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Fields, Meadows, and Gardens – an Integral Part of the City

The Example of Södermalm in Stockholm, Sweden

Abstract: As an increasing number of people live in towns and cities all over the world, the development of urban areas attracts attention. Urban planning in relation to quality of life and a sustainable society is on the political agenda and in the public eye. When it comes to food, modern towns and cities are today defined by consumers rather than producers. The urban agriculture movement is therefore often perceived as a new way to meet the needs of city life. However, throughout history towns and cities have had a high degree of self-sufficiency. It is often assumed that nineteenth-century rectilinear town planning was the main factor in bringing urban agriculture to an end. This study shows that in Södermalm, a central part of Stockholm which for a long time was characterised by a mix of industrial production, trade, craft, and cultivation, the fields did not disappear until after World War II. The view that agriculture was no longer compatible with modern city life and the concept of a green city constituted by parks and other green spaces as part of urban planning were connected to the interpretation of modernity in the Swedish welfare state, with its emphasis on rationality and efficiency, which lead to a dichotomy between urbanity and rurality.

Key Words: urban agriculture, urban gardening, modernity, welfare state, Stockholm

As an increasing number of people now live in towns and cities all over the world, urban areas and their development have attracted a great deal of attention in recent years. Questions of how urban areas should be planned, whether planning should be according to the principles of urban sprawl or rather a matter of densification, have been widely discussed among citizens, academics, and planners. The urban environment in relation to quality of life and different aspects of a sustainable society is also on the political agenda and in the public eye. Today planning seems geared towards more compact cities as a response to larger urban populations and the space for green areas, public as well as private, is limited.[1] So the core

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1 See for instance Rob Roggema, Towards Fundamental New Urban Planning for Productive Cities: the Quest for Space, in: Second International Conference on Agriculture in an Urbanizing Society, Reconnecting Agriculture and Food Chains to Societal Needs, 14–17 Sept. 2015, Rome, Italy. Proceedings of the Conference 2015, 179–180 note 3.

of the matter is what is an urban environment? Apart from perhaps obvious aspects such as a densely occupied area with access to a variety of goods, services, and work opportunities, the answer seems elusive. The complexity is mirrored in the amount of research analysing and interpreting urban areas and urban life in demographic, economic, political, social, and cultural terms. One frequently discussed topic is the rural-urban divide. Though such views are challenged today, not least from a planning perspective, traditionally "urban" and "rural" have been seen as a dichotomy, with urban life centred around commerce and manufacturing and rural life focused on cultivation and management of land.[2] Another aspect that has been put forward is the impact of new and altered urban consumption patterns emerging in the late twentieth century as a result of gentrification processes and a renewed interest in urban life, while there was a decline in industrial production within urban areas. The sociologist Sharon Zukin, for instance, wrote in the 1990s that "cities are no longer seen as landscapes of production, but as landscapes of consumption".[3] When it comes to food, towns and cities are today certainly made up of consumers rather than producers.

Urban agriculture comes in many shapes and forms, but essentially involves cultivating, processing, and distributing food in or around a town or city and is often associated with social, economic, and ecological sustainability. Among its many benefits individual well-being and health are also mentioned. Urban agriculture can be organised by individual citizens, groups, companies, or city authorities. It also includes more radical approaches such as guerrilla gardening, which could be defined as illicit horticultural cultivation in neglected public spaces as well as "non-places", that is, places that are forgotten and not cared for. All these forms of producing plants, vegetables, berries, fruit, honey, eggs, or similar products are often looked to as representing a different way of life in the cityscape and a new way to meet the needs of urban life.[4] The surge of interest during the last decades from authorities, organisations, and communities leading to various projects and media coverage may have reinforced the sense of novelty. The academic enthusiasm for the topic resulting in books, articles, and reports occasionally also contributes to this perception.[5]

However, towns and cities have had a high degree of self-sufficiency throughout history. This is certainly the case in Sweden, where studies show that urban agricultural production, particularly that of cereals and later also potatoes, was substantial in many towns in the pre-industrial era, and dependency on the countryside's food production varied considerably between towns.[6] Even on a local household level the degree of self-sufficiency could be high. This often included horticultural production on plots within the town walls as well as outside them in the town land, meaning the fields, meadows, and garden plots that surrounded the

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2 Alistair Scott et al., The Rural-Urban Divide. Myth or Reality?, in: Socio-Economic Research Group (SERG) Policy Brief 2 (2007), 1–27.

3 Sharon Zukin, Urban Lifestyles. Diversity and Standardization in Spaces of Consumption, in: Urban Studies 35/5–6 (1998), 825–839, quotation on page 825.

4 See for instance Chiara Tornaghi, Critical Geography of Urban Agriculture, in: Progress in Human Geography 38/4 (2014), 551–567; Michael Hardman/Peter J. Larkham, Informal Urban Agriculture: The Secret Lives of Guerrilla Gardeners, Cham et al. 2014.

5 For instance, Hardman/Larkham, Informal Urban Agriculture, 16, claim that: "Whilst the practice of gardening in the urban has been around for centuries (Schofield 1990), the idea of farming within a city is a relatively new concept, at least in the Western hemisphere (Nasr et al, 2013, Mougeot 1999, Viljoen et al 2005)."

6 Annika Björklund, Historical Urban Agriculture. Food Production and Access to Land in Swedish Towns before 1900, Stockholm 2010, 100–103, 151–154.

towns. In addition, archaeological studies in recent years have found many traces of gardens and gardening activities in urban contexts in Sweden dating from the medieval period and onwards, which indicates much greener and more productive towns than has hitherto been assumed.[7] Farming and horticultural production have evidently been an important and ubiquitous element in the urban fabric of medieval and early modern towns, also in Scandinavia.

The meanings of the concepts of "urban" and "rural" in an historical perspective have attracted considerable attention among scholars during the last decades. Similarities, differences, and the relation between the two have been questioned and problematised, as has the concept of urbanisation, and a more multifaceted image is emerging.[8] In medieval Sweden a town could indeed be very small. Sometimes not more than an aggregation of eight farms and a church was needed to obtain a town charter, while there were other places that never obtained formal urban privileges but had similar functions to a town.[9]

So, when did the perception of urbanity and city-dwellers change, and why? It often seems to be assumed that the shift was a consequence of industrialisation in the nineteenth century, when people migrated in large numbers from rural areas to work in the rapidly growing cities, centred on commerce, trade, and industry. The social movements that demanded urban reform around the year 1900 pointed to the disorder, congestion, and sanitary problems arising from expansion and speculation, and called for more attention to be paid to human health and quality of life, provision of amenities, and social equity.[10] People's lack of opportunities for garden cultivation and recreational outdoor life in industrialised cities was decried. Allotment gardens and garden cities were introduced as concepts bringing something new to improve life particularly for the working classes, but also for urban dwellers in general.

These movements thus conveyed a rather grey and distressing image of urbanity in the nineteenth century, which of course to a large extent was true. In Stockholm too, with its rapid industrialisation and urbanisation, the increase in population resulted in congestion, poor housing, and social and environmental problems. However, despite this development, as we will see, there were still farms and large areas of pasture and arable land within the city boundaries. For a long time, industrial enterprise and urban agriculture seemed, in a city like Stockholm, to be compatible. The major shift did not really come until the introduction

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7 Karin Lindeblad/Annika Nordström, Trädgårdsarkeologi i medeltida och tidigmoderna städer, in: Anna Andréasson et al. (eds.), Källor till trädgårdsodlingens historia. Fyra tvärvetenskapliga seminarier 2010–2013 arrangerade av Nordiskt Nätverk för Trädgårdens Arkeologi och Arkeobotanik (NTAA), Alnarp 2014, https://pub.epsilon.slu.se/12372/ (published 16 June 2015, last visited 21 Aug. 2019), 31–45.

8 See for example Sven Lilja/Peter Clark (eds.), Small Towns in Early Modern Europe, Cambridge 1995; Stephen R. Epstein (ed.), Town and Country in Europe, 1300–1800, Cambridge 2001; Åke Sandström, Ploughing Burghers and Trading Peasants. The Meeting Between the European Urban Economy and Sweden in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries, in: Finn-Einar Eliassen et al. (eds.), Regional Integration in Early Modern Scandinavia, Odense 2001, 95–105; Søren Bitsch Christensen/Jørgen Mikkelsen (eds.), Danish Towns during Absolutism. Urbanisation and Urban Culture in Denmark 1660–1848, Århus 2007; Björklund, Historical Urban Agriculture; Hans Andersson, Urbanization, Continuity and Discontinuity, in: Irene Baug et al. (eds.), Nordic Middle Ages – Artefacts, Landscapes and Society. Essays in Honour of Ingvild Øye on her 70th Birthday, University of Bergen Archeological Series (UBAS) 8/15, Bergen 2015, 21–31.

9 Martin Hansson, Småstäder och andra orter i senmedeltidens Småland, in: Meta historiskarkeologisk tidskrift (2017), 73–84, 76–77, 79–81.

10 Susan Fainstein, Urban Planning, Encyclopædia Britannica, https://www.britannica.com/topic/urban-planning/The-era-of-industrialization (published 12 May 2016, last visited 20 Aug. 2019).

of the welfare state and its interpretation of modernity. I will illustrate this by looking at the development of Södermalm, a part of the Swedish capital characterised by both industry and urban agriculture well into the 1900s, when fields and gardens were replaced by wide streets and apartment buildings. The aim is to clarify what factors were important for maintaining cultivation within the city's boundaries, and when and why fields, meadows, and gardens eventually disappeared.

From grey disorder to green planning?

Before looking more closely at the development of Södermalm, I would like to dwell a little longer on the situation around the turn of the twentieth century. This was a period of great optimism and a sense of the beginning of a new era. There was a general confidence in the future and the possibilities that lay ahead in a modern world. However, industrial society and the situation of workers were also criticised. The Arts and Crafts movement artist and socialist William Morris was one of these voices. In his novel *News from Nowhere* from 1890, he describes an English Utopia at the beginning of the twenty-first century, where people have freed themselves from the burdens of industrialisation and live in harmony with the natural world in an egalitarian society. London is no longer dirty, crowded, and dominated by slums where people lead pinched and sordid lives, but a pastoral idyll full of small houses and beautiful gardens with flowers, vegetable-plots, fruit-trees, and singing birds, where city-dwellers have more or less turned into country people. As we can see, Morris outlines the concept of a garden city, but he does not stop there. According to *News from Nowhere,* the whole of England is at this point turned into "a garden, where nothing is wasted and nothing is spoilt, with the necessary dwellings, sheds, and workshops scattered up and down the country, all trim and neat and pretty."[11] The idea of a garden city was further developed by Ebenezer Howard in his treatise *Tomorrow: a Peaceful Path to Real Reform*, published in 1898, in which he illustrates the garden city in a diagram with a large park at the centre, surrounded by dwellings with adjacent gardens and workplaces in the periphery, all enclosed by a belt of agricultural land.[12] The following year Howard founded the Garden City Association, and in 1903 he started the garden city project of Letchworth north of London. Despite the goal of providing blue-collar workers a good life with decent housing and recreational gardens including vegetable plots, in the end the prices were not affordable for these groups. Instead Letchworth and other garden cities and garden suburbs became predominately middle-class areas.[13]

The concept soon spread to the continent. One interesting example is Gartenstadt Hellerau outside Dresden in Germany, a small model town created around the Dresdner Werkstätte furniture factory by its owner, Karl Schmidt-Hellerau. The architect Heinrich Tessenow was involved in producing affordable dwellings for the workers. His books *Der Wohnhausbau* (1909) and *Hausbau und dergleichen* (1916) show the intention to provide small and func-

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11 William Morris, News from Nowhere or An Epoch of Rest, Being Some Chapters from a Utopian Romance, London et al. 1908, 93.

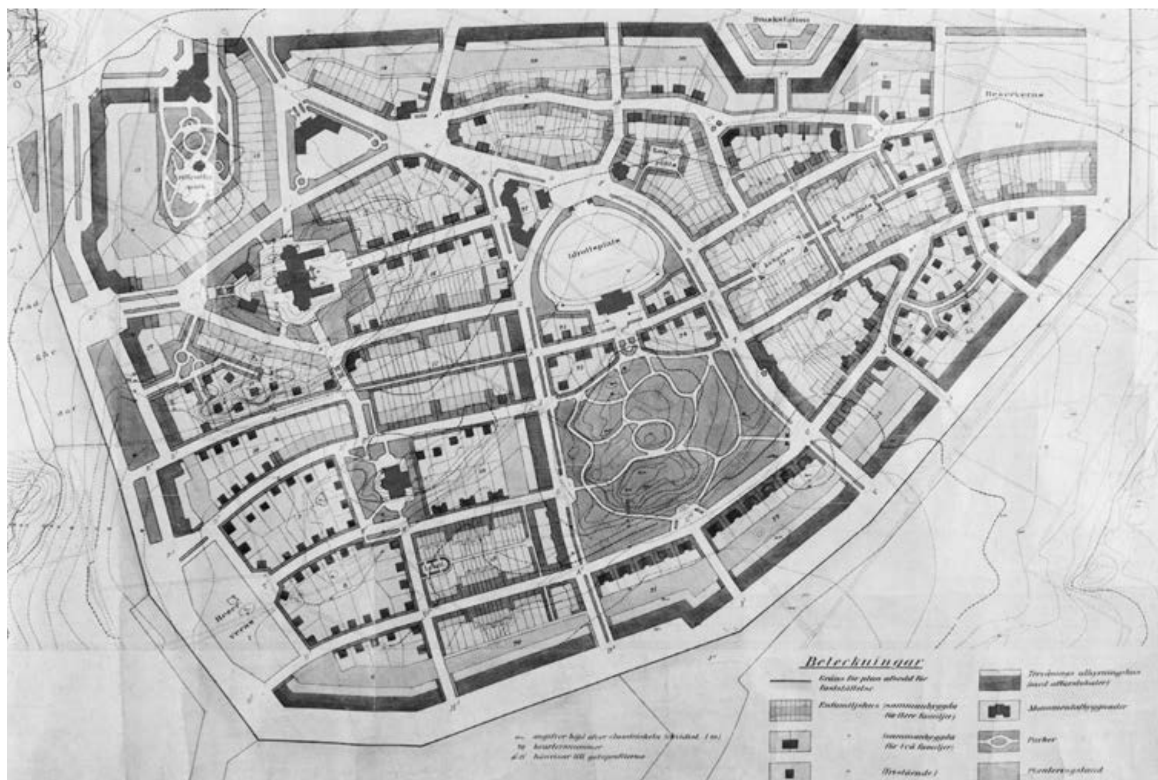
12 Ebenezer Howard, Tomorrow: a Peaceful Path to Real Reform, London 1898, 22–25.

13 Stanly Buder, Visionaries and Planners. The Garden City Movement and the Modern Community, Oxford/New York 1990, 84–95.

tional houses of high architectural quality, each with a smallish garden with a narrow patio, an area for growing vegetables and flowers, fruit trees, and facilities for keeping small livestock like hens and doves. They also provide photo documentation that these small cottage gardens were mainly used for subsistence cultivation.[14]

Gamla Enskede, south of Stockholm, was the first garden city in Sweden. The plan by the architect Per Olof Hallman from 1907–1908 (see figure 1) is dominated by different types of residential houses surrounded by gardens along gently curved streets. At the core of the area are a large park and a sports field, while along the periphery there are three-storey houses with shops and rental apartments, in front of which long narrow strips for cultivation are indicated. The aim was to help the working class with housing and the project was partly funded by the city. However, when it was built in the following years, the focus was mainly on detached houses with individual gardens instead of the proposed integrated model which the architect had envisioned, and as in so many other garden cities, it was primarily the middle class that moved in.[15]

Figure 1: Plan of Enskede 1907/08, the first garden city in Sweden.



Source: Per Olof Hallman 1907/08, Stockholms stadsbyggnadskontor, Public Domain, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Enskede_tr%C3%A4dg%C3%A5rdsstad_stadplan_1907.jpg.

14 Franziska Bollerey/Kristiana Hartmann, A Patriarchial Utopia. The Garden City and Housing Reform in Germany at the Turn of the Century, in: Anthony Sutcliffe (ed.), The Rise of Modern Urban Planning 1800–1914, New York 1890, 151–154; Didem Ekici, From Rikli's Light-and-Air Hut to Tessenow's Patenthaus: Körperkultur and the Modern Dwelling in Germany, 1890–1914, in: The Journal of Architecture 13/4 (2008), 379–406, 395–399.

15 Elisabeth Stavenow-Hidemark, Villabebyggelse i Sverige 1900–1925, Uppsala 1971, 307–312.

Allotment gardens were also strongly associated with the possibility to escape the grey city and its poor conditions in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Garden plots formed part of a policy to improve the situation of working-class families living under poor conditions and suffering from inappropriate housing, malnutrition, and social neglect. The land for the plots was often provided by the local authorities, but projects could also be initiated by organisations and private employers.[16] Inspired by the allotment movements in Germany and Denmark, the first allotment gardens were laid out in the south of Sweden in Landskrona and Malmö in 1895. The movement spread quickly and in 1905 the first gardens were created in Stockholm. The well-to-do Social Democrat Anna Lindhagen was one of the major proponents of allotment gardens. In her book *Om koloniträdgårdar* (*On Allotment Gardens*), published in 1905, she writes about the ones she had seen in Malmö:

> "Only a few tenants have a kitchen garden on a large scale, most of the gardens here are exclusively small homely 'dens' among shrubs, roses, and flower borders, which later [in the season] often are lined with strawberries. In some gardens there are fruit trees, which yield crops."[17]

It is obvious from literature of the day that producing food was one aim, but the possibility of leading a meaningful life despite the unhealthy circumstances brought about by industrialisation was equally important. The Swedish garden writer and architect Rudolf Abelin conveys this view in the book *Koloniträdgården* (*The Allotment Garden*) from 1907, where he describes the allotment garden as a lively place where "streams of joyful words" and "bright feelings of hope" prevail. He continues to paint the scene:

> "Mother and children have gone there in advance, and when the steam whistle sounds or the bell tolls, the father hurries to some quiet hours in the care of his family and God's free nature, with a little refreshing work with the soil followed by supper. He feels free out there, he sees his children tumble about in innocent joy, and he is seized by bright dreams about the strength of the seeds and herbs, about a rich and tasty harvest."[18]

Abelin underlines the togetherness. The cultivation is an important aspect, but the quote also conveys the garden as a haven.

To conclude, new concepts such as allotment gardens and garden cities, introduced as a means of improving the living conditions in densely populated towns and cities, were known and implemented early on in Sweden, including Stockholm. However, it is important to keep in mind that the context was somewhat different from that in Britain, Germany, France, and other countries, where urbanisation had started much earlier and the number of inhabitants

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16 Michel Conan, From Vernacular Gardens to Social Anthropology of Gardening, in: Michel Conan (ed.), Perspectives on Garden Histories, Dumbarton Oaks Colloquium on the History of Landscape Architecture, Washington D.C. 1999, 181–204, 196; Gunilla Englund/Sören Hallgren, Koloniträdgårdar, Stockholm 1974, 11–15.

17 Anna Lindhagen, Om koloniträdgårdar, Stockholm 1905, 28. Author's translation.

18 Rudolf Abelin, Koloniträdgården. En bok för stadsbor och industrisamhällen, Stockholm 1907, 17. Author's translation.

was much higher, which led to larger cities with larger problems. In the 1850s roughly 90 percent of the population of Sweden still lived in rural areas, the majority of them involved in farming. There was some early industrialisation, but it was centred in rural areas, the mining regions and forests in the north. Mostly due to decreasing child mortality, the population increased during the period from 1800 to 1870 by 77 percent, to 4.2 million inhabitants.[19] This eventually led to a situation in which people moved into towns and cities in order to find work, no longer being able to support their large families in the countryside. Urbanisation in Sweden began late, but advanced rapidly once it had started. In 1890, only two Swedes in ten lived in urban areas, whereas in 1935, half the population lived in towns and cities.[20] Stockholm had already started to grow around the mid-nineteenth century. At that time the capital had 93,000 inhabitants, by 1880 there were 169,000, and in 1900 the population had reached 300,000. This progression continued in the twentieth century. In 1930 there were around half a million inhabitants, and in 1980 almost a million.[21] As we can see, the population of Stockholm more than tripled from 1850 to 1900 and did so again from 1900 to 1980. Now it is time to take a closer look at the situation in Södermalm and how it has developed over time.

The early development of Södermalm

The name "Stockholm" first appears in the historical record in letters written by Birger Jarl and his son King Valdemar in 1252. The document gives no information about the appearance of the town, but the absence of a rectilinear city plan in medieval Stockholm seems to indicate spontaneous growth.[22] By the end of the fourteenth century, Stockholm had grown quickly to become not only the largest city in Sweden, but also the political centre with the royal residence. It comprised not only the small central island of Stadsholmen, meaning the Town Island, nowadays referred to as the Old Town, but was soon extended to include its surroundings. Stadsholmen was already densely populated in the Middle Ages, with hardly any room for gardens, let alone fields and meadows, so to incorporate the hinterland was necessary in order to survive. The island of Södermalm to the south, largely devoted to agricultural land except for areas where the terrain was too rocky or marshy, was important in supplying the citizens with provisions. In addition, a cluster of streets with mainly small wooden houses were built around the square by the bridge connecting the two islands. In connection with the ongoing large-scale redevelopment of the Slussen (sluices) area, remains of stone houses with evidence of a bourgeois material culture from as early as the sixteenth century have been found.

On a map from the early 1640s, we can see that the extent of the built-up area on Södermalm by then exceeded Stadsholmen in size, but that it still retained a rather medieval organic character (figure 2). However, this was soon to change, as the seventeenth century was a time

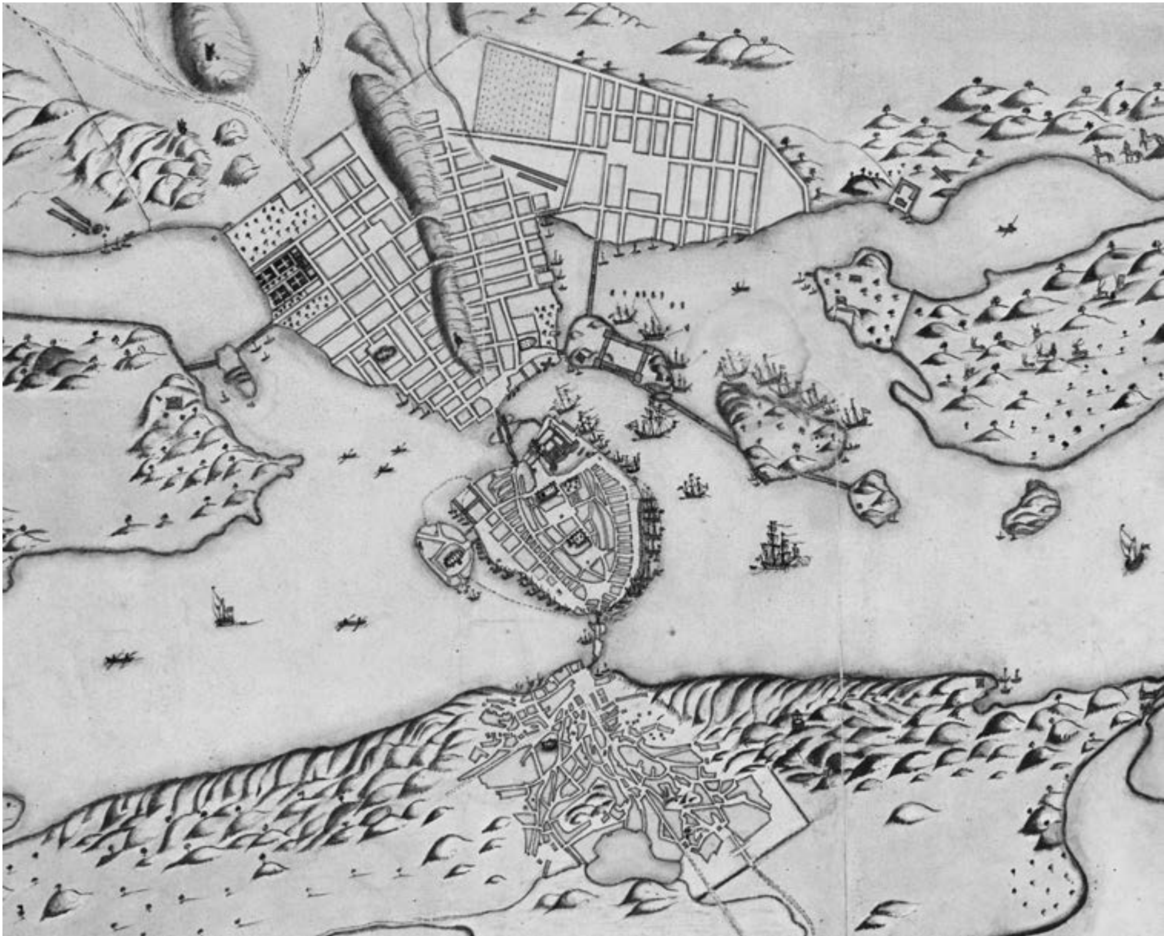
19 Janken Myrdal/Carl-Johan Gadd (eds.), Det svenska jordbrukets historia, vol. 3: Den agrara revolutionen: 1700–1870, Stockholm 2000, 186–187.

20 Ibid., 187.

21 Leif Wastenson et al. (eds.), Sveriges nationalatlas Befolkningen, Sveriges nationalatlas (SNA), 1st ed., Stockholm 1991, 59.

22 Göran Dahlbäck, Stockholm blir stad, in: Lars Nilsson (ed.), Staden på vattnet, part 1, 1252–1850, Stockholm 2002, 17–64, 17.

Figure 2: Stockholm in the early 1640s. While the north area called Norrmalm is characterised by a grid plan, the small island in the center, Stadsholmen (today the Old Town), and the rocky island in the south, Södermalm, retain a medieval organic town structure.



Source: Unknown author 1642, Kungliga biblioteket, Kart- och bildsektionen, Stockholm 51:30, https://stockholmskallan.stockholm.se/post/24365.

of great expansion. Sweden's new status as a great power meant that Stockholm now had to be turned into a European capital with a centralised administration, a new modern layout, and representational buildings. During the seventeenth century the population of Stockholm grew from an estimated 9,000 in the 1610s to 35,000 in the 1650s and 57,000 in the 1690s.[23] Extensive town planning transformed the city in the decades around 1650.[24] On Södermalm a gridiron plan was introduced, though it had to be adjusted to the difficult topography (see figure 3).[25] Another major change was the building of Queen Christina's Sluice between Stadsholmen and Södermalm in the 1640s. Opening up the passage between Lake Mälaren, the country's all-important inland waterway, and the Baltic Sea, the sluice was crucial to

23 Nils Ahlberg, Stadsgrundningar och planförändringar. Svensk stadsplanering 1521–1721, Uppsala 2005, 529.

24 Thomas Hall, Huvudstad i omvandling. Stockholms planering och utbyggnad under 700 år, Stockholm 1999, 53–54.

25 Ibid., 70–74.

Stockholm as a city in general, and to the development of Södermalm in particular (see figure 4). The town boundaries also became more distinct in the seventeenth century, when Stockholm, like all other towns in Sweden, was surrounded by a fence with tollgates, where toll (*tull*) was collected. The old names Hornstull and Skanstull in Södermalm signify that the whole island, including the arable land and unexploited rocky terrain, formed part of the city.

Figure 3: Detail of a map of Stockholm from 1656 showing the new rectilinear town plan in Södermalm.

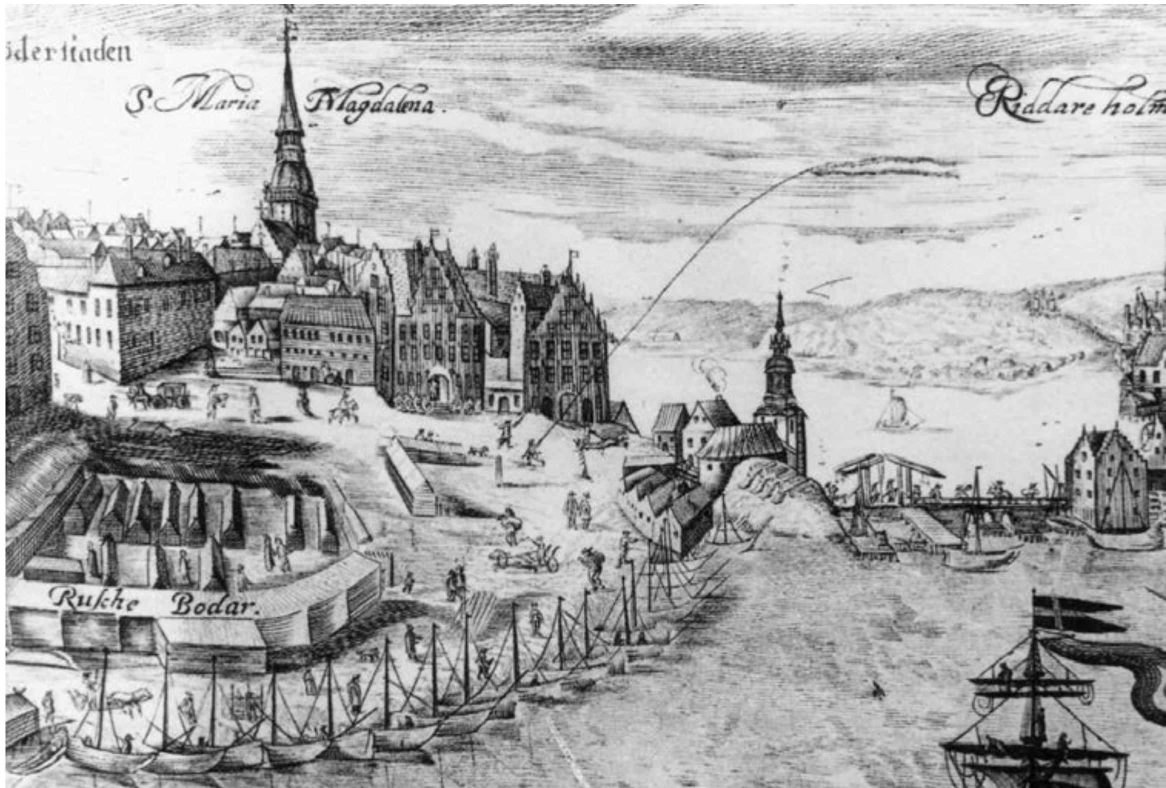
Source: Lantmäteriet, Historiska kartor, Lantmäteristyrelsens arkiv A99-1:11.

What characterised Södermalm in the seventeenth century, and who were its inhabitants? Interestingly, the economic activity of the island was already a mix of industrial production, trade, craft, and agricultural and horticultural cultivation. Its proximity to the harbours, the sluices, and the Iron Square in Stadsholmen, where all iron and copper – the backbone of the Swedish economy – had to be weighed before export, attracted entrepreneurs to set up business. Other inhabitants were active in shipping, toll collection, or weighing and transporting goods of various kinds.[26] Among the manufacturers, there were several textile industries, a tobacco spinnery, a tilery, several ropemakers, and tanneries.[27]

Horticultural production has also long been a characteristic of Södermalm. Fifteenth-century sources mention that the burghers in Stockholm had garden plots on the island.[28] Besides these, there seem to have been in excess of 50 gardeners in the 1670s, representing

26 Åke Meyerson, Befolkningen på Södermalm år 1676, in: Samfundet Sankt Eriks årsbok (1943), 73–106, 104.
27 Ibid., 99–102.
28 Ibid., 91.

Figure 4: Södermalmstorg, the square in Södermalm close to the sluice, 1650. We see some of the new stone houses, probably including Louis De Geer's palace in Götgatan and, in the foreground, the Russian market. Detail of a view of Stockholm made by Wolfgang Hartmann in connection with the coronation of Queen Christina in 1650.

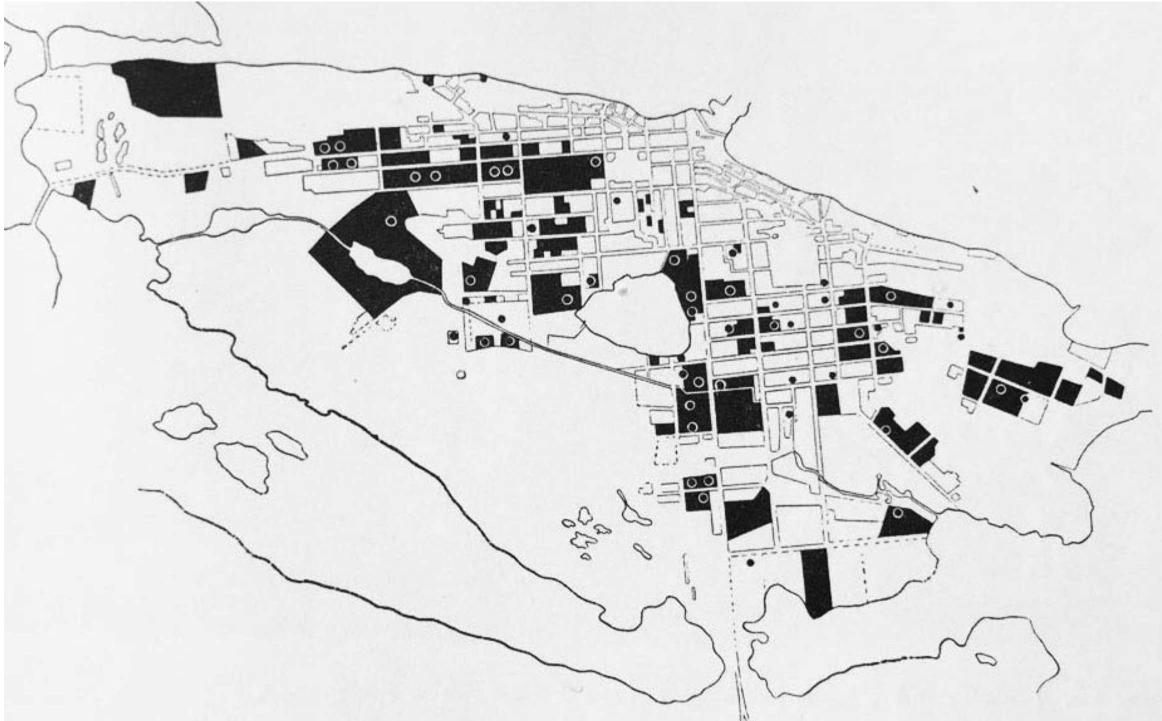


Source: Stockholms stadsmuseum, Inv. no SSM 503124, Public Domain, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:S%C3%B6dermalmstorg_kopparstick_1650.jpg.

more than half of Stockholm's total number of gardeners (see figure 5). The majority owned their holdings, but as most of them did not report employing any garden labourers, the businesses seem to have been small and family-run. Many of them were selling produce to so-called *månglerskor,* women who, with no other way to support themselves, could obtain permits to manufacture and/or sell goods not included in the guild monopolies from stands in squares or streets. A large number of these women lived on Södermalm and sold their merchandise on the bridge to Stadsholmen.[29] In 1676 there were approximately 1,555 farms and houses, and some 12,700 inhabitants.[30] In addition to pastureland and fields for agricultural production, a typical feature of the island were the many mills, owned by the millers themselves or by wealthy tradesmen.[31]

29 Ibid., 97, 105.
30 Ibid., 81.
31 Ibid., 94.

Figure 5: Gardens in Södermalm in the 1670s (black), dots and rings indicate those belonging to gardeners, based on the population register of 1676 and the so-called *Holms Tomtböcker* (register of properties) of 1674/1679.



Source: Åke Meyerson, Befolkningen på Södermalm år 1676, in: Samfundet Sankt Eriks årsbok (1943), 73–106, 105.

The built environment was a mixture ranging from very simple traditional houses to grander dwellings built according to the latest fashion. While wooden houses of varying quality and size dominated the island, ostentatious stone buildings now appeared in the areas around the market square and the nearby Church of St. Mary Magdalene, built in the 1630s.[32] Some of them were palaces with large elaborate gardens. An early example is the palace of the wealthy Dutch entrepreneur and industrialist Louis De Geer. The location on Södermalm was, from a business point of view, ideal for someone like De Geer, who had established himself as a major owner of ironworks in Sweden. He took a keen interest in horticulture; there is a sketch by his own hand corresponding to the kitchen garden that was laid out at his Stockholm property. It indicates beds for a wide array of vegetables and herbs, such as artichoke, asparagus, Welsh onion, cress, sorrel, sugar beet, endive, Spanish cardoon, and sage, many of them specialties and rarities, which may have been imported from the Netherlands.[33] By this time, many wealthy burghers in Stockholm had begun to establish small or larger farms in the parts of the city surrounding the central island, particularly on Södermalm. These small holdings, or *malmgårdar* (*malm* farms; see figure 6), were used for farming and gardening to provide the owner family with provisions and perhaps some extra income. Equally important, however,

32 Ibid., 82.
33 Badeloch Noldus, A Dutchman with a Penchant for Parks, in: Lustgården (1998), 41–58, 50–52.

was their function as a place to relax and escape the hustle and bustle of the city, particularly during the summer months. The gardens were important for growing various plants and garden produce as well as from a social point of view.[34] Gardeners were often employed – for example, the majority of garden labourers on Södermalm in the 1670s were employed in *malmgårdar*.[35] Burghers continued to build new *malmgårdar* all through the eighteenth century. They remained rather heterogeneous in respect to size and purpose (see figure 7). Some provided the economic base for the families that owned them, while others represented mainly a pleasant place to spend time and a break from ordinary life.

Figure 6: Groen's *malmgård* in Södermalm, built in the seventeenth century, was formerly operated as a commercial garden.

Source: Photo by Holger Ellgård 2017, Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Groens_malmg%C3%A5rd,_jan_2017a.jpg.

Despite a clear commitment from the 1600s onwards to turning the spontaneously developed town of Stockholm into a well-planned capital based on continental ideals, large parts of Södermalm remained less regulated and devoted to urban agriculture well into the nineteenth century. Important factors in this, as we have seen, were the city's need for a degree of self-sufficiency and the desire to avoid the cost and difficulty of long-distance transport, a point especially pertinent when it came to fresh produce like vegetables and fruits. However, perceptions of the concept of urbanity itself were also of great relevance. The prestige of

34 Birgit Lindberg, Malmgårdarna i Stockholm, Stockholm 2002, 14–17.
35 Meyerson, Befolkningen på Södermalm, 97.

Figure 7: Plan of Zinkensdamm *malmgård* in Södermalm with its large gardens and fish pond, which in 1788 belonged to the tradesman Philip Jacob Marius. Explanation: a. Main house and outbuildings (at the top), b. Gardens, c. Outer garden with a newly established field, d. Enclosed area for tree cultivation, e. Field, f. Meadow, g. Meadow including rocky terrain and pond, h. Outland.

Source: Hieron. von der Burg 1788, Stockholms stadsarkiv, Församlingsritningar/MAR 94-95, https://sok.stadsarkivet.stockholm.se/bildarkiv/Egen-producerat/BN-ritningar/ForskartorPDF/SSAKR_009061_100dpi.pdf.

large houses and palaces with substantial gardens rich in fruit trees, vegetables, and flowers continued to be an important aspect of building a representational city, and as a bonus, many of these gardens also delivered garden produce to the citizens. In the eighteenth century the cultivation of tobacco, which could be called a "cross-over" between industry and urban agriculture, began to develop into an important enterprise on Södermalm. The majority of Stockholm's tobacco manufacturers were situated here, and the tobacco fields and adjoining tobacco barns would become something of a hallmark of the island.

The development in Södermalm from the nineteenth to the twenty-first century

In the nineteenth century, we see rapid urbanisation in Stockholm and intense development taking place in Södermalm. Around 1850 its population was roughly 27,000, by the turn of the century it had reached almost 70,000, and in the 1930s and 1940s it peaked at circa 145,000 inhabitants.[36] Several new industries were established in Södermalm, among them the Ludwigsberg foundry and mechanical workshops opened in the 1840s, which were to become an important industrial enterprise in nineteenth-century Sweden.[37] Another considerable line of business was brewing. One of the largest and best-known plants was the München brewery, founded in the 1850s. A decision with far-reaching significance in boosting the area's development was made when Stockholm's first railway station was placed in central Södermalm in the 1860s. This new and modern means of transportation facilitated the transfer of goods to and from the city, and soon new companies were established close to the railway station.

Around the same time, in 1866, a new city plan initiated by the politician Albert Lindhagen was produced in order to deal with the expansion (see figure 8). One of its principal aims was to introduce a new concept of urbanity, with a system of wide esplanades and boulevards, prominent buildings (often institutions), and public parks, and as we can see, all of Södermalm was now to be developed. Due to its radical approach, the great expense involved, and competing interests, the so-called Lindhagen plan met with opposition in the city council and was never implemented in its entirety. A revised version was finally passed a decade later for central Stockholm, and in the 1880s the public park of Tantolunden was laid out accordingly along the water in the western part of Södermalm.[38] In the Lindhagen plan, a wide main road, Ringvägen, was to have formed a semicircle around Södermalm, with the purpose of simplifying transportation between Lake Mälaren and the Baltic Sea. The topography, however, proved too difficult to master, and only one section of Ringvägen was finally built, running from north to south in the western part of Södermalm. As we see on the plan, the intention was to develop the whole island in a grid pattern, but very little had

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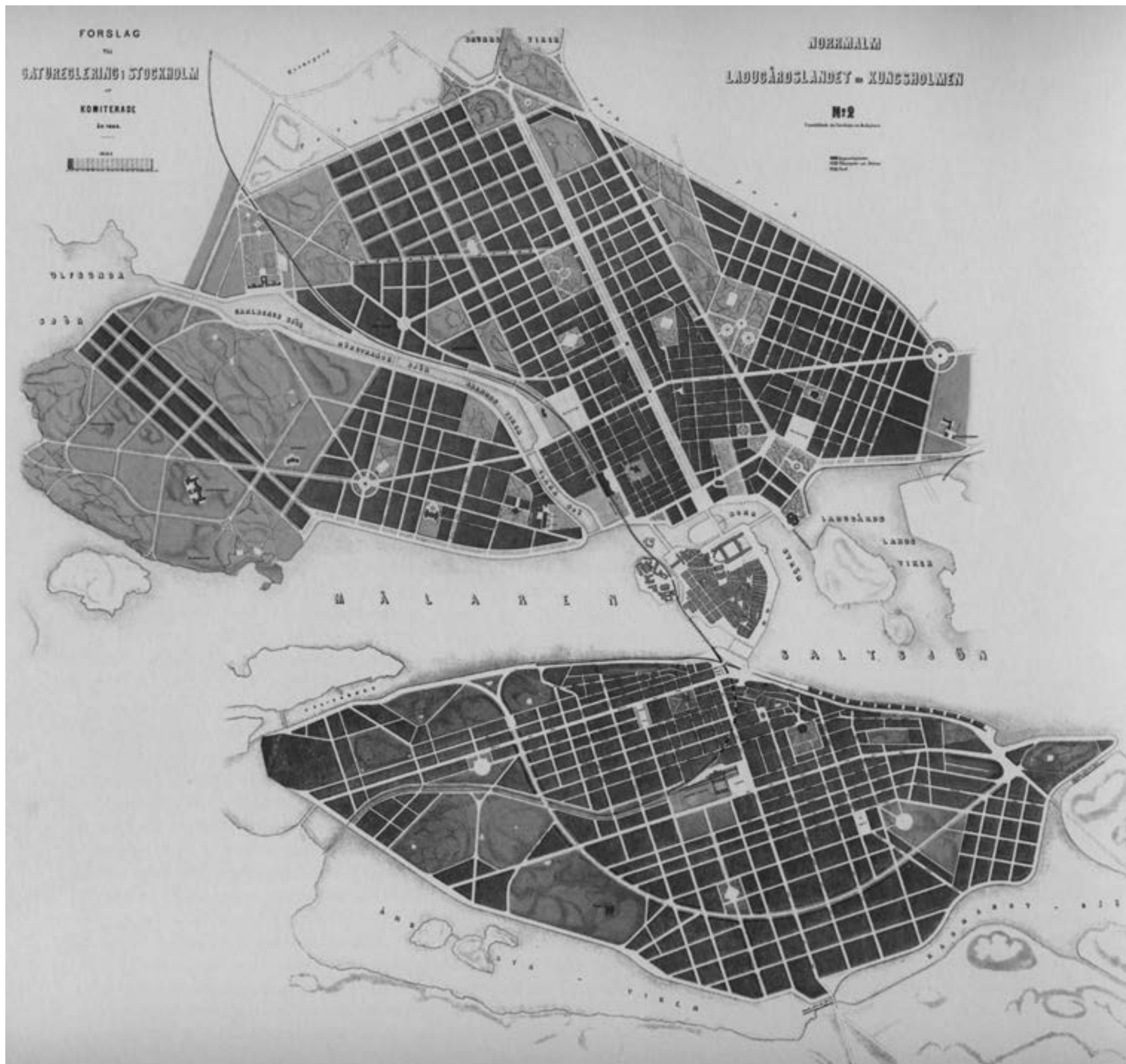
36 Befolkningen i Stockholm 1252-2005 – från 1721 enligt stadens statistiska årsböcker, Utrednings- och statistikkontoret, Stockholms stad (2005), 30–33, https://stockholmskallan.stockholm.se/PostFiles/USK/historisk_befolkning_web.pdf (last visited 24 Oct. 2019).

37 Eva Dahlström Rittsél, Verkstadsmiljöer under 1800-talet. Mekaniska verkstäder mellan hantverk och industri, Stockholm 1999, 93–120.

38 Hall, Huvudstad i omvandling, 113–125.

Figure 8: The original version of the so-called Lindhagen plan from 1866, showing the proposed development of Stockholm, including Södermalm.



Source: Albert Lindhagen's general plan for Stockholm 1866, Stockholms stadsarkiv, Public Domain, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Lindhagenplanen_1866.jpg.

been realised by the turn of the century.[39] There was still a good deal of arable land, particularly tobacco plantations, much like what Heinrich Neuhaus's detailed map from the 1870s shows (see figure 9). Tobacco production was monopolised in the early twentieth century and significantly, the new state-owned Swedish Tobacco Company set up their first factory and offices in Södermalm in 1917, to be followed by several new buildings until the 1940s.

In 1906 the first allotment gardens on the island were established in the rocky terrain along the water south of the Tantolunden park. The area was called Eriksdalslunden after the former

39 Gatureglering Stockholm 1897. Map from 1897 showing the development of new houses, roads and parks in Stockholm until 1897, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Gatureglering_Stockholm_1897.jpg (last visited 20 Aug. 2019).

Figure 9: Detail from the panorama map by Heinrich Neuhaus from the 1870s, showing Malongen in the centre, one of Södermalm's oldest industries where textiles were produced from the 1660s, tobacco fields with a tobacco barn, and many gardens, among them the one by Groen's *malmgård* (to the right).

Source: Heinrich Neuhaus (1833–1887), Centraltryckeriet, 1875, Stockholms stadsmuseum Invent. no. 503158, Public Domain, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Neuhaus_panorama,_Nytorget,_Malongen,_Groens_malmg%C3%A5rd.JPG.

farm of Eriksdal, which had been sold to the city in the 1880s. The site was inspected and chosen by the allotment garden society in Stockholm (*Föreningen koloniträdgårdar i Stockholm*), which had been founded that same year with Anna Lindhagen as its first chairperson. On the visit to Eriksdalslunden she immediately saw the potential of the site. She wrote:

> "In the company of the former city gardener Medin, we directed our steps to Eriksdalslunden, the grove which by its beautiful location deserves the epithet 'the delightful'. There genuine Södermalm nature is preserved, with the rocks untouched, with the willows leaning out over the Årsta bay, with the sun in the right position all day and with sunset making Eriksdalslunden seem bright when the night has fallen over the rest of the city. In between all the wild nature we saw large stretches of open land – potato and tobacco land and an old venerable [tobacco] barn that was created as a tool for colonists."[40]

The word "colonist" is linked to the Swedish term for "allotment garden", which is *koloniträdgård* or "colony garden", and consequently the user is a *kolonist*. The quote conveys the

40 Anna Lindhagen, Koloniträdgårdar i Stockholm 10-årsskrift, Stockholm 1916, 5–6. Author's translation.

Figure 10: Map of east Södermalm (1938–40), showing the extension of the town planning at that time, including Ringvägen, the Eriksdalslunden allotment gardens, the new Erikslund modern housing area, and the railway station with the rail yard in the centre.

Source: Stockholms stadsingenjörskontor, 1940, Stockholms stadsarkiv SE/SSA/Tryckta kartor/ Karta över de centrala delarna av Stockholm 1938-1940/Kartblad Staden:d, tryckår 1940, Creative commons CC-BY, https://stockholmskallan.stockholm.se/post/31639.

sense of untouched nature and rural feeling that Lindhagen experienced, despite the large rail yards around the station and all the industrial activities in Södermalm. Several other allotment areas would follow, among them one within the Tantolunden park.

Some parts of the island remained as they had been well into the 1930s, when the last areas were developed (see figure 10 and 11). One such area was between Eriksdalslunden and Ringvägen, where apartment buildings with small flats with modern commodities began to be built in the 1930s. They mirror the breakthrough of modernism in Sweden at the time.[41] In the early 1930s, the first underground line in Stockholm was built in a tunnel below Södermalm, as a first step toward replacing the trams and creating an efficient transportation system from the future suburbs in the south to the city centre. There were three stations, all still functioning: Slussen by the sluice, Södra Bantorget (now Medborgarplatsen) by the railway station, and Ringvägen (now Skanstull) by the former Skanstull tollgate. The last of these was situ-

41 Henrik O. Andersson/Fredric Bedoire, Stockholms byggnader. En bok om arkitektur och stadsbild i Stockholm, Stockholm 1988, 261–262.

Figure 11: View of the South Station and its vast rail yard, ca. 1940. New factory buildings and old fields existing side by side.

Source: Photo by unknown, Hans Björkman collections, Public Domain, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:S%C3%B6dra_stationsomr%C3%A5det_1930-talet.jpg.

ated by the department store Åhlén & Holm on Ringvägen, which had originally opened in 1915, but been replaced by a new and much larger modern seven-storey building in 1929.[42]

Before relating the further development of Södermalm, some background must be provided on the evolution of the so-called Swedish model, which was implemented from the 1930s and onwards and would contribute to transforming Sweden from one of the poorest countries in Europe around the turn of the century to the richest in the 1970s. In a famous speech in 1928, the Social Democratic leader Per Albin Hansson introduced *folkhemmet*, the concept of society and state as the "people's home", as a metaphor of the society that he wanted to create. The foundation was, as in any good home, a sense of togetherness and common feeling, where equality, consideration, cooperation, and helpfulness would prevail. When applied to society, this would mean the breaking down of all social and economic barriers which still separated privileged and deprived citizens. The major task for politicians in a democracy, according to Hansson, was to create a society where all citizens could be assured

42 Ibid, 121.

of economic and social security and everybody would cooperate for the common good.[43] The association between home, nationalism, and socialism was effective in bridging class identity and thereby attracting a wider base of voters.[44] Around the same time, in 1930 the Stockholm Exhibition introduced modernism, or functionalism as it was known and applied in Sweden, in architecture and urban planning to a wider audience.[45] The exhibition would be of great importance to the Social Democratic ideology and the development of Swedish society over a long period of time. The Social Democrats won the general elections in 1932 and would stay in power until 1976. The implementation of *folkhemmet* was carried out in cooperation with industry and was accentuated after World War II when the economy grew strong.[46] The concept of the Swedish welfare state was developed, with a large public sector providing services in housing, health, and education, as well as a universal social insurance system in order to guarantee decent living conditions for all. Urban planning and housing policy were a central part of the political agenda. Everyone, including the working class, was to be offered affordable, practical, and comfortable modern homes; however, the various construction projects also provided work during recession periods. Physical planning was now established as an academic subject and urban planning had become an expert field, strictly controlled by scientifically developed guidelines and economic regulations.[47] The building process in new housing areas was further rationalised in the 1960s, speeded up and on a new scale, as construction methods had been developed with modular units and prefabricated elements.

The quest to create a modern society also included the central parts of Swedish towns and cities, where existing buildings and blocks were demolished to give way to modern shopping centres and facilitate car traffic.[48] Stockholm was subject to one of the largest urban renewal projects in Europe during the 1950s and 1960s. In a period when other countries were rebuilding cities that had been destroyed during World War II, politicians in the Swedish capital were demolishing the old quarters in the city centre in lower Norrmalm and replacing them with modern commercial and business buildings (see figure 12). The local politician Joakim Garpe commented on the transformation during a debate in the City Council in 1963, explaining that the intention was to adjust Norrmalm according to "the capital's special leadership role". It was to "become the display window of Sweden" and "the representative city district of the modern Swedish welfare society".[49] Overall, urban development reflected the confidence in rationality, function, large-scale solutions, and science that characterised the Swedish welfare state until the 1980s. It relied on a powerful government, a large public sector, and an independent municipal structure responsible for interpreting and implement-

43 Per Albin Hansson, Från Fram till folkhemmet. Per Albin Hansson som tidningsman och talare, Solna 1982, 227–230; Timothy Alan Tilton, The Political Theory of Swedish Social Democracy, Oxford 1990, 126–127.

44 Anders Isaksson, Per Albin 3. Partiledaren, Stockholm 2000, 189–191.

45 Andersson/Bedoire, Stockholms byggnader, 261–262.

46 Christer Lundh, Spelets regler. Institutioner och lönebildning på den svenska arbetsmarknaden 1850–2000, Stockholm 2002, 139.

47 Johan Edman, New Directions in Theorizing the Professions; the Case of Urban Planning in Sweden, in: Acta Sociologica 44/4 (2001), 301–311.

48 Bengt O. H. Johansson, Den stora stadsomvandlingen. Erfarenheter från ett kulturmord, Stockholm 1997, 46–48, 56–58.

49 Hall, Huvudstad i omvandling, 127. Author's translation.

ing national policies locally.[50] The ethnologist Åke Daun points out that no other Western society has given so much power to government and public planners, and in light of this he emphasises rationality as a key factor in the Swedish mentality. Daun concludes: "The 'philosophy of planning' entails that one believe in the possibilities of arranging social conditions for the best of all citizens by means of rational thinking."[51]

Figure 12: The city centre of Stockholm was transformed in the 1960s to become a "display window" of the modern Swedish welfare state. The photo shows the five high-rise office buildings under construction, the main feature of the transformation, amongst the existing older buildings in their quarters. The area in front of the five "trumpet-blasts" would later be developed into Sergel square, where the House of Culture, with a theatre, reading rooms, exhibition areas, a restaurant and café, was built in the early 1970s.

Source: Photo by Oscar Bladh, Stockholms stadsmuseum, Photo no. Fa 50936, Creative commons CC-BY, https://stockholmskallan.stockholm.se/post/5340.

Södermalm was a working-class area in the twentieth century (see figure 13). The many industries made it less attractive as a residential zone. In addition, the island was overcrowded, with many families living in one-room apartments. This led to large numbers of inhabitants choosing to leave when given the opportunity with the expansion of suburban areas sprawl-

50 Sylvain Ducas, Case Study of the City of Stockholm and the Greater Stockholm Area. Summary, October 2000, 15, http://www.habitation.gouv.qc.ca/fileadmin/internet/centredoc/pubSHQ/M06301.pdf (last visited 10 July 2019).

51 Åke Daun, Swedish Mentality, University Park, PA 1999, 137.

Figure 13: Workers' cottages with gardens in Södermalm, 1946, with the large new hospital Södersjukhuset in the background.

Source: Photo by Lennart af Petersens (1913–2004), 1946, Stockholms stadsmuseum, Photo no. F 36653, Creative commons CC-BY, https://stockholmskallan.stockholm.se/post/9574.

ing out of the city. The population more than halved from the 1940s to the 1980s, when there were only about 70,000 inhabitants remaining in Södermalm.[52] During the 1970s and 1980s many industries were relocated and their buildings either demolished or turned into housing or offices. The railway station with its expansive rail yard was removed from Södermalm and replaced by a lesser station for commuter trains. The former transportation hub in the middle of the island was thus, in the late 1980s, turned into a housing area for some 30,000 inhabitants, equivalent to a fairly large Swedish city. During this period of deindustrialisation,

52 Befolkningen i Stockholm, 30–33.

Figure 14: Urban agriculture in Södermalm. The members of the non-profit association *Trädgård på spåret* started a garden project to spread knowledge about cultivation and food and develop a green vision for the area.

Photo by Helena Lyth 2015.

artists, musicians, writers, and other young people started to move to Södermalm, seeking something different, perhaps some sort of authenticity, and a less bourgeois lifestyle.

During the 1990s and the twenty-first century the island has undergone gentrification and been transformed from a somewhat neglected and run-down former working-class area into one of the most attractive and sought-after parts of the city with an array of restaurants, bookshops, designer shops, vintage shops, and flea markets. In 2014 Södermalm was designated the third "coolest neighbourhood" in the world by *Vogue* magazine, echoing its transformation into an area of the upper middle class and hipsters, with numerous residents working in media, the arts, and other creative professions.[53] The population has risen to

53 Global Street Style Report: Mapping Out the 15 Coolest Neighborhoods in the World, The Vogue (September 2014), https://www.vogue.com/slideshow/fifteen-coolest-street-style-neighborhoods#3. (last visited 16 Aug. 2018).

nearly 130,000 (2017),[54] with densification and escalating housing prices as a result. During the last decade, small-scale urban agriculture, particularly gardening, has been encouraged by the local authorities as part of a new lifestyle in the city.[55] Several such projects are found in different places in Södermalm. "Garden on Track" (*Trädgård på spåret)* is one such initiative that started in 2012, in which cultivation takes place along an abandoned railway track (see figure 14).[56] Equally, organic and/or locally grown food products are regularly sold at a farmer's market.

Conclusion

It has often been assumed that it was primarily nineteenth-century rectilinear town planning that made urban gardening and urban agriculture disappear in Sweden. This may have been the case in major European cities where the process of urbanisation and industrialisation was on a larger scale, but in the case of Stockholm and Södermalm, traditional agriculture and horticulture prevailed well into the 1930s and was finally swept away during the post-war era. Often referred to as the record years, this was the period when the modern Swedish welfare state was formed, based on a Social Democratic political agenda and a strong economy, introducing social and economic reforms including housing, pensions, vacation time, education, and women's liberation. Modernity was a fundamental concept in building the welfare state.[57] The process of developing a modern society had of course started much earlier, yet this interpretation of modernity was new, and it is the key to understanding why urban agriculture disappeared in Södermalm. The emphasis on rationality and efficiency in the welfare state, characterised by a division between producer and consumer and between working time and leisure, and by striving for large production volumes and effective transportation, also lead to a new kind of division between urbanity and rurality. Agriculture was no longer considered compatible with modern life in the city, and the concept of the "green city" was invested with a new meaning, designating parks and other green recreational areas as a part of urban planning. The allotment gardens in Södermalm, however, did not have to make way for housing or other expansions, probably because development for a long time was mainly taking place in the suburbs. Once the area regained its attractiveness and new building projects were planned, the allotment gardens were too established to be threatened; today they are protected and cherished as cultural heritage (see figure 15). Some of the old Södermalm gardens have also been protected in the last years, some as museums, others in

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54 Befolkningen i Stockholm, 30–33.

55 Cf. Stadsodla på Södermalm, http://www.stockholm.se/-/Nyheter/Park-natur-och-friluftsliv/Stadsodla-pa-Sodermalm/ (last visited 16 Aug. 2018); Södermalm har fått en ny park med stor stadsodling, in: Södermalm Direkt, 25 May 2016, https://www.stockholmdirekt.se/nyheter/sodermalm-har-fatt-en-ny-park-med-stor-stadsodling/aRKpew!EhJVzYIuxWkTIWEg4DnRg/ (last visited 16 Aug. 2018); Allt fler Södermalmsbor vill bli stadsodlare, in: Mitti Stockholm, 22 March 2016, https://mitti.se/nyheter/allt-fler-sodermalmsbor-vill-bli-stadsodlare/ (last visited 16 Aug. 2018).

56 Trädgård på spåret on Facebook, https://www.facebook.com/TRADGARDPASPARET/ (last visited 16 Aug. 2018).

57 Urban Lundberg/Klas Åmark, Social Rights and Social Security. The Swedish Welfare State, 1900–2000, in: Scandinavian Journal of History 26/3 (2001), 157–176.

people's day-to-day environment. However, as they are only rarely used for producing food, but rather as green recreation and leisure areas, they have in a sense been incorporated into modern thinking.

Figure 15: Eriksdalslund is one of the oldest allotment garden areas in Stockholm. Today Eriksdal is a cherished recreational area and a part of the cultural heritage of Södermalm.

Photo by Åsa Ahrland 2019.