bike in Stephanie’s garage. The family is outside their house almost every time, the kids are playing and the mother is picking weeds, planting flowers or just spending time in the garden, we have waved at each other a few times but never introduced ourselves. This day the older daughter, about seven years old, has put her plastic toy chair on the sidewalk and with her bicycle helmet on she give away paintings to passing neighbors. I start to talk to her and she shows me her artwork. The mother approaches us and start to excuse her daughter’s behavior as we start to chat. Her name is Maria and I start to ask her about the
neighborhood, as I am curious and want to learn more, but Maria is faster than me. She is also curious about what a Swedish student does in Madison. I explain my project to her and she smiles, she loves this neighborhood. Maria has lived in tons of different places before coming back to the same neighborhood as she was born and raised in. Some of them were even in Europe, but when starting a family she knew that this was the place she wanted to be, I knew I wanted to let my kids have what I had. Marias daughter who gave me her painting is named Tia and she now interrupts. She wants to know what part of Madison Sweden is and how long it takes to go there. Maria corrects her and says it is very far away, it takes many hours to go there. How long time away is Sweden then? How far away, Maria corrects once again. Tia looks confused, distance is sometimes very abstract, and for a seven years old hard to grasp. I have to leave and Maria has to continue her work in the garden.

From that day we small talk a bit every time I come home from the office until one day when Maria invites me into their house for a talk over some refreshments. This day Tia is crying as she fell on the plastic vehicle they played with on the sidewalk, but it’s a Friday night and anyway time to go inside for dinner. Maria and I sit down in the living room, where there are a few really soft and comfortable sofas, and Tia is running around looking for noodles and playing with her guinea pig. We start to talk a bit more detailed about the neighborhood and how they spend time here. I have taken notice to all time the family spends outside their house in the garden and Maria confirms that she loves to garden what grows in their backyard to take care of her plants. I just learned about the terrace, the land strip between the sidewalk and the street that is publicly owned but of maintenance responsibility of the house owners, and ask her if she grows anything on hers. Maria tells me she has so many plants and her garden is staring to become limited, so when she needs to split plants she just put them there. Some neighbors have much serious plans for their piece of the terrace and dig them out to create rain gardens. By planting native plants they catch the rain and absorbs runoffs and clean the water before it reaches the lakes, a set up that state a sustainable lifestyle and consideration for nature. Maria has much more casual plans for her piece but Tia jumps into the discussion and tells me about her plans instead. She grows, in collaboration with Maria, purple flowers she says. Maria develops and tells me about the part of the garden they have together, they grow daisies, asters and some other flowers, and yes, they are purple. Spending a lot of time in the garden and on the terrace it is easy to meet with neighbors, especially if they also have kids.

Maria is, as mentioned, born and raised in this neighborhood and some of her best friends also live around here, like Rachel a few houses down the street. Their kids play a lot and often when everybody is out on the street or in their gardens all neighbors meet for spontaneous dinner parties and potlucks. Someone start to make spontaneous plans and the rumor spread around the block as more and more neighbors get together. Maria enjoys this way of living, in a neighborhood where most have college education and maybe work as teachers or professors and share a liberal view on politics and life. She describes it as people have a common set of values and share the same lifestyle, it is easy to make friends.
Figure 3: the terrace
The kids can play safely, have a lot of friends and good schools around. Across Monroe St. is Wingra park where there is a zoo, they are surrounded by all kinds of recreation. But still they spend most of their free time in their garden and on the sidewalk. Sometimes when they put the sprinklers on the kids run through them, and this very day they made a train of toy vehicles and tagged them to a bike for fun. Maria talks very positive about the area and when I comment on that she laughs, her friends living in other parts of the city has started to bully her a bit about that. She is, according to them, always referring to her neighborhood and how nice it is. But then it is also a very conscious choice from her side to live here, in a place where they have everything, retail, groceries and restaurants but also security and strong social network. Since they moved here eight years ago, they haven’t changed their minds at all.

**Signs From the Front Porch**

In opposite to Maria, Stephanie is not from the neighborhood but moved here from her home city San Francisco when she got her job at the university. She is also not part of the neighborhood in the same way as Maria and her family. Maybe it is because her kids moved away from home but she assures she didn’t have much time over for taking care of her garden or socializing on the street when they were young either. Her father had to come from San Francisco for six month a time to take care of the kids and the household so she could continue her job in peace. It became his role to take care of the garden and since he past away a few years ago I didn’t get a chance to learn more about his experiences from living there. This also confirms my observations, Stephanie’s garden is nice and cozy but not well maintained at all. And even if she has a big house with several porches and balconies she hardly ever uses them as her working schedule not really allow that.

Stephanie and Maria know each other, but not in that sense that they spend time together. Maria tells me how she can hear Stephanie play her instruments in the summer and how the kids sometimes played with her dog while it still was alive. But except from saying hi to each other at the street they just know each other by their names. It is obvious that Stephanie’s relation to the neighborhood is much different from Maria’s. The reasons are of the same character; it is safe and friendly, it is close to down town and services and there is recreation and restaurants a short walk away. Stephanie goes back and forth between her home and her jobs during the day and run her errands with her car on her way from or to meetings. Even though they are not friends, Maria can tell Stephanie is a liberal and progressive intellectual, just as many others in Madison. I got this confirmed one night when my relative drives me home. He says: *Oh, I can see your host has a Recall Walker sign in her garden!* And yes, there is a Recall Walker sign at the corner spot of her garden but I don’t know what the sign means nor do I know what it means that he comments on it, I can’t tell by his voice. The only thing I know is that it regards political standpoints in some sense. My relative explains to me, the current governor of Wisconsin, republican Walker, was as
soon he got elected in 2010 involved in, and the reason of many important political decisions that most inhabitants of Madison considered as injuring to the city and to the state. People in Madison constantly describe themselves as liberal inhabitants of a city becoming a political and cultural island in Wisconsin as most other parts are of much more conservative values than Madison. One example of what Walker did was returning funding of a fast train to Milwaukee to the government for ideological reasons. This lead to serious demonstrations and occupations and two years later they are still going on down town Madison. The issue is complicated and I have to ask him, does this mean she is a republican or democrat? He laughs and answers me that she is definitely a democrat. Later I bring up this issue with Stephanie and she explains a bit more; everyone got really engaged in the demonstrations and she finds me a souvenir from her closet. It is a blue t-shirt with a print of the outlines of Wisconsin and with the text Solidarity on the location of Madison. She gives it to me and adds that I can bring the Recall Walker sign with me home, it would make a really great memory of the people in Madison.

From this day I take notice to the political signs in every other garden, and just as if they were display windows I start to acknowledge the political engagement of the inhabitants of Madison. After I learned about the political signs I also started to take notice of another kind of ‘sign’. They are wooden constructions, looking like small houses with a glass door anyone passing can open. Kristen, the executive director at Sustain Dane, tells me they are called Little Free Library and contain books placed by anyone who feels for it or taken by anyone who would like to have them. She and her neighbor Rachel, also a co-worker at Sustain Dane, bought one together for their neighborhood for 350 USD from the organization that runs the project. The aim of the mini libraries is to enhance community life and looking in to their webpage the organization describes itself as exploring the benefits of green practices (Little Free Library 2012). Kristen and Rachel are excited about it, and happy to have contributed to the neighborhood with something like this. And on the staff meeting that day, Phil brings a pile of books to put in the one outside the office; it looked a bit empty he said.

Meetings in a Ditch

It is a beautiful Saturday morning in Madison when I met John while biking in to the city centre. John is born and raised in Madison but lived around Wisconsin, Minnesota and Michigan before he ended back in Madison at the point when he and his wife started a family. Through Madison Near West runs a bike path called the commuter path and follows the old railway and John and his neighbors were weeding by the path as I stop and started to talk to him. The green land between the path and their gardens is publicly owned but is covered with unwished weed threatening their own gardens so they all make an effort to get rid of it. Actually John just got to know the ladies working across the path as they are gathered friends of the owners of those two houses.
John tells me he is happy to work in the ditch even though it is not his garden, he takes every chance he gets to work outside. And he doesn’t want the garlic mustard to come in to his domains, as it is a hard work to get rid of it. He points at the poles that mark out his property, it starts about four meters in from the bicycle path and then he shows me with his hand what house that is his. It’s the brick house with solar panels on the roof. John gives me the impression that he aims for a sustainable lifestyle and when I tell him that I am from Stockholm he immediately shines up and says, *I love Stockholm, it is such a nice city.* He has never been to Stockholm though he explains; he has just heard that it is a good city, in both a social and green aspect. That’s why he moved back to Madison, it’s the only choice in this area if you want to have a progressive lifestyle. He doesn’t even have to own a car here, he has the bike path right behind his backyard and on the front of the house there is a bus stop. I am surprised by this claiming as I so far during my Madison stay have understood that it is, compared to Stockholm, quite hard to manage without one so I ask him once more to confirm that he really doesn’t own a car, it seems very unusual, even if it is just used for grocery shopping or special occasions. And that’s true, his wife owns one that she uses more often, but still, they are very little dependent on that kind of transportation he claims. The kids are in school close to their house and since he and his wife are working down town they have everything close. My bike and me are parked right in the middle of the path and John is standing in the ditch, joggers and people biking down town are constantly passing us while we talk. The sun is warm and in the ditch on the other side are three older ladies laying on their knees picking garlic mustard. I ask John if they usually hang out and he says they don’t. But this kind of place is good for being social, in the ditch he can chat with older ladies, say hi to passing neighbors or meet people like me. He enjoys this environment. We talk a little bit more about Stockholm and I say that this kind of path doesn’t really exist there; it is like a highway for bicycles and joggers. John agrees and says it is one of the most essential things about this neighborhood, after the railway was transformed into a bike path the value of property was raised. This site became attractive but also a node for transportation and flow of people John tell me.

John goes on chatting about small things around us. He shows me his garden, they already grow a lot of flowers and some vegetables but they also have plans for more advanced things like grapes and strawberries on the part that connects to the bike path. John also tells me about a trend going on in Madison; since most people live in free standing houses with gardens they are popular to use for all kinds of local production and now more and more people have even got their own chickens. He point at one of the corners in the garden and tells me that they have plans for maybe two or three chickens here; in the future they will have their own egg production and chickens running around their plot. He is very excited about this project and hope it can be realized during this summer, it is good for the children to be able to be close to animals and the eggs will probably taste much better than those they buy from the grocery store.
The Cultural Practices of Open Space

When looking into cultural practices as those of John, Stephanie, Maria, Ann-Marie and Tage, it becomes an investigation on a local scale. But what is local is not only a matter of the same, cultural practices are parts of, and links creating a network that creates a bigger picture than only that of the ditch, terrace or the porch. As Petcou notes, globalization is part of creating a homogeneous society, but parallel to this are local culture practiced and part of creating a heterogeneous rhizome of different identities, a trans-local scale working in contrast to a global one (Petcou 2010). Fiona Woods stress in-between areas as a part of a trans-local culture; they are sites of production as in-betweens are sites where people can find identification in, and act upon possibilities for changes in their life worlds. Woods also confirms how in-between areas function as linkage, creating networks rather than communities, and these linkages are produced by cultural practices (Woods 2010).

This means that the cultural practices of John weeding the ditch while communicating with his neighbors and through-passers, Maria’s children playing on the terrace, Ann-Marie and Tage sweeping snow or Stephanie communicating political statements are all part of constructing a trans-local culture, individuals acting upon local conditions but together part of the rhizome of cultural biodiversity (Petcou 2010).

So as stated earlier in this text, are cultural practices producing networks; social, global, ecological and virtual networks. Who ever produces space is intertwined in these networks (Bauman 1997). As I, and others, in this text have experienced these cultural practices of neighborliness, I also observed and produced them. Finding networks and being part of networks, in Madison and in Stureby, became a further investigation of what territorialities that exist and what happens on the borders between them. Good fences make good neighbors is a phrasal outcome of peoples experiences of these networks; how people relate to each other and how interactions are made through the urban fabric.
4. Good fences make good neighbors – open space, territories and the borders between them

“We keep the wall between us as we go.  
To each the boulders that have fallen to each.  
There where it is we do not need the wall:  
He is all pine and I am apple orchard.  
My apple trees will never get across  
And eat the cones under his pines, I tell him.  
He only says, ‘Good fences make good neighbors’. ” (Frost 1914)

When the decision was taken that I was going to Madison I was told there is an American saying Good fences make good neighbors. I tracked it down to a poem by Robert Frost, who in 1914 questioned our needs for individualism, to be private and for territorialization (Frost 1914). Fences are, when discussing territoriality, meant to be a clarification of property in order to not live in an “undistinguishable common space”. Even though the clearest distinction is within the law, in practice ambiguity occurs as property is used and handle in all kinds of ways and for all kinds of purposes (Madanipour 2003:66 ff.). I will here argue for how territorialities works as a producer of connections and communication and the research of Ali Madanipour, researcher on urban space, agencies for urban change etc. at Newcastle University, UK, will be a base. For an argumentation against this I will use Alexander Ståhle, a landscape architect and researcher at Royal Institute of Technology, to keep a discussion between them in order to strengthen the argumentation of Madanipour.

Ståhle argues for an urban development where there is room for densification as well as more green areas using space syntax methods. In Compact Sprawl, Ståhle explores territory and its ambiguity and ambivalence, and turns back to the modern planning of the suburbs from mid-20th century. He means these suburbs, i.e. neighborhoods built in the 50’s, leave a lot of land to become in-betweens, because of what maybe can be unconscious planning, bits of nature, areas between highways, vacant lots and so on. These spaces could be called margins as social control is less than in other public, or open spaces, and are therefore used by minorities and people with alternative lifestyles that acts outside societal presence. But Ståhle also claims there is another type of space, spaces created from changes in society through time, e.g. they have become something else than what they were from the beginning. Ståhle chose to call them ambiterritory as they “exist in two worlds like, ambiguity and ambivalence, referring to something that affects both sides and primarily to vagueness and uncertainty”, it is according to Ståhle a no-man’s-land (Ståhle 2008:124). There is an uncertainty about open space that both gives freedom and confusion: freedom in that sense that marginal open space lack territorial control, and confusion in that sense that in ambiterritorial open space is places there are “fuzzy and unclear situations between territorialities” (Ståhle 2008:124-125). Open space is according to Ståhle understood
as an area that you could enter, which has no buildings or other constructions and is build-
able. Streets, paths, roads and water are therefore excluded in this meaning. Open space
could either be an artifact or nature and according to Ståhle a non-artifact is defined by
saved vegetation and cliffs where an artifact, e.g. space between buildings, is the reverse
and affected by humans (Ståhle 2005:14-15). Madanipour, as well as Ståhle, discusses ter-
ritoriality and the interface between private and public realms. Madanipour means that
“boundary is indeed a site of communication and interface between” the two different realms
and Ståhle points out how “entrances are the most fundamental interface between the interior
space (private) and exterior space (public)”. This is where movement happens and becomes an
interaction between human actants and non-human actants (Madanipour 2003:63, Ståhle
2008:428). Territorialization is thereby a way to understand how the physical environment
relates to the behavior of humans and vice versa (Madanipour 2003:39-70). In this thesis
focus lays on open space as green areas, e.g. saved vegetation, bits of nature, private gar-
dens, public parks etc. especially those defined by Ståhle as artifacts. The discussion of
territoriality will help to understand how boundaries and borders affect human life. When
understanding everyday life as actions and movements in, and over different territories it
becomes important to acknowledge different understandings of territoriality. As Ståhle
provides us with research following the contemporary planning ideal, e.g. densification
and 19th century block grid structure, Madanipour discusses why boundaries between
territories shape social relations and opens up for interactions between different spaces,
spheres and places of the city.

Defining Territoriality

Territoriality is a concept stuffed with interpretations, definitions and explanations. Through
history this has lead to misunderstandings and conflicts; does it regard property
lines and geographical explanations? Is it about home range and zoology? Or is it about
occupation of land? It is first in the 1970’s that it starts to become a concept, dealing with
social aspects of society and about identity, which means focus is put on feelings towards
spaces and personification of territory as well as defense, active control and occupation of
space. Mattias Kärrholm divides the concept of territoriality into three different themes,
territoriality as behavior, territoriality as societal phenomenon and territoriality as coding,
in order to try to gather the same concept under one roof (Kärrholm 2004). This thesis con-
cern territoriality less as its earlier employments such as from agricultural societies, and
more about the individual perception of such and how this regards implementations as
territory as societal phenomenon and coding. All though issues of ownership regards how
researchers such as Ståhle use territoriality as a concept and argument for a more clear
urban structure, postmodern philosophers such as Gilles Guattari claim that territories
are in constant change and could therefore never be static (Kärrholm 2004).
Territoriality derives from a distinction of private and public as the private sphere is under control of the individual and is not reached by the public; it is not able to observe for the public. Even if most of public sphere happens in private spaces it can stretch out to spaces in public. Examples are when someone is reading in a public park or when in public transport listening to their mp3 player, there is a clear private mood but the space is public and shared with strangers. To be disturbed then would be an intrusion of the private sphere but not to break the law, therefore the distinction of a private territory differs between law and practice. Privacy could also be distinct from public by the individuals right to not share certain information; the legal definition of privacy becomes clearer but regards space less then in the latter understanding of the concept. If these concepts are put in the context of space there is clearly an unclarity where the border goes between private and public. How to consider private space is also a matter of an ideological understanding, for some this is looked upon as a means of freedom of choice, while public space stands for surveillance and control from a higher hierarchy level (Madanipour 2003). Ståhle offers another perspective on the definition of public and private territory. In terms of use he sees it as a matter of mobility. As use of public territory is associated with mobility, the use of private territory is associated with occupancy. To further discuss how public territory is defined Ståhle uses Simmel; “the stranger.../no owner of soil” is a description of how public life appears; meetings between strangers. The higher density of meetings between strangers, the more a space is perceived as public as the social control is low. The opposite goes for private space where social control is high, as the flow of strangers is low. Ståhle enhance the street as a public space and the entrances to the street as interfaces between the private and public, but also include parks and their pathways in this example of how a space becomes public by their “multiplicity of users and density of movers of strangers”. Bill Hillier also emphasizes the variable of usage of space:

“Interiors tend to define more of an ideological space, in the sense of a fixed system of categories and relations that are continually reaffirmed by use, whereas exteriors [open space] define a transactional or even political space, in that it construct a more fluid system of encounters and avoidances which is constantly re-negotiated by use” (quoted in Ståhle 2008:128-129).

What I find is that the difference between private and public territory is in other words related to the level of control and territory is also a way of controlling space and organize activities, form behavior, shape identities and create distinctiveness. Madanipour finds three levels of territoriality, moving from a private character to a public one. A primary territory is one that is more or less occupied on a permanent basis. Such could be a home or an office desk that the occupant thinks him- or herself of as an owner of. The control of the territory is of the occupant and any kind of intrusion would be a problem to this person. The second territory is a space that is not considered as owned by the occupant but is frequently used by this person, e.g. a classroom where there is a flow of people, a flow that is still limited to a group of people. The control of this kind of territory is not of the individual
but of the group and is in that sense moderate. The third territory is on a public level and the level of control is low. This could be a square, park, beach or other space that is used by a high number of people. Any level of occupancy is only of temporary character and the individual is just one by many others occupying this space. This leveling of territory shows that it’s not only about law and legal agreements, it is also about perception, belonging and to find identity within areas of occupation (Madanipour 2003).

What level of control, or to what extent a territory is occupied helps to describe the difference between juridical and social territories, sometimes they collide and sometimes they strengthen each other. The difference is of importance for social relations and human life and following paragraph will describe how and why this is.

Communicating Through Boundaries

Changing the discussion from territory to property transport the issue into a discussion about law but also about ideology. What differs nature from property? Private property from common resources? John Locke defined in the seventeenth century nature to be common and property to derive from human labor on common nature, a reasoning that makes value a factor differing nature from property (Locke 1921). Without labor, nature wouldn’t be worth anything, and being worth anything transform a space from nature to property. Human have a natural right to property just as he or she has a natural right to labor. In opposition to Locke, Rousseau argued for private property as a root for inequality. This argument came from Rousseau’s belief in the society’s authority to individuals right to private property: “there would be neither strength in the social bond nor effective force in the exercise of sovereignty” if society gets subordinate to private property (quoted in Madanipour 2003:57). Hegel had though another view on role of private property in society. He argued for the need of the individual to express her- or himself and how private property is a means for an embodiment of the individual’s personal will. Private property is then an institution for self-expression through which the individual relate to the world (Hegel 1967). Although Locke’s calling for life, liberty and property inspired Thomas Jefferson to, in the Declaration of Independence from 1776, put the phrase “life, liberty and pursuit of happiness” as a promise to all Americans that private property always should be made priority to public land; “whoever owns the soil owns all the way to heaven and all the way to the depths”. It is stating Man as in control of land but also stating an ideological path for the development of a country where private property is of a high value and in it self an aim for all settlers, from 18th century till today’s immigrants (quoted in H.M. Jacobs 2005:22-4).

So if the city is built on different realms, properties and territories, and if society is based on the distinction between what is private and public, boundaries are a way of subdividing the city. These boundaries, between different realms, must constantly change in a dynamic way for a living city. Social relations are shaped through boundaries, as they are
an *interface* between the different realms, a creator of communication. Examples are a front porch of a house, built for interaction between a private and public realm, and colonnades of a square, which is a fading from public to private. These boundaries are interfaces between the different realms of the city and means for an interaction shaping identities and generating cultural processes (Madanipour 2003). This claim could be compared to the way *The Walkable City* works with connections, walkability and urban life. But whilst the comprehensive plan uses urban structure to accomplish this, the boundaries Madanipour suggests ask for other kinds of interactions using interfaces to generate processes. One example of an interface overlapping boundaries is explained as the terrace by Harvey Jacobs, University of Wisconsin, May 20, 2012. As a researcher on property ownership and territoriality he describes the ownerships and cultural rules of the sidewalk and the small strip of grass that runs between the houses and the street in all areas. The street is publicly owned, and so is the land all up to about 20 centimeters in to the private garden. This to keep it easy if the city would need to expand the street of some reason, although this land strip, the terrace, is the responsibility for the house owner to maintain. In some cases the winter maintenance is even of his or her responsibility. The house owner is allowed to grow plants and flowers but not to put up signs with political messages (H.M. Jacobs 2012). This is a phenomenon where private and public spheres are overlapping and where law meets with social relations in an ambiguous territory.

Therefore, this thesis suggests that boundaries, as such, become something that, for some purposes, we should strive for as they encourage positive encounters. An ambiguous boundary, such as a porch, is helpful, but clear and well-defined boundaries such as walls create arid places without encouraging any interaction at all. Boundaries could thereby function as “a means of communication”. Ambiguity is then a tool for how social relations are shaped in place. If the boundary then is a space of ambiguity between public and private, law becomes hard to consider, as property boundaries not are the same as social boundaries (Madanipour 2003). Next part of the chapter will discuss how Ståhle, as a researcher in the local context of Stockholm, instead advocates for clarification of territory through urban structure.

**Urban Structure as a Clarification of Territory**

Ståhle says a sustainable urban development should be reached through a better-connected city, which according to Ståhle is reached through densification (Ståhle 2005, 2008). This statement is not unique and can be seen in many other parts of planning policy than just his research. The comprehensive plan *The Walkable City* is one of them, but newspapers also follow up on this kind of argumentation for use of open space. In October 2011 Dagens Nyheter published an article about densification and park development in Stockholm. According to Boverket and Folkhälsoinstitutet it is recommended that every inhabitant have a maximum of 300 meters to a park, which Kristina Alvendal, politician in charge,
wants to implement in Stockholm (Sundström 2011). Except from Alvendal also Ståhle is interviewed. As a researcher on densification and greenery Ståhle claims there is a difference in how parks and green areas should be understood, and the difference lays in the user value and attractiveness.

“The inhabitants of Östermalm believe that they have an easier access to parks and recreational areas than the inhabitants in the green area Högdalen. A park is so much more than the trees that grows there.” (Ståhle 2005)

The concept of use value is in Ståhle’s research connected to human action an the performance of things, to him it only regards direct use value which is the action of humans and to be on a site as an opposite to indirect use value that refers to passive actions and use of space, e.g. looking at the site from a view. The concept of open space efficiency is in Ståhle’s research a correlation between the accessibility to open space and the quantity of open space within 1000 meters. This concept is strongly related to spatial distribution of space and the urban structure (Ståhle 2008).

Ståhle build his research upon the presumption that a dense city is a better city, a planning stance common in most part of western world and is also seen in Madison planning policy and practice. It gives the benefit of more shops and restaurants, fewer cars, more businesses, more creative people with a result of high creativity and knowledge (Hoffman 2012, Ritzén 2011). In his thesis he develops this argumentation meaning that the suburbs are in much need for densification. Ståhle define densification as a basic process, a starting point for planning practice where open space in different ways is an instrument. Ståhle’s general approach to the city corresponds to his conclusions; the traditional inner city blocks allow an equal distributed system of parks and greenery with a high efficiency (Ståhle 2005). Arguments like these for sustainability and connections are of course hard to not agree with, it seems stupid to not aim for such an urban development, but one other argument I find in Ståhle’s research is that densification should be used as a clarification of territory. He finds that parks in a block grid structured area have a strong correlation between direct user values and the number of visitors. A correlation that was not found in parks of the same size in suburbs built in the 50’s, a result Ståhle connects to their higher number of ambiterritories. This is one of the results Ståhle uses to argue for ambiterritories being an object for densification. To reach a clarification of space by densification, and then achieve the more sustainable and connected city, Ståhle state urban form as a tool. The findings of the research investigation confirms his former findings; inhabitants of suburbs built in the 50’s perceived themselves to have less accessibility to parks and nature compared to inhabitants of block grid structured neighborhoods. Ståhle claims that block grid structures, such as Östermalm in Stockholm, has a high integration of space and that is the reason why the inhabitants of such a neighborhood perceive a proximity and flow to all functions of a city. In the suburbs from the 50’s can single parts of the neighborhood have a spatial integration but it seldom regards the whole neighborhood. The spatial structure of these
suburbs, a separation of functions, creates a spatial separation and e.g. green areas end up located outside people’s everyday movement patterns. Ståhle therefore state and promote an integration of space, as when green areas are easy to find, the number of visitors is optimized. The same goes for open space efficiency, a concept the research finds most applicable on Östermalm and its esplanade system. One main argument in his research is that the morphology of the 19th century is preferable to the morphology characteristic to the mid-20th century.

My understanding of this is that through an integrated system, i.e. block grid structures, lines of sights and open space efficiency Ståhle claims that the fuzziness and the unclarities that ambiterritories offer is reduced and direct use value is increased. What is not included in this is the indirect use value i.e. the knowledge of being close to an open (green) area, the view of the same, biodiversity etc. The methodology used is quantitative with presented numbers of what is attractive. This gives a research placing itself in a postmodern context but with a positivismization of its outlines, which I find problematic as he thereby doesn’t acknowledge the value of social and cultural aspects. He also implicates a simplification of those processes and captures the attention of media since his research confirms a general discourse formulated by running politicians such as Alvendal.

So when Madanipour promote a situation of borders as interfaces between different territories, blurring up territorial restrictions and predefined restrictions of space, Ståhle argues for a densification, efficient distribution of space and clarification of ambiterritories to open up for higher numbers of flows and lessen confusions and no-mans-lands in public space. To implicate these two approaches to territoriality would give quite different result when it comes to urban development where I suggest Madanipour stands for an argumentation with room for a wider range of aspects of urbanity than Ståhle has.

To Use Walking as a Connector of Open Space

Stockholm’s comprehensive plan *The Walkable City* is emphasizing urban structure as an answer to the planning issues Stockholm is facing. Previous chapter was a discussion about how open space should be treated when facing densification, and how territoriality works when it comes to human interactions and social relations. I look upon walkability in the frame of the comprehensive plan, as a metaphor for the interactions Stockholm wants to achieve through changes in urban structure.

Through history to walk is the simplest way for transportation, as it needs no further equipment. But the activity of walking differs in relation to what context it is done, connected to nature and landscape walking is for example mostly about recreation, sports- and health activities. In an urban context it is more connected to transportation and to move between different programmes (Nicholson 2008, Wikipedia 2012a). Walking as leisure is
also connected to the word flâneur when it comes to the urban context. Then the meaning changes from being about transportation towards something more connected to lifestyle. Charles Baudelaire, the French 19th century poet, developed this concept to “a person who walks the city in order to experience it” and have become a symbol for something urban and modern. A flâneur is something that belongs to an urban lifestyle (Berman 1981).

Looking at how contemporary urban planning and design is conducted in Stockholm you see ambitious projects with sustainability aims and visions of an urban life with lively activities on the streets. During my studies in Stockholm I have also acknowledge anxious and restless attempts to obstruct the results of a modernist way of planning, something that today is considered by some as a failure and the creation of an injured city. One example is how Kristina Alvendal described the structure of Stockholm suburbs using words such as barriers, empty space, failure etc. in a debate article in Svenska Dagbladet (Alvendal 2008). Today’s reaction to this is to create dense city environments with what necessary content needed to achieve an urban life (Alvendal 2008, Stockholm stad 2010 etc). The Walkable City is a response from the municipality, a comprehensive plan where this is described. How can the city be more reliable on walkability? How can Stockholm develop polycentric to encourage cluster creations with more housing and workplaces? The concept includes these questions but is also dealing with how to decrease car traffic and create efficient environments for businesses, sports, culture and the jig-saw-puzzle of life stressed families of the 21st century do. To walk is used as a metaphor for this aim to achieve urban life: a way to create connections, meeting places, movements between sites and a continuation of site (Stockholm stad 2010). Alvendal claims that the dense shape of the city is the most attractive urban environment we know of today. Therefore we need to create a supply responding to the demand by building a much more dense city. By using the term walkable Alvendal refers to a dense urban environment where the citizens should be able to continuously walk through the city (Alvendal 2008, Stockholm stad 2010).

But interactions, connections and urban life are not only about urban structure, which this thesis is stressing. Bringing in other variables into open space, e.g. acknowledging processes brings this thesis into a discussion about how to see beyond urban structure and how to include social relations. While The Walkable City uses the practice of walking as a metaphor for urban life Michel De Certeau uses walking as an image for those unconscious actions that constitute everyday life of humans. Standing on the top of World Trade Centre in New York City De Certeau looks down at the activities below him and establish the ideas of those actions as tactics; the practices of the city are an uncontrolled network where the people have no knowledge of why they act like they do, or maybe not even that they act, it is just repetitive actions. De Certeau puts the tactics in opposition to strategies; they are plans and regulations by governmental and other authorities, in other words the opposite to everyday life as in unconscious and repetitive actions (De Certeau 1984). His use of the concept tactics are related to in this thesis’s earlier discussions of cultural practices as in global rhizomes and multiplicity of cultures (Petcou 2010, Mulder 2002) and the point
is that it is on the streets that this is actually happening. This is where people read and write the city and while this is happening the city is of constant change as the city is nothing like a holistic term but a conglomeration of properties (De Certeau 1984).

**Open Space as a Field of Action**

As open space is discussed in this thesis as open areas in-between not only the relation between private and public is of interest, it is also about the relation between urbanism and landscape. The role of green and nature differs between these two concepts and depending on the context they contribute with different values. By tradition urbanism and landscape has been separated without any real reasons to integrate. In architecture and urban design, landscape is a matter of bourgeois aesthetics, and is therefore added to the scene as something picturesque. Landscape/architecture is a dichotomy that excludes the one thing from the other where architects tend to not see the capacity of landscape. Landscape urbanist James Corner oppose this by arguing for a higher integration of space. As the number of people living in urban areas is constantly growing which means that in areas of megapoles, for example, it becomes less and less important to differ between landscape and urbanity.

Thinking of both landscape and cityscape as a surface instead of sites introduces the idea of our living environment as something else. Surface doesn’t limit our mindsets into what is what but instead opens up for possibilities where the functions of nature can be brought in to the urban landscape and where urbanity does not exclude important functions such as bio-diversity (Corner 2006).

Corner claims landscape urbanism offers ways for different professions to meet for a new synthetic art, “a spatio-material practice able to bridge scale and scope with critical insights and imaginative depth.” (Corner 2006:28). Corner develops how to lead way to practice what is quoted above by using the time variable, finding the city as a field of action and using the imaginary. He points out how it is not the urban form or the physical structure itself that generate social relations, rather it is urban processes such as capital accumulation, deregulation, globalization, environmental protection etc. that shapes urban relationships. A statement that brings in the time perspective and sets focus on the process itself and also differs to Ståhle’s claims about how spatial structure is of most importance for flows (social relations). Corner means the object quality of space becomes less and less important on the behalf of the systems that condition and density of urban form. For planners and architects this implicates a way of working considering the process rather then the result. As David Harvey argues it is a matter of “more socially just, politically emancipatory, and ecological sane mix(es) of spatio-temporal production processes”, how things works in space and time becomes an important part of urban design. The aim becomes a terra fluxus, a metropolis where
“this work must necessarily view the entire metropolis as a living arena of processes and exchanges over time, allowing new forces and relationships to prepare the ground for new activities and patterns of occupancy.” (Corner 2006:30)

If urban landscape is a field of action, surface is described by Corner as a horizontal phenomenon. This point of view makes it possible to shift between scales and see everything horizontal in the urban landscape as a surface; roofs, streets, sidewalks and parks but also the whole infrastructural system. Corner concludes that this makes way for seeing surface as urban infrastructure e.g. instead of, like architecture do, consuming the potential of the site, urban infrastructure holds possibilities and potentials to make room for uncertainties. The environment is therefore no longer a designed object but “elements that sets in motion a diverse network of interaction.” (Corner 2006).

Corner also means there is an essential importance in the imaginary. The collective imagination, derived from the experiences of the material world, must be the motivation for the designers’ quest in his or hers practice.

“Public space in the city must surely be more than mere token compensation or vessels for this generic activity called ‘recreation’. Public spaces are firstly the containers of collective memory and desire, and secondly they are places for geographic and social imagination to extend new relationships and sets of possibility. Materiality, representation and imagination are not separate worlds; political change through practices of place construction owes as much to the representational and symbolic realms as to material activities. And so it seems landscape urbanism is first and last an imaginative project, a speculative thickening of the world of possibilities.” (Corner 2006:32)

So what Corner thinks landscape urbanism offers to the urban designer is ways of melting together diagrams and strategies and to see the relationship between this and that what is tactile and poetic. When engaging new ecologies of future metropolises the dialectics between urban lifestyle and what is traditionally nature must be pay attention to just as much as it also regards the processes and its multiplicity (Corner 2006). Putting the field of action in a discussion emphasizing Madanipour’s notion that interfaces are a result of overlaps of territorialities shows there are possibilities to expand territories even further. In this thesis it is stressed as a way of putting interfaces together to a field where actions, such as social relations, occur. How cultural practices are part of the communication over borders that interfaces mean is a clue to how issues of densification and urban development can be performed. Part of this is the discussion about in betweens and what happens when the cultural practices of inhabitants of neighborhoods, as the once I met with, glue together into an urban environment produced by, and for the people who live in it.
5. To exist between frames

The difference between occupancy and flow is not only, as most often referred to (here Madanipour 2003, Ståhle 2008), the feeling of inhabiting place. It is about the way communication and connections are made. From the argumentation in this thesis the conclusion can be drawn that it is communication over borders, across territories and the ambiguity between them that impact people’s ability to connect to their own identities and to relate to an everyday life. This opposing the meaning of connections as I understand them here; it is a way of creating mobility and action of people through the urban environment instead of people’s actions within the urban environment, it is a movement of people floating by. The conclusion finds its importance when cities are subjects to urban development, expansion and densification. This as the distinction between through and within is fine, but of matter to how in-between areas are considered. I see this distinction as a term for the discussion regarding how to solve contemporary urban issues: sustainable infrastructure. A general discourse asking for denser cities is brought up in The Walkable City as well as in planning policies in Madison, but also in most other western cities.

With the aim of investigating in-between areas and how they are part of constructing the urban environment I have observed and performed cultural practices in Stureby and in Madison. It has been a travel between sites, where I have been situated in a number of small worlds, with the possibility to enter in and out of those events that sometimes are referred to as everyday life. They are although actions of what creates an urban landscape, the field and the site, and to travel is to put them next to each other and to find their relationality (Corner 2006, Kwon 2004). This relationality is found through me traveling between sites and expanding these small worlds into a context of contemporary thinking about spaces in-between, suburbs, densification and urban development. This thesis is telling the story about these relational places, a story that lets them exist next to each other. I will through these final paragraphs try to close this thesis by answering the asked questions in the introduction.

In the introduction I raise the question of interfaces and what role they take while creating communication over boarders. Through the actions of people I have showed how interfaces are means of communication when ambiguity occurs in the urban environment. Interfaces produce a space for political messages and ways to form identity, as when Stephanie put up her sign in the front yard. It is an act for creating social relations as when John is weeding his ditch and Ann-Marie and Tage are sweeping snow and it is an act of relating to the place it self as when Maria consciously moved back to where she grow up and to where people are of the same cultural and socio-economic preferences as her. The ambiguity of borders is constituted by social and legal regulations, as stressed by Madanipour. The ambiguity is because of, but also a reason to social interactions and spill-overs in cultural practices.
It is here important to differ between communication and connection, although they are two concepts intertwined with each other are they are also pointing to different things. Connections seems to deal with flows and mobility, used by Ståhle and *The Walkable City* with the aim to achieve an *urban life* through a strengthen infrastructure and clarification of programmes (i.e. Ståhle’s and Alvendal’s promotion of the block grid city). Communication seems to a higher extent deal with cultural practices and shaping of identities (Woods 2010, Madanipour 2003). Through that understanding it is possible to distance it from connections as it is less about the physical form (as in how the city should expand, densify and develop etc.) but more about the possibility for people to act upon their identities and everyday life.

The discussion about cultural practices of in-between areas emphasizes through this thesis the importance of occupancy and the opposition between the acts of occupation and the acts of flow. To both *The Walkable City* and the research of Ståhle flows are an aim to achieve when developing, or/and densifying, Stockholm. It is a matter of movement, the actions of people. The effects of occupancy are though different to the effects of flows. Occupancy in the sense it is talked about here emphasize the role of in-between areas; they function as a glue putting together the urban environment. Drawing back to Corner’s ideas about surface as a field of action proves this point, but it is also pronounced by Pier Vittorio Aureli as the source of architecture. According to Aureli is the framing and separation of the building a description of the city; it is a composition of separate parts that meet in confrontations as it is a political agonism (Aureli 2011).

**Spill-Overs**

I have through this text told the story of a few individuals, their homes and its surroundings that could be called neighborhood. There are three different pictures of neighborhood presented: Magnus Bårta’s image of a Swedish single-family house, Arcade Fire’s music, and my own picture of America when arriving in Madison. Placing these pictures next to each other makes a situation occur where I have explored the characteristics of neighborliness in two different neighborhoods, in two different continents, but with the many similarities of Caucasian middle class. It has been a performative action to step down in these both situations of Stureby and Madison where I have been able to move between observing and producing cultural practices. My experiences in Stureby and Madison are examples of neighborliness and what interactions that are created on ambiguous borders between territories. These interactions are cultural practices that together intertwine in networks, rhizomes or a written text that create cities (Petcou 2010, De Certeau 1984). These meetings with inhabitants of the neighborhoods shows upon activities (cultural practices) that are performed within and across territories, a kind of spill over that occurs on borders. These actions are a result of boundaries that exist in neighborhoods: between properties and between neighbors.
Good fences makes good neighbors are words that has been following me since this projects early start but my first real experience of them was when I was left on Stephanie’s porch when I first arrived in Madison. I found an unlocked front door chocking but also a bit provoking to me; what does a safe neighborhood really mean? But the open door is a good example of how the cultural practices of fences works, Stephanie trust that her front yard symbolizes a trespass and a threshold to her private property, the unspoken fence makes good neighbors. While visiting the U.S. I asked around what this saying meant and got different answers all the time, and especially Maria made it very clear that this is not at all related to her life No, this does not go for our neighborhood! To her it is almost an offence as she interpret the saying as not liking your neighbors ‘it is when you don’t want to have any contact, you want to hide’ (Maria 2012-04-20).

So turning back to the song of Arcade Fire with this in mind a few things comes up to mind; their text picture a neighborhood as forgotten and left to the destiny of its inhabitants. It is almost as if the place in the song would be an offer to De Certeau’s strategies, but with no space for tactics, or in other words no space for humans. There are borders between the inhabitants as well as between the houses, the only relation that is referred to is the one of war. This is a picture of neighborliness that Maria does not agree on, she has quite consciously chose to live in this specific place to experience a closeness to similar minded people, a neighborhood where everyone will chose the same side. The picture of the suburban borders created by war does not correspond to this situation. Maria’s cultural practices in and around her neighborhood spill over from her private territory, as when her kids play on the terrace, but it does not spill over her socio-economic territory.

It Happens In-between - Separation and Confrontation

I have in this thesis pictured myself as an interdisciplinary urban design and planning student with mixed positions in the contemporary urban development discussion in Stockholm. I have through my different angles and through out my education mapped out a situation in Stockholm where spaces of in-between in open urban landscape are objects to changes. This as they fit into a current policy making of densification and connecting through urban fabric found in the comprehensive plan of Stockholm, The Walkable City, and in Alexander Ståhle’s research. This mapping was as a pre-knowledge, and a starting point for this thesis but has also continued through the working process. The thesis starts with a scene explaining the difference between the frame and the situation; standing in a street corner in Madison has put me down right in the situation and the gap between this situation, and my picture of America and American culture is obvious. Pending between the frame of my own, but also other’s pictures, and the situations I have met through this process, has been my way of mapping what is considered as important in terms of urban design, planning, densification and cultural practices.
What I suggest is to change the topic for the discussion from how to create walkability to how to develop interfaces from ambiguous territories. This makes the discussion less fixated with urban structure and the picture of the city but opens up for processes considering the current situation. This goes along with Corners notion about surface as a field of action, a field that is not accepting urban form as something static but takes use of what already is there and is open for on going processes. Thereby landscape and urbanism becomes not only something picturesque to each other but components of an urban structure, it is a cooperation to create a heterogeneous entity. It is also a possibility for an urban development to happen on the terms of local cultural practices rather than an on-going global culture of urbanization. When occupancy no longer is about inhabiting place but the ability to separate from, and confronting with other entities of the rhizome, the ability to exist in a field of action arises; or in other words when communication occurs. It is an existence between frames as well as a confrontation with the situation.
References


frost-mending.html [2012-04-18]


Hoffman, Jeanne (2012) personal meeting, 2012-04-18


Jacobs, Harvey M. (2012) personal meeting, 2012-04-20


Maria (2012) personal meetings, 2012-04-12 – 2012-04-25


Petcou, Constantin (2010) “Rhizomatic and Trans-Local Culture” in Petrescu et.al. (edt.) *Trans-Local-Act*, aaa/peprav


Ritzén, Jessica (2011) *Här är det lika trångt som på Manhattan*, Dagens Nyheter, September 26


Sundström, Anders (2011) *Parker ska ligga inom 300 meter*, Dagens Nyheter, October 10

