
Feminism for urban planners

This booklet is the outcome of our research within a project in the course Making Urban Studies-VT23 at Malmö University, Sweden. It is planned to shed light on the importance of feminist approaches in urban planning, while also including the practical aspect and finally, presenting a feminist reading of an area in Malmö. It aims to bridge feminist theories to planning practice and give urban planners an overview of the relevance and current important elements of feminism for and in their practice.

Six contemporary feminist theories and approaches are presented: the social construction of gender and place/space, the aim of accommodating everyone, intersectionality, the importance of reflecting and positioning for research, social reproduction/production and everyday life as well as social justice. These theories and approaches are used as a framework to analyse planning documents in Sweden. To investigate the current urban planning practices and the challenges for implementing feminist urban planning, two people related to the urban planning field at Malmö municipality and a researcher at Malmö University are interviewed. Finally, Norra Sofielund is analysed through a feminist reading with the focus on the everyday life practices of three participants living in the area, expressed through mental maps.



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Urban Studies Master's Programme - VT2023

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This booklet is a representation of our research within the course Making Urban Studies-VT23. It is planned to shed light on the importance of feminist approaches in planning and bridge the theories to the practice by presenting an example of a feminist reading of an area in Malmö, Sweden.

Design Inspiration: «Ahmed for Architectural Students» (2019), Brady Burroughs

Anaïs Bechelli, Maike Greb, Mia Olsson

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Context: Sweden and its long history of gender equality

There is a long tradition of the fight and implementation of gender equality in Scandinavia, with Sweden as a pioneer in many regards. It stands out primarily through the early implementation and institutionalisation of feminist demands in state politics (Ellingsæter, 1998; Hilson, 2008). In contrast to other European societies, childcare provision and inclusion of women into the labour market have been key concerns on the political agenda of many parties for decades. The dual-breadwinner model has been considered a necessity for sustaining the economy and has historically led to an early opening of labour work for women.

Spatial planner Anita Larsson (2006), however, argues that while Sweden has been a driver of gender equality policies and "state feminism" (p. 507), gender equality has not been a priority in spatial planning (p. 507). In our interview with an urban studies researcher at Malmö University, it was pointed out that women are still discriminated against in many ways, also in relation to the urban. Besides unequal salary and essential differences in hospital care, issues include harassment in public spaces and public transport. Although there have been efforts to counteract, many cities are still considerably shaped by the male planning perspective. In this booklet, we want to shed light on the importance of feminist theories for urban planning, review the current planning practice and give an example of the operationalisation of the theories.

Glossary and information

Feminism

Way of thinking that aims to improve the situation of discriminated social groups, with a focus on the historical subordination of women in society and that is closely linked to the aim for social, economic and political equality, equity and justice for all.

Feminism in Urban Planning

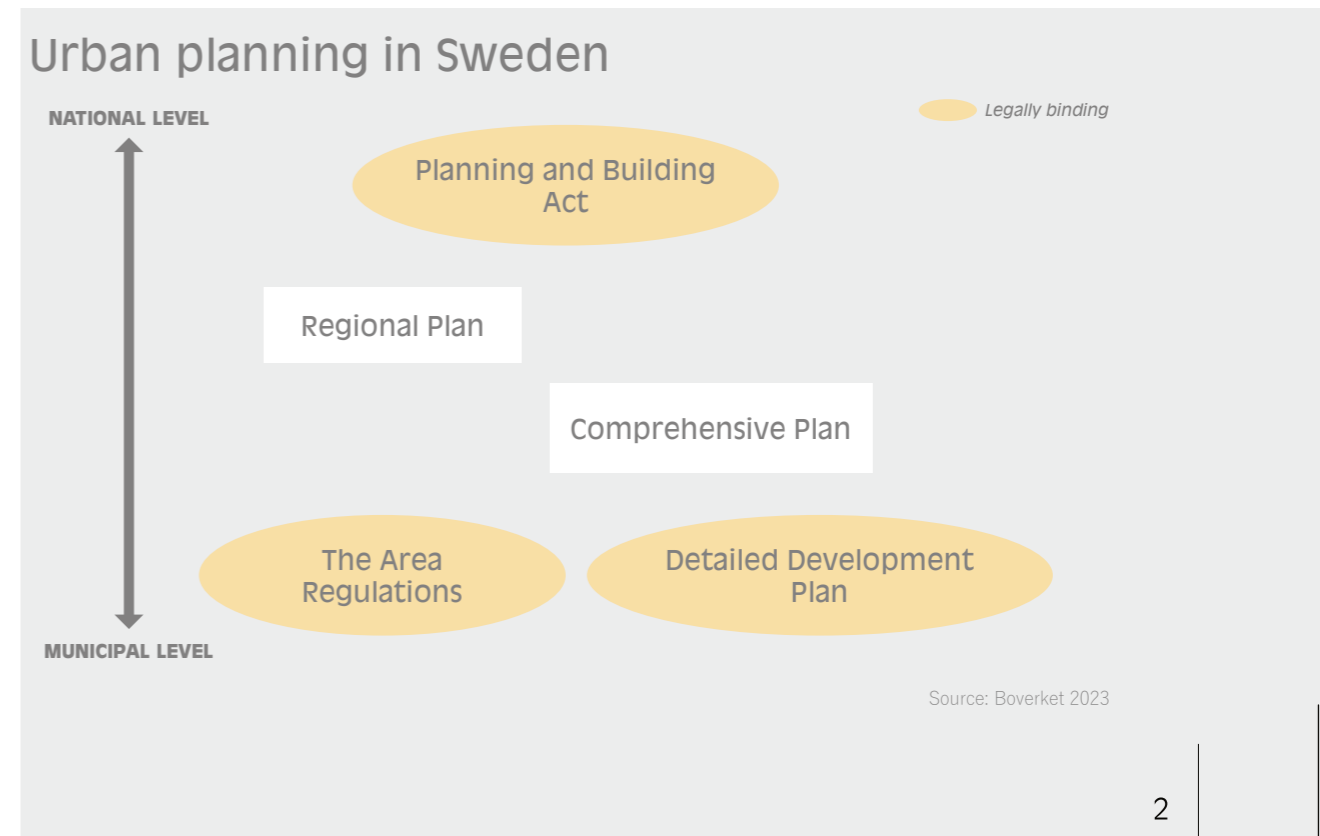
Planning practice, created in opposition to patriarchal values, aiming at planning by offering equal opportunities and paying attention to the needs of every individual.

Gender Equality

Concept aiming to provide equal access and opportunities to everyone regardless of their gender. In the planning documents, the term gender equality is used at the expense of the term feminist.

Social Reproduction and Production

A way to classify activities, not based on genders or sex, but on paid work (production) and unpaid work, often care work (social reproduction). Its aim is to focus more on the individual's practice than the individual's gender while still improving the situation for those who do social reproduction work.



Part 1: Important contemporary feminist theories for urban planning

This part is a compilation of contemporary feminist theories that we argue to build a base for feminist urban planning. We will introduce several theorist's perspectives. Five theorists hold our hand when looking at society through a feminist lens.

"You need to have someone to hold your hand when you start to look at society"
(Christina Lindkvist, Interview May 5th 2023)

Social construction of Gender and Place/Space

Doreen Massey is a social scientist and a feminist geographer who, in her book *Space, Place and Gender* (1994) reminds that **space is "constructed out of social relations"** (p. 2) and that it reflects "and **affect[s] the ways in which gender is constructed and understood**" (p. 179). Therefore, she confirms that "gender has been deeply implicated in the construction of geography [and that] geography [...] influences the cultural formation of particular genders and gender relations" (p. 177). Thus she **acknowledges the existence of relations between space and gender** and how they can interact with each other and even **influence their development**. Therefore, any intervention on the space in an urban planning context will have direct effects on the social relations and thus gender.

The social relations within a space are not rigid and move in time and space which is one of her main argument to add the time perspective to space and then call it "space-time" (p. 2) in order "to understand space as a simultaneity" (p. 3). She argues that this new concept of space-time can be "a configuration of social relations [that] implies the existence [...] of a **simultaneous multiplicity of spaces**" (p. 3) that should be taken into account in planning. Moreover, she adds that the space and the social relations can be perceived differently and even more depending on the positions that the users of the space hold.

From all of that she argues that "feminist geography is (or should be) as much about men as it is about women." (p. 189) This statement is linked to a non-gender-binary perception of space and relations mentioned later.

Doreen Massey
Social scientist and feminist geographer

Accomodate Everyone

Leslie Kern
Associate professor of geography and environment and women's and gender studies at Mount Allison University (Canada)

In her book *Feminist City* (2020), the feminist geographer **Leslie Kern** describes the difficulties for some city dwellers to "blend in" (p. 22) into the crowd. She has experienced **this impossibility of invisibility in the city** mainly during her pregnancy, when unknown people felt comfortable approaching or touching her and she barely had the chance to go somewhere unnoticed. One of her concerns is to **become aware of the patriarchal structures that exist in the built environment**, especially regarding "location of residential areas, work-places, [and] transportation networks" (p. 28). Kern mentions that there are efforts in urban planning to include feminist perspectives. However, there is the **danger of reproducing existing binary gender stereotypes** and previous gender inclusive planning was often centred around the concerns of white, able-bodied, married mothers (p. 36). In Leslie Kern's perspective, a feminist city's built environment **should accommodate all bodies and be "care-centred without having merely women in mind as caretakers"** (p. 38 f.).

Christina Lindkvist on the concept of care trips
"a lot of these trips are made especially by women, escorting children, minors to schools, helping out the dependent family members like old parents or sick relatives, to get food, medicine, etc, etc."
(Christina Lindkvist, Interview May 5th 2023)

Intersectionality

The goal to accommodate everyone cannot be achieved without including aspects of intersectionality. Contemporary feminist theories naturally include intersectionality since "there are lots of women who are superior to a lot of men, if we just take these two categories" (Interview with Christina Lindkvist, May 5th 2023). The human geographer and urban planner Brenda Parker reviewed current literature on gender and the city, in her article "Material Matters: Gender and the City" (2011). She finds that **intersecting identities that relate to class, ethnicity, ability, sexuality and age**

have increasingly been included and emphasised on in feminist theories about the city (p. 435). To put it more drastically and in the words of Flavia Dzodan who have been quoted by **Sara Ahmed**: "Feminism will be intersectional 'or it will be bullshit'" (Burroughs, 2019, p. 38). The aim of feminist scholars is to no longer oppress and thus **different (intersecting) dimensions of oppression must be considered**.

Sara Ahmed
Formerly Professor of Race and Cultural Studies at Goldsmiths, University of London

Reflecting and Postioning

Thoughts of the critical feminist and postcolonial scholar **Sara Ahmed** have been applied to architectural theories by Brady Burroughs and her students in Ahmed for Architectural Students (2019). Particularly relevant for urban planning are Ahmed's ideas on feminism as intersectional (as mentioned above) and applied to "all areas of our lives" (p. 37). Besides these aspects, Burroughs and her students also emphasise the **importance of reflexivity of the orientations of the researcher, since these are "starting points in how we approach, view and act within our world, society and life"** (p. 28) and thus also influence the research. The reflectivity of the researcher is also related to **transparency about their own position in society**. These two aspects have been established practice in feminist research since the 1980s, "foregrounding the unequal power geometries of knowledge production" (Tanyildiz et al., 2021).

Reproduction/Production and the Everyday Life

In her article on the feminist planning practices in Sweden, the spatial planner **Anita Larsson** (2006) mentions the issues of the Swedish approach of gender-neutral planning and suggests a merge of gender theory and planning theory to make feminist urban planning applicable. While she argues that universalism is connected to the Swedish tradition of universal welfare benefits, this universalism is difficult to apply to planning. The 'general public interest' that is planned for is not defined and thus leaves out people's perspectives, often that of women. However, the binary understanding of gender is denied by Larsson as well; she follows previous feminist researchers' understanding that **definitions of gender are related to cultural context and always changing** (p. 511). In relation to that she argues that "feminism has consistently grappled with the paradoxical problem of articulating the voices of women, while simultaneously **aiming to dismantle and deconstruct the concept of gender**" (p. 509). She suggests using the concepts of social reproduction and production as an alternative to men's and women's perspectives. Social reproduction "refers not only to human reproduction but also to family life, household chores and care in the broad sense, which may include care of the elderly, children and the sick" (p.520). Production involves "the making of goods (in a broad sense) [and] is predominantly linked to paid work and to the public sector" (p. 520). The concepts are generally acknowledged by many feminist scholars and are related to the field of urban studies as **the aim is to make care and reproduction work more accessible and collective in the city** (Kern 2020, p. 38). Larsson suggests the 'everyday life' as an opportunity to include individuals' perspectives regardless of dichotomies.

Anita Larsson
Formerly Associate
Professor of Spatial
Planning at the School of
Technoculture, Humanities
and Planning (Karlskrona,
Sweden)

Social Justice

Since the way of measuring men and women is always questionable, Christina Lindkvist prefers to turn to the concept of a just city (interview, May 5th 2023). **Iris Marion Young** is considered by Lindkvist as "a guiding light to understand justice". In Justice and the Politics of Difference (1990) and Inclusion and Democracy (2012), Young develops theories and arguments about social justice.

**Christina Lindqvist
Christina Scholten**
Associate professor for urban, mobility
and sustainability studies at Malmö University
Her current work focuses on accessibility,
mobility and transport from an equity
perspective.
Interview May 5th 2023

Young argues that social justice should arise from a "**positive self-definition of group difference**" (Vitrano and Lindkvist, 2022, p. 4). This could not occur with the "**ideal of impartiality**" that she refers to. An impartial approach would lead to a non-concrete approach to the reality of social issues, as a "**view from nowhere**" (Vitrano and Lindkvist, 2022, p. 4). That is why according to Young, the **social differences should not be overlooked**. In another work, Young (2012) argues for **deconstructing structural inequalities and involving people from different group positions** (Sjöqvist, 2017, p.17). This is also related to what Christina Lindkvist says during an interview: "I find it more interesting to think about equity and from an intersectional perspective, where we actually acknowledge differences within social categories as well. I think that it is more fruitful for the development [...] to work towards a more just city" (interview, May 5th 2023). Moreover, social justice is impacted by "institutional conditions which inhibit or prevent people from participating in determining their actions or the conditions of their actions" (Young in Vitrano and Lindkvist 2022). This statement is defined as **a form of institutional domination** and, thus, it is **a constraint for democratic participation**. She mentions the concept of "ideology of expertism", which can be related to a top-down relation between experts and "non-experts" and which characterises what she calls an "administered society". This is what the bottom-up processes today in urban planning try to tackle.

Iris Marion Young
Former Professor of Political
Science at the University of
Chicago

Part 2: Summaries and reflections on previous examples of feminist planning in Malmö

The aim of this part is to summarise and reflect on planning documents in relation to feminist planning in Malmö. We chose to not only look at those projects that label themselves as feminist but also the Planning and Building Act, the Regional Plan and the Comprehensive Plan. Since gender equality is often linked to mobilities and transport, we included the Mobility Plan in our analysis. We further looked at the Detailed Plan for Sofielund to focus our analysis on our case study for part 3. Two interviews with people related to the urban planning field provide us with information about urban planning practice. All the planning documents and interviews are reviewed by using the theories presented in part 1 as a framework. The aim is to find out how the planning documents of Malmö Stad as well as the interviewees apply, talk about and deal with the feminist perspectives. The findings are finally presented in the form of challenges and suggested solutions in relation to the six theoretical focal points we developed previously.

Interviewee 1

Working with urban planning and gender equality (Interview May 2nd 2023)

Interviewee 2

Working with transport and mobility (Interview May 9th 2023)



Planning and Building Act

The concept of equity is displayed at the very beginning of the planning and building act, one of its goals is to “promote societal development with equal and good social living conditions” (Ch.1, 1§). Through its explanations, this document shows the importance of the consultation that we can bring together with the aim of accommodating everyone. This emphasis is presented through the requirement, for the municipality, to organise consultation sessions concerning planning projects. Moreover, as written, “the municipality must also give [...] individuals in general who have a significant interest in the proposal the opportunity to participate in the consultation” (Ch.3, 8§), this is done in a “transparency and influence” (Ch.3, 8§) purpose to “produce as good a basis for decision-making as possible” (Ch.3, 8§). Anyone that can participate in the consultation can leave a comment that should be taken into account in the review process, this means that, in the rules, the needs of every citizen should matter to the municipality. However, the proposal could be deepened by encouraging a way to reach out to a diversity of participants. Another major aspect is the presence of rules surrounding the evaluation process of projects/plans, which is internal (between the municipality and the city council) and external (consultation session). The decision is therefore not taken at once and is decided after it has been assessed by several entities. A longer-term evaluation could be implemented to accompany the life of a project in relation to changes in the city and its environment.

Regionalplan för Skåne 2022-2040

The Regional plan for Skåne 2022-2040 emphasises on investments in public transport, cycling and walking infrastructure to promote gender equality (p. 22, 56). School, care centres, local recreational areas and nature should be in close proximity to everyone, especially to children, elderly and people with disabilities (p. 52, 54). It is mentioned that it has been facilitated to do care work for elderly at home through the improvement of housing (p. 41). Since a goal of feminist scholars is to make care work more collective and public, this seems to possibly lead to obstacles for those who have to do unpaid care work for elderly at home. Considering this is the regional plan, it might, however, refer to outskirts that face different obstacles or require different needs. It might also relate more to the possibility of paid care workers to do mobile care. Again, however, the reality often includes relatives' care work practices at home as well and can thus at least be considered a questionable point in the plan.

Additionally the plan mentions the inclusion and increased democratic participation of the individual that should be supported by the built environment (p. 48). There is an emphasis on the integration of citizens into the regional planning process, including children and youth (p. 96).



Översiktsplan för Malmö (OP) - Planstrategi (+ Utvecklingsplan för jämställdhetsintegrering)

On 30 august 2007, "the municipality has [...] committed itself to systematically integrating the equality perspective in all operations" (Utvecklingsplan för jämställdhetsintegrering, p.1). This commitment is also in line with the 1993 national policy, Propositionen 1993/94:147, on equality that "focussed on men and women having the same rights, obligations and opportunities" (in Utvecklingsplan för jämställdhetsintegrering, p.3). The document "Utvecklingsplan för jämställdhetsintegrering" is related to the comprehensive plan and gives more detailed goals on equity and gender equality and how to achieve them with priorities on certain policy areas such as education, transport and housing. In the comprehensive plan, the democratic process is mentioned in the main goals of the plan as a tool "for the citizens [...] to create a good life for themselves" (OP, p.11). This democratic process is also depicted through participation which itself is described as "a prerequisite for successful urban development" (OP, p.5). It was mentioned by interviewee 2 that, over the years, the consultation process has been improved (in line with the PBL's guidelines) towards a better inclusion of every citizen so that the municipality can "have different views from people that otherwise aren't being consulted" (Interview 2, May 9th 2023). Gender equality and equity are often related to safety and accessibility to the entire city, emphasis is also placed on the accessibility for people with different disabilities and that it "should always be considered when designing public space" (OP, p.44). A whole section is devoted more specifically to "Equality and gender equality" (OP, p.44), the plan suggests that a "gender equality perspective must be included in all areas of activity and at all stages of planning and decision-making" (OP, p.44). Transport is often presented as concrete means to "support increased integration [...] and gender equality" (OP, p.42) especially through its accessibility for all citizens. In general, particular attention is paid to the importance of meeting the needs of individual citizens through planning.

Trafik- och Mobilitetsplan 2016

The traffic and mobility plan (Trafik- och Mobilitetsplan) from 2016 mentions gender equality most often in relation to modes of travel and commuting. Journeys made by men and women are separately measured and divided into different means of transport. Women cycle, walk or take public transport more often, while men are more likely to take the car (p. 20). Thus, improving the infrastructure for walking, cycling and public transport is considered a way to improve gender equality (p. 15, 19, 20). It is often mentioned that everyone should have access to different means of transport or walking infrastructure to take part in society actively (e.g., p. 5, 7, 12, 23, 46, 63). The traffic and mobility plan clearly states that planners should have an awareness that planning affects aspects of (gender) equality, equity and integration as well as the environment and the everyday life of people (p. 7, 12). Daily shopping and child care are explicitly named as facilities that should be accessible for everyone (p. 13). This goes hand in hand with traffic safety that is aimed to be improved (p. 24). More accessible walking and cycling routes seem to solve issues regarding environmental, social and economic sustainability. Although it is not mentioned in relation to gender equality, there is an emphasis on the planning for commuting by different modes that should be facilitated by accessible intermodal exchange points (p. 40). The implementation of these goals is aimed to be achieved by increasing citizen participation and possibly by the formulation of the right to cycle for all residents in Malmö (p. 61). Mobility should also make spaces accessible that can serve as arenas for democratic and cultural exchange (p. 62). Indicators to measure equality were in the development when the plan was published (p. 65). Interviewee 2 argues in a similar way when saying that the transport system is clearly connected to gender equality since men and women use it in different ways. Besides the different modes of transport it is also mentioned that women tend to work in a closer distance to home as they feel more obliged to be close to those in need of care (Interview May 9th 2023). Mobility thus seems to be related to gendered issues in practice. However, the tools and language used clearly divide men and women into two categories to be scrutinised separately.



Sofielund detailed plan: Sofielund verksamhetsområde år 2040

Overall, the planprogram of Sofielund business area for 2040 is focusing on economic activity and sustainability. It is aiming for inclusion, safety, comfort, bringing people together while highlighting the neighbourhood's specificities. However, no specific social groups are pointed out in the discourse for these social goals, apart from generic social groups such as children, young people, workers (e.g. p. 27) and on the other hand some local actors such as property owners, associations and businesses (e.g. p.18). Some statistics included in the document are distinguishing women and men in relation to the attendance to leisure activities or facilities (p. 40, 56). Moreover, there is no mention of gender equality ("jämställdhet") apart from the question of safety (p.27) and it is the general idea of equality or equity that is mainly referred to ("jämlighet"). It relates to a point that Interviewee 2 argues, saying that "The Swedish legislation [...] talks about equality or equity in a wider sense. But I would say that gender equality is of course part of that". Related to the aim of inclusion, Interviewee 2 says "we always use the term 'we plan for all' and of course we do [...] You need to maybe focus a bit more on [the] primary target group to shift level service, shift norm systems".

Furthermore, one of the goals of Sofielund planning program is named "To do things together is to do things right" (p. 18). It is aiming for a bottom-up perspective in the development process of the area, coming from the existing participatory culture that is acknowledged in the discourse (p.18).

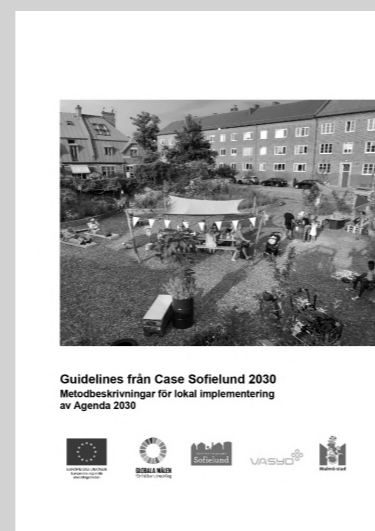
Overall, this planning program gives urban development orientations that do not precise the social specificities of the area on a human scale (p.4) and the methods for an inclusive process. However, undergoing projects on the area are described and seem to take charge of specific issues or angles, such as Tryggare Malmö (safer/more comfortable Malmö) and Case Sofielund 2030.

Sofielund detailed plan: Guidelines from Case Sofielund 2030

Case Sofielund 2030 is a project for developing innovative collaborative structures and processes to create sustainable growth and urban development and, ultimately, to meet the goals of Agenda 2030. The outcomes from this project are put into a document describing the methods, the limits and learning points of the process for each sub-project as well as implementation tips.

Since gender equality is part of the goals of Agenda 2030, it is mentioned in 3 of the 7 sub-projects of Case Sofielund 2030 at the same time as the goals for “reduced inequality” and for a “peaceful and inclusive society” (p. 5, 12, 26). The question of gender has therefore a specific consideration distinguished from the general issue of equality. For the sub-project related to public art, it is specified that the team of the involved artists is composed of an equal number of men and women (p. 11). In the case of the project of Naturmolnet, which is a temporary park project, there is the question of getting a better gender mainstreaming, which is associated with the idea “that everyone [would feel] welcomed to use the place, strengthened social bonds, common ownership, reduced costs related to vandalism, and much more” (p. 19).

About the process, the essence of Case Sofielund 2030 is to engage with the local people (p.3). The experimental approach of the project allowed to put a real effort into involving them in the process by elaborating and trying innovative methods. For instance, the project funding has given the opportunity to pay wages for the local NGOs that have been engaged in the project, according to Interviewee 1. However, there were quite important struggles for some sub-projects to get a representative participation of the local inhabitants. Interviewee 1 insists on the importance of the local NGOs in the process, saying that “The NGOs working with connecting people at a local level are really doing a great job and... we would not be able to try these things out or try to make that kind of difference without their help”



Additional Outcomes of the Interviews

Interviewee 1 started to define feminism by stating their own gender and connecting that to a specific perspective on the term, namely considering feminism a necessity that aims to achieve equality between genders.

Interviewee 2 explains that “[...] I feel that “feminism” or “feminist” sometimes is much more politically charged term, if you call it like that.” Interviewee 2 has used the term feminism before. The municipality, however, is referring to the term gender equality.



Conclusion

The challenges were formulated on the basis of our review of the planning documents and on what the planners indicated in the interviews as obstacles in their practice. Suggested strategies include planners’ views on how to deal with hurdles as well as previous positive examples of planning (e.g., Case Sofielund 2030 and its reflection process). Both challenges and suggested solutions were related to the six essential aspects that we derived from feminist urban theories (part 1).

	Challenges	Suggested strategies
Social Construction of Gender and Place/Space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledgement of the social construction of gender • Lack of measurability of gender impacts through a deconstructed concept of gender • Improving the situation for all (especially for those that have been found to be more vulnerable) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complement a quantitative approach with a qualitative approach • Work not only with the statistical average but also with the average of diverse groups
Accommodate everyone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approaching different social networks • Including participants in the consultation process, take into account their opinions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner up with local NGOs or other local associations • Multiply the consultation sessions and arrange them in different manners
Intersectionality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Necessity to reach and include a diversity in the participants, both in terms of gender and other intersecting identities (class, ethnicity, ability, sexuality, age, ..) • Developing a holistic view in every project or plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Think of a way of valuing the participant's time, also to include people that might not usually have the resources to participate • Partner up with several local NGOs or other local associations
Reflection and Positioning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementing relevant projects that can evolve regarding the users and the changes in society • Avoiding hasty assumptions and conclusions regarding the site and field of study 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include evaluation, activation and maintenance of the places in the initial planning • Share the learning outcomes from the planning processes so that it can benefit other projects • Be aware of your own position on the topic and make room for the voice of the users • Be aware of the educational impact that planning processes have for participants (besides the impact on built environment)
Reproduction/Production and the Everyday Life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoiding a gender-binary vision that often leads to stereotypical conclusion and solutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include social reproduction/production in the thinking process to raise awareness about social reproduction activities in everyday life
Equity and justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of who is included as well as who is not included • Including many individual perspectives • Regularly consulting people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involve people from different group positions • Divide the individuals in more groups and look at their average needs • Adapt the methods of consultation in order to reach people that otherwise are not being consulted or "heard"

Part 3: Analysis of Sofielund through a feminist reading

Area of Study

Norra Sofielund is a centrally located neighbourhood in Malmö, with Möllevången in the north west and Rosengård to the south east. It consists of residential buildings, schools and many cultural and religious venues as well as supermarkets, industrial buildings and green spaces. This blend of different uses and possible activities is due to the area's history and gradual development from farmlands to Malmö's industrial hub to a part of the central areas of the city.

In the mid-19th century, Sofielund's farmlands were transformed into industry with a residential area for the labour workers (Foroughanfar, 2022, p. 70) and during the first part of the 20th century many food, textile and service companies moved to Sofielund; eventually also the starch factory Stadex AB and the Pågen factory. While the factories were established in the area for some time, much of the industry left Sofielund in the 1990s. The industrial buildings are now used by small retail stores and warehouses, car repair and car wash shops; there is a "predominance of migrant retail spaces" (p. 17) and ethnic-cultural and religious venues.

On the one hand, some changes were initiated by the migration of stores and venues to the area; on the other hand, development plans for the area of Sofielund have also been developed by Malmö municipality. These include the Case Sofielund 2030 and Sofielund 2040 plan.

Sofielund is planned to be developed into a sustainable residential neighborhood, preserving its existing character and culture, and binding the centre and the eastside of the city. One challenge in the urban development of this neighborhood is the coexistence between housing, industrial, commercial and cultural activities, considering the environmental risks that industries and the related traffic are generating.

Everyday Life

As elaborated on in part 1, the theoretical concept of social reproduction and production is acknowledged by feminist scholars to research without reproducing gender stereotypes or investigating binary differences between the experience of men and women. Nevertheless, the concept has been criticised to divide practices in a binary manner in relation to the public and the private sphere as well as it leaves some practices uncategorised. To research the interplay of private and public in the urban, the concept of social reproduction and production can be further developed to the concept of everyday life. **Researching everyday life practices then is a way to operationalise feminist theories to analyse an area.** Larsson (2006) explains the concept as “compris[ing] unpaid work such as care and household chores as well as the individual’s performance of paid work including travelling to and from work. In this way, the spheres of reproduction and production are linked together.” (p. 522). In researching individual everyday life practices, stereotypical issues are not reproduced while different experiences are still acknowledged. Thus **it is more about understanding different experiences than needs for women and needs for men** (Larsson, 2006). Next to the link between everyday life practices and the urban space, the **aspect of time** is also essential to study everyday life (Ellegård, 2018). This is commonly investigated with the help of diaries that participants write on their everyday practices, including time and place (Ellegård, 2018; Scholten, Friberg and Sandén, 2012). Although we consider this a valuable method, we used the method of mental maps to show the everyday life practices of the participants.



Everyday Life through Mental Maps

Our decision to choose a **qualitative approach** is rooted in Larsson’s (2006) argument that quantitative research for gender equality can, if poorly represented, quickly lead to misinterpretations (such as relating it back to biological differences) (p. 527). It also refers to our suggestion in part 2 **to complement quantitative methods that have previously been used in urban planning to research gender inequalities** with a qualitative method.

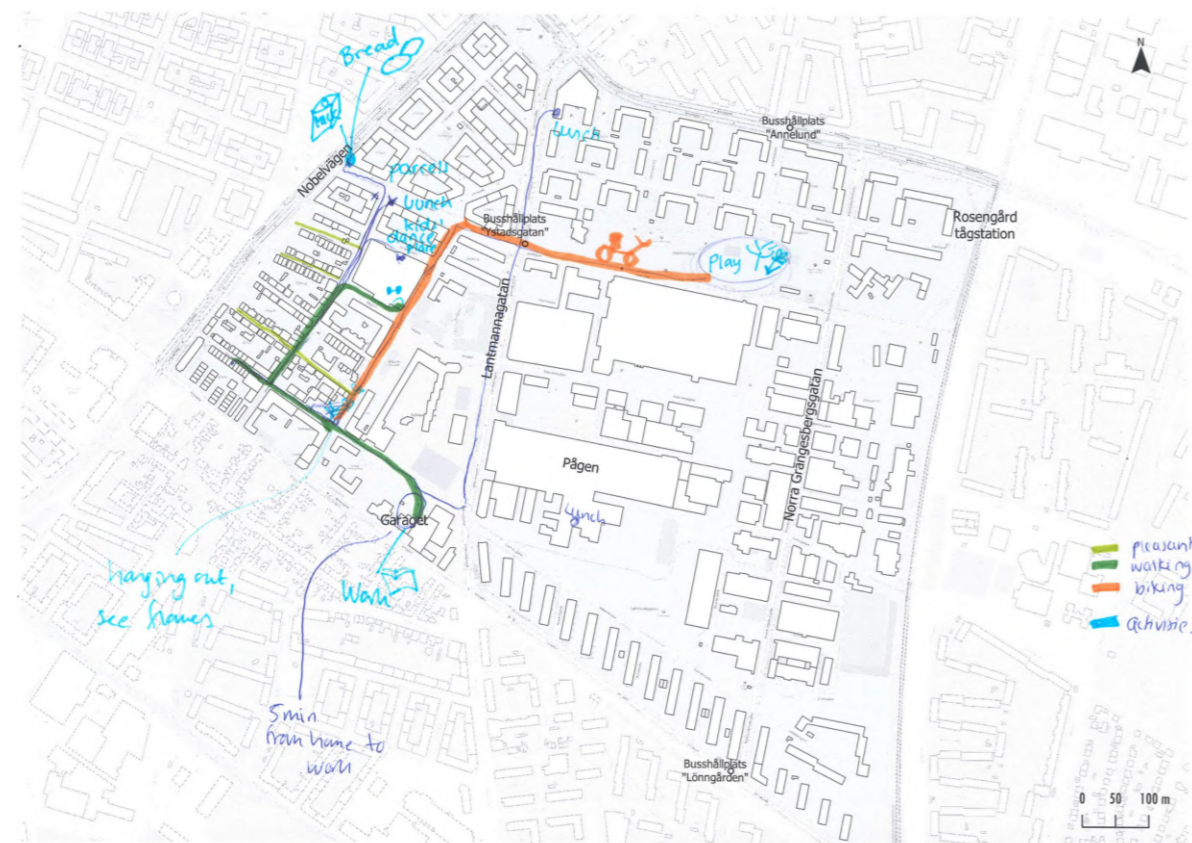
In line with Larsson (2006), the profile of each participant is not mentioned because we want to analyse the space through the individual practices rather than the participants’ gender, age, social category, etc. We chose not to ask for or describe the intersecting identities of the participants. In our understanding, the mental maps serve as a display of the individual narrative of the area and their personal relations to the area. Since this is highly intertwined with the identities of the participants, we consider it sufficient to display the narrative without drawing conclusions about the connection of the narrative to identity markers.

The public library and culture centre **Garaget** is our entry point to the research area. Due to its wide range of activity offers, a diverse group of people uses Garaget. Through Garaget as an entry point to the community, we tried to have a diverse sample of participants by approaching the staff and people in the library spontaneously. Garaget thus served as a connection between us as research students (we can access it and sometimes use it privately) and the residents of the area (it is open to everyone and used by many people living in the area).

Three narratives of users of the area Norra Sofielund will be presented through mental maps and short explanations. The mental maps spatialise their daily practices in the neighbourhood. We choose to **present the narratives individually in order to keep visible all of the specificities that embody “everyday life”**. This includes (unpaid) social reproduction practices as well as (paid) production practices. The purpose was not to differentiate between the activities; however, we can say that all participants included practices of social reproduction as well as production. It is a way of implementing the theories into the analysis of an area through individual perspectives. Therefore, **we will not present conclusions drawn from the individual narratives but we believe that the narratives suffice to express a feminist experience of the space.**

Three feminist narratives of Sofielund

Narrative 1



Mental map - Participant 1

Participant 1 (P1) is both living and working in the area and their children are going to school also in the area. Therefore, they do an important part of their daily activities in the neighborhood. P1 brings their children to two parks in the neighborhood which are Naturmolnet ("it's the best") and Enskifteshagen ("nice for the children") where they can skateboard and play basketball. They used to go to a park along the street Klaragatan but stopped to go there. Moreover, P1 cares about their children to see trees and flowers, "to give that to the children", and feels a lack of green spaces. That is maybe why they are regularly going to nature on weekends. They used to bring their children to activities in the eastside of the area (Norra Grängesbergsgatan) but these activities moved to Rosengård. When asking P1 about the feelings related to the built environment, they expressed negative feelings towards two specific roads in the area. Rolfsgatan is "not so nice" because of the traffic and Lantmannagatan is too large to walk.



In opposition, Klaragatan is "a bit nicer" and "more quiet" and they prefer the street "without cars" in the westside of the area. About the modes of transportation and P1's chosen paths, they walk to school for bringing their children, to work which is 5 minutes from home, and to the gym. They take the bike to go to the park and choose a direct path. On the way to work, they encounter many people. After work, P1 goes back home and then does other activities such as picking up the children at school or going to the gym in the area. Furthermore, they do quick shopping at the "Time" supermarket and buy bread at a specific place. They eat lunch at several restaurants in the area saying "when I'm rich", because they are quite expensive. There is also a post office where they pick up their parcels. At the end, P1 realises the spatial range of their daily practices and says "I thought I was everywhere in the space but actually I spend most of my time here [pointing to the south-western part of Norra Sofielund]".

Narrative 2



Mental map - Participant 2

The participant 2 does not live in the area but just next to it, in Södra Sofielund (blue circle at the bottom of the map). P2 said at first that they do not have a lot of activities in the area because they order a lot online and the pick up point is not in Nörra Sofielund. They mostly use the bike because "Malmö is a bike friendly city" and the bus is "inconvenient and too long" due to many construction sites that deviate from the usual trajectories. It takes 5 minutes by bike to go to Garaget, their workplace. Usually for lunch, they eat at Garaget because they find the restaurants in the area expensive.

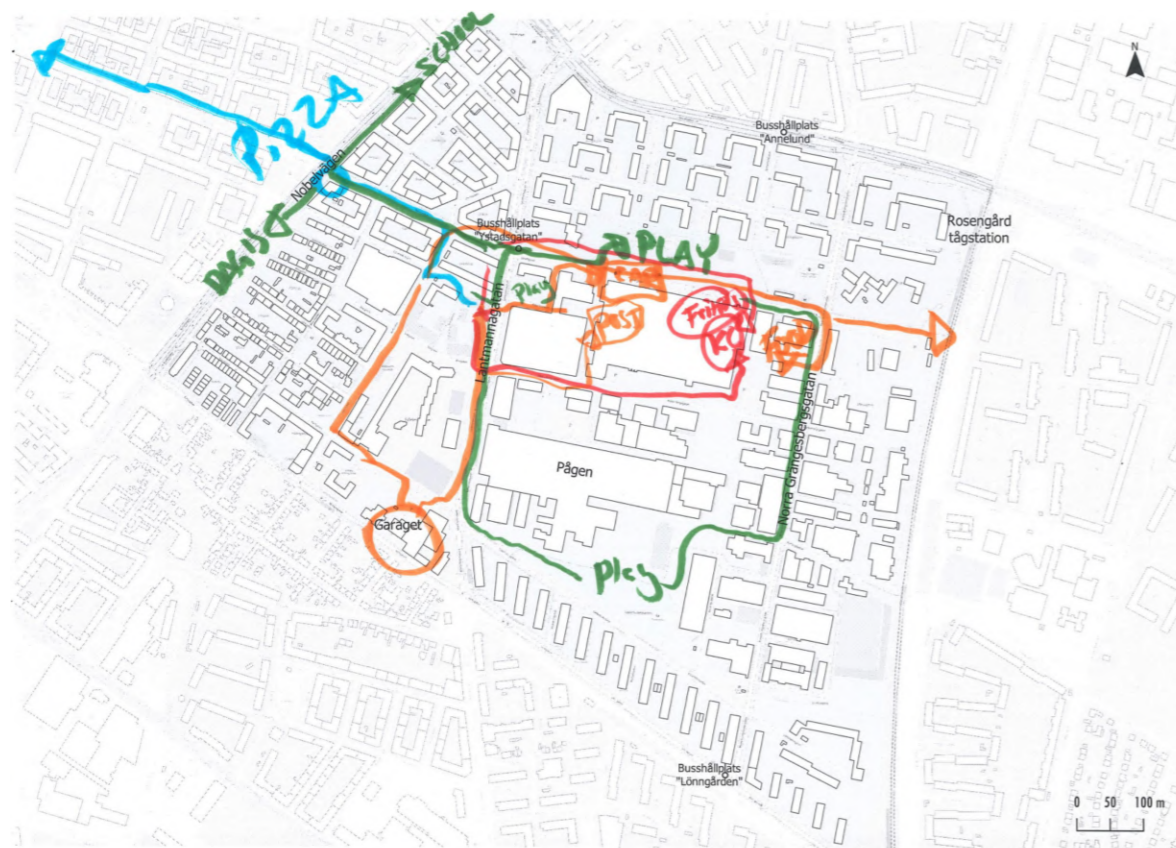
They go grocery shopping after work to Orient food because they sell halal food, P2 sometimes has problems parking their bike because there is a lack of parking spots for bicycles. Another problem is that grocery shopping takes time because sometimes only one cashier is open. P2 mentions that they sometimes buy bread in a restaurant next to Pågen.

When talking about the neighbourhood in general, P2 insists that they never go to the west because they do not feel safe because it



is "not well lit at night" and there are too many buildings (area with the red cross on the map). P2 sometimes goes bouldering at Klättercentret or to Enskifteschagen with friends and family. P2 uses these paths on the map because they are straightest and shortest to go to their activities but also because even if Lönngatan has an appropriate bike lane, there are too many bikes and scooters and they do not feel comfortable.

Narrative 3



Mental map - Participant 3

Participant 3 (P3) lives in Norra Sofielund and their life is centred around the area. There are many activities that participant 3 is doing and many places to visit, as participant 3 emphasised while drawing: "There's a lot in the area". Since P3's children are often with P3 and they "cannot walk too much", they mostly take the bike. P3 brings their child to the kindergarten on the days that P3 has to work and brings the other child to school everyday. They regularly go to the parks Enskifteshagen and Gullängen. They also go to Garaget in the afternoon. The climbing gym (Klättercentret) is mentioned as a place that they often visit. The paths they choose are mainly related to the shortest way to the facility they want to visit; however, many routes actually include stops at the post office (in the industrial area), the grocery store Orient Food or Fritidsbanken (in the industrial area). They regularly pick up or order pizza from outside of Norra Sofielund. In general, P3 seems to be very active, biking to Triangeln and to Rosengård regularly. The most important everyday life activities are, however, in the area. They seem very comfortable in the area.



Reflection and learnings

We formulated reflections on this method regarding its implementation, thinking, etc. and also on the influence of our own perceptions on the whole process. Since evaluation is a necessary and important aspect of a feminist approach, we tried to express learning elements that could be taken into account when using the method of everyday life through mental maps.

- **Everyday life through mental maps:** The method helped participants talk with a practical lens about the space → it served as an indirect way of understanding the space's dynamics and facilities.
- **Educational impact of planning on participants:** We realised that the participants developed a (temporary) better understanding of their own everyday life practices and reflected on them within our conversation with them.
- **Spontaneous approach:** We found the spontaneous approach valuable to reach different people; however, a small compensation for the participants' time would have been ideal.
- **Finding an entry point to the community:** Since the area was unknown to us we had difficulties finding an entry point to the community that can be representative of the diversity that make up the neighbourhood. This could be achieved by reaching out to inhabitants through several and different locations that are complementary.
- **Influence of our own practices in the area:** We consider Garaget a valuable entry point but believe that this is also related to the concentration of some of our own activities in the southern part of the area. For instance, we did not look for an entry point to the residents in the north.
- **Influence on our own understanding of the area:** During the research process we learned to look at the area differently; talking to participants has affected our reading of the area as well.
- **Leaving out personal information about participants:** We decided to leave out personal information about the three participants. This might seem contradictory to the previously mentioned importance of not overlooking social differences (part 1). However, we consider some social differences to be expressed in the difference of the mental maps. We did not want to draw conclusions about practices from identity markers. Therefore, we understand this method to be the best possible way for now, but possibly not the ideal way.
- **Power relations:** The three participants on the site were not asked for personal information. However, we assume that they were older than us and had less knowledge about the feminist approaches than us. On the other hand, they were considerably more familiar with the area.

The third part of this booklet was meant to give us the chance to investigate an area through a feminist perspective after giving overviews of the main relevant feminist theories and the previous planning practice in Malmö. We do not consider this the ideal way but a suggestion for research practice that can be further explored. In line with this and the feminist research tradition, we would like to reflect and receive feedback on our work. The intention is for us to learn and improve our work in future research, but ideally also to provide readers of the booklet with a platform to discuss.

We appreciate all feedback on our Padlet:

<https://padlet.com/feministurbanplanning/reflections-and-feedback-a2je6f18945albg7>



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Thanks to Malmö University for providing us with a room of our own :)