

Dissertation presented at Uppsala University to be publicly examined in Sal X, Universitetshuset, Uppsala, Friday, February 8, 2008 at 10:15 for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. The examination will be conducted in Swedish.

Abstract

Sundin, M. 2007. Bra läge men dåligt rykte. En jämförande historisk studie av tre stadsdelar i Borås, Eskilstuna och Gävle. (Good location but bad reputation. A comparative historical study of three city sections in Borås, Eskilstuna and Gävle). 623 pp. Uppsala. ISBN 978-91-506-1979-9.

Centrally located problem areas of today, with suburban-like modernist architecture, are an anomaly in Sweden. The purpose of the present study is to investigate this Swedish anomaly by comparing three such city sections – Norrby in Borås, Nyfors in Eskilstuna and Öster in Gävle – and to try to answer the question: what type of case is this? To answer this question, a theoretical perspective distinguishing habitation, population and images is developed using concepts from Bourdieu, Elias and Scotson, Goffman, Lefebvre and Østerberg. Methodologically, this is a detailed comparative case study of the history of these three city sections in three or four phases, from before to after their thorough urban renewal in the 1960s. Once, these habitations developed in concert with their city into a working-class area, just beside the city centre, but beyond the railway station. After WWII, they became subjects of renewal, thus afflicted by a slum process that preceded demolition. The new habitation was planned for housing a working-class population. Suburban-like in shape, it was nevertheless part of an inner-city renewal. The new habitation became a target for critique already during the renewal process, a critique that was cast in the same terms as the critique of the suburbs of the time: Images of poor and troublesome outdoor milieus, social problems of different kinds, empty apartments, high turn over, immigrants and refugees were produced, in the media but also by the inhabitants and their organizations, giving the city section a bad reputation. This was to last until the present. Yet with new investment in attractive housing in adjacent brown field areas, these areas have once again become the subject of renewal. Consequently, these areas can be identified as a case of a good location with a bad reputation, emerging from the inner-city renewal of a former working-class habitation.

Keywords: Sociology, case study, urban history, inner-city renewal, urban problems, stigma, media, Sweden

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