

BEYOND/ BEHIND BELONG- INGNESS.

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*Toward an architectural approach
enhancing situated belongingness
through embracing, valuing &
(re)acting to stories.*

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Architecture and Planning Beyond Sustainability
Critical Spatial Perspectives*



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*Toward an architectural approach enhancing situated belongingness
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Master's thesis in Architecture
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Abstract

Belongingness | Situated knowledge | Design Approach | Subjectivity | Positionality

How does one belong? Belongingness is a complex notion binding Place and self that matter to be investigated in architecture. To be addressed in this field, the notion should be deemed beyond a common and singular perception of the definition to acknowledge the particularities of each situation. Hence, the thesis draws on Situated knowledges theory to tackle belongingness and address the Place in its whole complexity. From both a literature study and an in-situ application, the thesis investigates an approach that can enable the mapping and design for belongingness through the research question: How can architecture enhance situated belongingness through embracing, valuing, and (re)acting to stories?

Belonging is first defined theoretically through study from social sciences to architecture, and addressed in relation to Situated Knowledges, allowing for belongingness to be acknowledged regarding connectivity and interactions and go beyond dichotomies of human/object. Situated belongingness is then explored in praxis through the investigation of a suitable architectural approach giving a direction to search and design for belongingness. The five steps approach is developed conjointly with an application to understand what is behind belongingness in the context of the transitional network around the Folkets Hus in Gothenburg, Sweden.

The thesis emphasizes the necessity of a complex approach as well as a more suitable definition of belongingness for architectural praxis referring to one being part of a system. By working from an empathetical position 'within' the location, the thesis addresses the relevance of first decomposing the location through the representation of specific agents' (hi)stories, to later reconstruct an understanding of the situation as a connected network and value the agents that matter in the local belongingness. The research highlights the design praxis as a (re)action to the found situated knowledge, allowing the design answer to be specific and contingent on the situation. Finally, the master's thesis opens a critical discussion regarding the architectural practice and the element behind its understanding.

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Table of content

INTRODUCTION / <i>Background, Purpose, and Position</i>	7
<i>Background & Purpose</i>	
<i>Research questions</i>	
<i>Method & Delimitation</i>	
<i>Personal motivation</i>	
<i>Reading intructions, theories and postition</i>	
CHAPTER 1 / <i>Space, Place, Belongingness</i>	13
Space, Place, and Perception	14
<i>Discourse on Place</i>	
<i>Phenomenological approach to the Place</i>	
<i>Assemblage theory on the Place</i>	
<i>Sense of Place</i>	
Belonging, Perception and the Built environment	19
<i>Discourse and context</i>	
<i>Definition of Belonging</i>	
<i>Belong to a Place</i>	
<i>Impact and importance</i>	
<i>Behavior and the built environment</i>	
<i>Belonging and the built environment</i>	
<i>Belonging, new perspectives in discussion</i>	
GLOSSARY	25
CHAPTER 2 / <i>Situated Belongingness</i>	27
Situated Knowledge Theory	28
<i>Introductory discourse</i>	
<i>Context of the emergence of Situated Knowledge</i>	
<i>Defintion of Situated approach</i>	
<i>Situated Praxis</i>	
Situated Belongingness approach	33
<i>Subjectivity of the author</i>	
<i>Situated approach on the sense of belonging</i>	
<i>The process of Situated belongingness approach</i>	
CHAPTER 3 / <i>A Place to belong</i>	40
Situation description: Olof Palmes Plats	41
<i>Relevance of the site</i>	
<i>Brief history of the location</i>	
<i>Process description</i>	
1/ Situation analysis: Embracing stories	46
<i>1st action, gather observations of visible local agents</i>	
<i>2nd action, gather knowledge of invisible local agents</i>	
2/ Situation understanding: Representing stories	58
3&4/ Situation findings: Connecting and valuing stories	63
<i>Mapping the situated network</i>	
<i>Belongingness of the History/Past</i>	
<i>Belongingness of the Urban Furniture</i>	
<i>Belongingness of the Ground Materiality</i>	
<i>Belongingness of the Passer-by</i>	
<i>Belongingness of the Statue</i>	
5/ Situation suggestion: (Re)Acting to stories	71
<i>Approach to praxis, a concept for a test design suggestion</i>	
DISSCUSSION / <i>Critical reflection and beyond</i>	78
<i>Concluding discussion: throwback to the research</i>	
<i>Opening Discussion: questioning our role</i>	
<i>Outro: beyond and behind the research</i>	
BIBLIOGRAPHY / <i>List of references</i>	85

Background,
Purpose, and
Position

Background

Architecture has been taking part in significant cultural, societal, and identity debates in the last decades. This last 30 years, researchers have attempted to understand the way people are living and interacting with space (e.g. Altman & Low, 1992; Hashemnezhad et al., 2013; ThinkingCity, 2018). More recently, the notion of belonging has become a much prominent topic and has been undertaken by different actors. The notion was in particular raised at the Oslo Triennale of Architecture *After belonging* and was the general theme of *TedTalks Sydney 2018*. Indeed, the definition of belonging has been largely challenged, raising the question “Where does one actually belong? What relationship does one have with objects?”. In 2022, 189M posts on the social media platform Instagram contained the #home (#home on Instagram, 2022), however, 240 million people were not born in the place they are actually living (Casanovas Blanco et al., 2016, pp. 10–12).

Nowadays, the current globalized context, planetary urbanization, and pressured mobility seem to threaten the essential person-place relationship. In this political context, the formation of localities and identities seems to confront larger national and international interests (Lovell, 1998). These topics engage with a challenging and essential call, reminding people of the importance of feeling attached somewhere and the value of being situated (Altés Arlandis in Gromark, 2017, p. 275). Belonging is a much relevant challenge for architecture, but one should consider it in a broader sense rather than just as a synonym of collective identity as it is has been often analyzed by scholars (Antonsich, 2010).

Indeed, since the late 1980’s globalization theory has emerged as a response to a new form of economy, increased capitalism, free-market, and neoliberalism politics (Robertson, 1992 in Savage et al., 2004). In this context, in the 1990’s it was possible to envision one common world, centered around global connectivities. With the increased movement of people and goods and the intensification of international aesthetics, new social relations emerged from these global flows (Savage et al., 2004). But globalization not only means expansion of markets, collaboration, and communication, it also embeds drastic changes and the creation of new forms of identity, ambiguity, as well as different belongingness.

For some, the world is facing a “general crisis”, tackling environmental, economic, societal, and ethical questions. Surrounded by planetary urbanization fear, disorientation, and increasing social inequalities, Alberto Altés Arlandis warns us to “not fall into the trap of believing that technology will solve our societal problems” (Altés Arlandis in Gromark, 2017, p. 275). If architecture seems to be a tool to address challenges, it should establish a form of responsibility and become socially relevant.

Therefore, architecture should deem engaging with new forms of practices and theories that recognize the possibilities and particularities of our contemporary time while being aware of the fragilities of our past. A practice that addresses possible alternatives or “other” futures in order to

give an appropriate answer to overcome the challenges (Doucet & Frichot, 2018). It should participate in a certain form of criticism concerning the human-space relationship in order to continue addressing shifting society and context. For some, those alternative practices must be activated from a point of view of ‘Situated knowledge’ and aim for more meaningful and responsible practice toward the world (Alberto Altés Arlandis in Gromark, 2017; Doucet & Frichot, 2018, Haraway, 1988). The question of the central place of architecture is raised, and interrogates if other parameters should not be considered in the decisions and if architecture should not be “closer to a thing among other things” (Frichot, 2018, p. 7).

Purpose

The master’s thesis seeks to emphasize belongingness in the discourse of architecture as a crucial point to address the Place, its encounters and their relationalities. It aspires to redefine the notion in relation to architecture going beyond dichotomies and common perceptions and definitions. The core aim is to investigate a specific and suitable approach to search and design for situated belongingness. It aims to give a direction to work ‘within’ a location allowing for the specificity of the situation and the subjective representation of the practitioner to exist. The thesis intends to tackle the gap between theory and practice by addressing ‘Situated knowledge’ as a lens for the developed approach. Lastly, the research aims to set the base for discussion regarding a different way to map a situation, address the elements that matter in the study of architecture, and reflect the position of the architect.

Research Questions

“How can architecture enhance situated belongingness through embracing, valuing and (re) acting to stories?”

Under this main question, the thesis seeks to answer the following sub-interrogations: Why belonging is a crucial topic to address in architecture? How can the field of architecture tackle belongingness? What matters to grasp belongingness in the built environment? How to perceive belongingness to avoid reductionism? What embracing situated knowledge as an approach gives to architecture and especially to the discourse around belongingness? What does it change to look at belongingness from a situated point of view? How to transfer knowledge from situated theory to praxis? How to address the location to reveal existing belongingness? How to embrace, represent and value stories left by others on a location? How to re-tell belongingness stories gathered from a time being? How to (re)act to situated and embodied knowledge on a design?

But also touching broader questions such as: What is the role of the architect? How to address a responsible and resilient practice in architecture? What matters in the study of architecture? What is the position of the human in the discourse of architecture?

Method

The master’s thesis follows both a theoretical and practical approach in three parts. The process is iterative, and all parts are entangled in reflection and time.



Literature studies are conducted as an iterative loop between the notion of Space - Place - Belonging, exploring former research from social science disciplines to architecture. All the theoretical background forms the base for the reflection and positioning, regarding the researched approach.

The thesis uses Situated knowledge as a base approach to engage with the complexity of belongingness. Therefore, the embedded theory is first studied to understand key concepts, and then in relation to former applications to praxis. In the framework of the thesis, belongingness is addressed through the lens of situated approach. From the study of this theory, the gathered findings from the literature, and a simultaneous application in a situation, an approach is developed to envision enhancing situated belongingness. The core approach is described and follows 5 main steps, embracing - representing - connecting - valuing - (re)acting the stories, guiding the search for local belongingness. The approach uses subjectivity, positionality as well as engagement with pluralities as a way to gather situated and embodied knowledge.

The situated belongingness approach is applied on a site perceived suitable for the research, using as well as informing the core research approach. The description of the application is situated in the present tense as a personal tale of the process. This narrative is documented both from the representation of knowledge gathered from many stays at the location but also from interviews, archives and social medias investigations. The application is therefore contingent on the situation, the subjectivity of the author, and the time of observation. On the basis of the situated analysis, a succinct suggestion of a test design emerges as a (re)action.

Delimitation

The paper is subject to the author’s subjective understanding of the topic. In this research, anthropological and philosophical concepts in the literature study are only addressed from the perspective of architecture. Therefore, the notion of belongingness is envisioned in a broader sense in regards to architecture and barely considered as a synonym of community. One should acknowledge the complexity of belongingness, a notion deeply entangled with one subjective experience and contingent to specific situation.

Further in the process, the developed approach gives a direction rather than an explicit and detailed method to follow. And the application of the approach is subject to the author’s positionality, subjectivity, and the studied situation. The proposed design suggestion in reaction to the analysis is only to be perceived as a test.

Personal motivation

Even if the situated approach does account for much further subjectivities than mine, recognizing my own implicit bias and vulnerability to the topic matter in the reading of this thesis. By understanding my personal experiences with belongingness and the objectives behind the process, it helps to grasp the approach and re-situate my initial thoughts. Although, these personal stories should not be perceived as an authority leading my further decisions.

Here, is the story that I am choosing to tell as a glimpse of my personal relationship with the complex subjects of architecture and belongingness.

"My own relationship with the Place is something that is triggering me for a long time. I always felt the need to be aware of my connections and feelings toward Places. I feel the call to understand the sense of 'things' and how they are bound together. I see this process deeply entangled with my observations, curiosity, and questioning of my surroundings. My perception of my environment is also dependent on my exacerbate sensitivity and empathy. I have found in the practice of architecture a way to grasp my world in exploring diverse disciplines and re-telling embodied understandings. But for me, architecture is probably an attempt to seize specific situations, a quest for understanding people’s needs and emotions to generate situated answers.

I have changed what is generally defined as "home" more than 20 times, but I have probably found myself belonging to more than that amount. I discovered new Places, cultures, and traditions by first following my family but also later due to own decisions. I have always felt a certain need to analyze and understand the situation in order to find my Place in this new territory, but sometimes, I also claimed it. As a child, I was constantly moving from one home to another, thinking about where and how did I belong and searching for 'things' that would bind me to the situation. This pushes me to perpetually reflect on my own position, wondering: Where do I belong?, What makes me belong here?, Am I at the appropriate position, in the right setting? With this in mind, I have developed a sense of analysis of my own and others' feelings toward Place, people and 'things'."

Reading instruction, theories, and position

The *Introduction*, depicts the background and purpose of the master's thesis, establishing the theoretical background as well as the initial positioning regarding the topic.

The first chapter, *Space, Place, Belongingness* provides a theoretical review of the notion of Place and the interactions between Place and self. The literature is extracted from several disciplines: anthropology, sociology, environmental sociology, geography, and architecture. In order to understand the context, the chapter contains the history and evolution of the term Place, and an explanation of the attachment mechanism to Place. Through the discourse, belongingness becomes the central point of research, defining its mechanisms, importance, and relation to architecture.

The second chapter, *Situated belongingness approach* addresses the 'Situated knowledge' as a starting point. This theory is contextualized in regards to its history with the feminist discourse related to architecture, defined by its main fundamental text, *Situated Knowledges* by Donna Haraway (1988). The theory is then explored in terms of praxis in the architectural field. Main authors of the field such as Jane Rendell, Hélène Frichot, Isabelle Doucet, and Alberto Altés Arlandis are taken as the main voices to understand such practices. Belongingness in architecture is defined from the perspective of the situated knowledge theory, establishing the acknowledgment of subjectivity, positionality and plurality. Through the process, 'the situated belongingness approach', is elaborated from both literature findings and an in-situ application of the approach.

The third chapter, *A Place to belong*, consists of an implementation in a specific situation of the developed approach. The site around the Folkets Hus and Olof Palmes Plats in Gothenburg, Sweden is defined as a suitable situation to explore the approach. In order to grasp the local belongingness, the site is mapped by embracing and valuing a collection of local (hi)stories. A suggestion to enhance the situated belongingness in the transitionary square emerges as a test design in (re)action to the gathered embodied knowledge.

The last chapter, *Discussion*, acts as an open reflection on the master's thesis and the proposed approach. Moreover, this part tackles also some larger reflections about the role of architecture and the elements that matter in the understanding of architecture.

Space, Place, Belongingness

Space, Place, and Perception

Place | Space | Phenomenology | Assemblage theory | Locality | Sense of Place

→ How can a Place influence certain behaviors ?

→ How can different perceptions of the definition of Place lead to a contrasting architectural approach?

→ What matters to feel a sense of Place?

Discourse on Place

Sociologists, environmental psychologists, and human geographers among others, have been researching for decades the relationship between place and society. This has led to a large amount of research around the topics of territory, function of space, personal space, and Place attachment. Since the 1970s, the notion of Place has been reflected upon, to look if Place can shape a sense of identity, a certain behavior, or even determined specific feelings (Altman & Low, 1992; Hashemnezhad et al, 2013, p.5; ThinkingCity, 2018). Therefore, the term Place has gained interest and been defined in correlation with the existing term of space.

Space is never empty, but always “saturated with qualities” as Michel Foucault defines it (Foucault in Leach, 1997, p.6). But how one is interpreting it and giving it social, cultural, and individual meanings is what is defining Place (Altman and Low in Hashemnezhad et al., 2013, p. 6). Therefore, this shifting vision from space to Place is subjective to people depending on “their social bonds, feelings, and emotions” to the space (Stedman in Hashemnezhad et al., 2013, p.6). Indeed, Place is connecting sociality to spatiality (Dovey, 2010, p.59).

"Place is connecting sociality to spaciality."
(Dovey, 2010, p.59)

Phenomenological approach to the Place

In this research of identity and locality, the notion of Place is problematized in historical, political, and phenomenological terms (Lovell, 1998; Savage et al., 2004). In the field of architecture, phenomenology defines a new approach for the representation of Place. This discipline is an interpretative study that describes the appearance and explores the human experience. It looks at everyday events, experiences, and meanings, and researches for the essence of unnoticed phenomena “beneath the level of conscious awareness”(Muminovic, 2015, p. 298; Seamon & Sowers, 2008, p. 43).

The philosopher Heidegger defines that it is only through one’s experience of the location that the space can become Place and that being is spatial (Muminovic, 2015, pp. 298-299). The Place is defined by

the interconnection of being and the way people are dwelling, building, and experiencing the Place (Norberg-Schulz, 1980, pp. 6-23). With this interpretation of Place, Heidegger defines the Place as part of “people’s existence”, and the relation to identity becomes essential (Muminovic, 2015, p. 299).

Christian Norberg Schultz, an architectural theoretician, interprets Heidegger’s approach to the practice. The existential Place concept is introduced, and the concept of dwelling is further developed. Indeed, for him, architecture is much important because the “environment influences human beings” (Norberg-Schulz, 1980, p. 5). Dwelling is seen as a “total man-place relationship” and as a “safe place for which you can produce an environmental image and clearly identify it” (Norberg-Schulz, 1980, p. 6, 23). By looking at specific phenomena such as space and character, Norberg-Schultz aims to grasp the essence of the Place. In a similar approach, the geographer Edward Relph in *Place and Placelessness* defines a “persistent sameness and unity” to define Place identity (Relph, 1996, p. 47).

Relph and Norberg Schultz are criticized for the existentialist character given to the Place, ignoring specific social and temporal occurrences and the construction of Place identity. By giving a static vision of the Place, they define a rooted mode of dwelling in our world (Dovey, 2010, p.19; Massey in Seamon & Sowers, 2008, p.5).

Several architects have engaged with practices that can refer to a phenomenological approach to the built environment where high attention is given to the feeling of the architect. By immersing themselves in the context, the designers are drawing attention to self-desires and emotions (Pallasmaa, 2012, pp. 17–41; Zumthor et al., 2006, pp. 18–21). Juhani Pallasmaa qualifies this practice as a multisensory experience and Peter Zumthor as “sensuous architecture” (Pallasmaa, 2012, pp. 17–41; Zumthor et al., 2006, p. 65). Thinking that the body can mediate with exterior experiences without engaging with the intellectual resonates with Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and his book *Phenomenology of perception* where the body is the main medium to connect with the world (Merleau-Ponty in Pallasmaa, 2012, p. 23). In regards to Norberg Schultz’s thoughts, the design process of phenomenologist architects is to search for specific and established order to understand and grasp the context. Moreover, the design is not only based on the only perception of feelings but also calls for memories to generate particular atmospheres, materials, and images. It acknowledges that sensuous connection is rooted in the past through previous feelings, background, and understandings (Pallasmaa, 2012, p.23; Zumthor et al., 2006, pp. 30–36). The design process is constructed on perpetual interactions between the feelings and reasons of the designer.

One of the main aims of the design for phenomenological architects is to answer the context. The design should embrace history, traces of human beings and showcase the qualities of the context to enter in

"Phenomenologist architects are searching for specific and established order to understand and grasp the context."

communication with the site. But, this situation can only happen if the architect is able to generate a meaningful and poetic condition, seeing that without the architect, materials of the surrounding are not poetic (Zumthor et al., 2006, p. 10, 17, 24). Hence, the architect is looking for the creation of perfection, and wishes that "forms, volumes, and spaces come into being" (Zumthor et al., 2006, p. 37, 93). With this existential way of dwelling, architecture should embody the timeless and materialize "ideas and images of ideal life" (Pallasmaa, 2012, p. 71).

Assemblage theory on the Place

In the last decades, this phenomenological definition of Place has been largely challenged due to the work of Gilles Deleuze. In a Deleuzian approach, Place is related to dynamics, taking the notion of time into consideration. With this approach, Deleuze sees entities in the process of becoming, and therefore opposes himself to the notion of being. In his philosophy a new form of realism is then introduced between phenomenology and materialism. For these reasons, Place and being have not to be seen as especially interlinked to each other (Dovey, 2010, p. 43; Muminovic, 2015, pp. 301–308).

Furthermore, Deleuze introduces a new approach to the object, shifting the understanding from what it "is" to what it "does" (Altés Arlandis 2017, p.275). In his point of view, Place is defined as an assemblage, where 'things' are interlinked to each other and act in a system. Later, Manuel

DeLanda details further the concept of assemblage defining those "particular essences" of an assemblage as "multiplicity" and Place as "wholes whose properties emerge from the interaction between parts" (Delanda, 2006, p.5). The notion of Place has evolved from an eternal quest for fixed meanings to the research of particular essences. This definition can be seen as a less reductionist approach and limits the possible alienation of the Place. The Assemblage is rather looking for specificities and aiming to define each Place as unique (Dovey, 2010, pp. 22-33 and Muminovic, 2015, pp. 301-306).

Kim Dovey (2010) interprets these theories in the "territorialized assemblage", describing Place as a "dynamic rhizomatic structure" made of environment and people, where all the parts are both tangible material but also experiential elements. For Dovey, Place can't be reduced to an understanding of all its parts but must rather be seen as the relationship of all the parts that compose the assemblage (Dovey, 2010, pp. 36-43 and Muminovic, 2015, pp. 301-303).

With this shift of perspective, the definition of Place has largely been challenged and the built environment has been reintroduced as a significant term. The consideration of the Place as an assemblage has also contributed to the practical application of theories to design (Muminovic, 2015, p. 308). Indeed, this practice enables for better connectivity and flow between architecture and its context, rather than expressing the context through forms, objects, and feelings. The practice opens to a

larger range of approaches and encourages "adaptation, reversibility, and fluidity" (Dovey in Frichot, 2013, pp. 131–148). Moreover, considering the assemblage as an architectural approach helps to engage with the social dimension of architecture and consider socio-spatiality parameters of the everyday world in the process. With the emphasis on materiality, Place as an assemblage can be envisioned as a "subjective experience-phenomenon" (Muminovic, 2015, p. 38). On another note, Dovey expresses the idea that identifying Place as rooted or in movement is a mistake, and that both should be considered (Dovey, 2010, p. 43).

Sense of Place

The Place has been examined in terms of its definition, however, the social construction and mental perception around it are essential points to address. In architecture and urban design, the interaction between human beings and their meaningful space has been the research subject of many scholars these last 30 years (e.g. Altman & Low, 1992; Hashemnezhad et al., 2013; Scannell & Gifford, 2010). Especially focusing on the impact of Place on people's way of living, their perception of the Place, and their specific social attachments that can occur.

The sense of Place is described as a conscious particular meaning given by an individual or a group to a Place based on a unique collection of characteristics, attachment, and satisfaction. These perceived qualities are visual, social, environmental, and cultural (Hashemnezhad et al., 2013, pp. 6-7; McMahon in Hsiao, 2012). The given meaning can refer to sensory parameters or particular behaviors toward the Place. In French, the word 'terroir' describes well this notion. The word is used to depict external parameters that affect other characteristics such as people or culture. This place-person interaction influences the creation of social values and individual behaviors that affects everyday symbols and activities.

The concept of sense of Place is, on the one hand, a subjective perception of people with a certain relation to emotions but, on the other hand, subject to objectivity, deeply affected by external objects. The concept is both embedded in psychological and physical meanings (Hashemnezhad et al., 2013, pp. 6-8). The sense of Place is therefore characterized by cognitive and physical components. For some scholars, three dimensions are raised to describe these interactions, the cognitive, behavioral, and affect. The cognitive parameter refers to the spatial perception of the space and orientation, the behavioral aspect relates to the functional relationship to the Place and the emotional parameter is the perceived satisfaction and attachment to the Place. The three aspects together address form, function, and meaning (Altman & Low, 1992, pp. 6-8 ; Scannell & Gifford, 2010, pp. 3-8). For that reason, addressing the notion of the sense of Place is much relevant to understand fundamental people's attachment to a Place and general patterns of people's habits to a certain location.

"The notion of Place has evolved from an eternal quest for fixed meanings to the research of particular essences."

(Dovey, 2010, pp. 22-33 and Muminovic, 2015, pp. 301-306).

"The Sense of Place has been described as a conscious particular meaning given by an individual or a group to a Place based on a unique collection of characteristics, attachment, and satisfaction".

(Hashemnezhad et al., 2013, p.6-7)

Although the degree of emotional attachment to the Place defines different levels of sense of Place. David Hummon addresses satisfaction, identification, and attachment as aspects that can lead to a various sense of Place among people (Hummon in Hashemnezhad et al., 2013, p. 8). Therefore different stages are defined around the sense of Place, being located in a Place, belonging to a Place, being committed to the Place. (Hashemnezhad et al., 2013, pp. 8-12)

(Hashemnezhad et al., 2013, pp. 8-12)

Belonging, Perception and the Built environment

- Belonging | Behavior | Feeling Home | Attachment | Satisfaction | Beyond belongingness
- How can belonging be defined ? Why belonging is an essential topic to address?
 - What matters in the construction of a sense of belonging?
 - How belongingness has to be perceived to avoid generalization?

Discourse and context

For several decades, the field of architecture has been much preoccupied with questions of form and aesthetic, leaving aside reflections around culture and social connections as if they were also answered by the form. But, in the recent years, culture and identity have gained interest, and space has become one departure point for analyzing how people experience the world (Leach, 1997, p. 76; Morgan, 2012, p. 1). The definition of belonging has largely been challenged due to globalization and facilitated mobility, questioning one’s definition of “being home” or “feeling placed”. Defining this notion nowadays is more important than ever through essential questions such as "Where do we actually belong? What relationship do we have with our objects?" (Casanovas Blanco et al., 2016, p. 10).

Definition of belonging

Belonging has been explored by several and defined in multiple terms. It can refer to the notion of being part of a system, in the sense of being in connection or an essential part of something (Collins English dictionary, n.d.; Maslow, 1943, Oxford Advanced Learner’s dictionary, n.d.).

Moreover, as seen previously the sense of Place is concerned both by physical but also social parameters, and so is the belonging notion (Casanovas Blanco et al., 2016, p. 14; Hashemnezhad et al., 2013, pp. 6-10). Belonging is also defined as a feeling of attachment, grounding the self and the environment together (Leach, 1997, p. 80). With this definition, belonging is about "possessions and appartenance", referring to the "social dynamics of 'fitting in'" (Fortier in Leach, 1997, p. 80). The sense of belonging conveys the idea of being at the appropriate Place, and being properly situated. This feeling can be associated with the metaphor of being at home (Antonsich, 2010; Dictionary, n.d; Oxford Advanced Learner’s dictionary, n.d.). Being at home inducts a certain form of security,

"Belonging can refer to the notion of being part of a system, in the sense of being in connection or an essential part of something."
(Collins English dictionary, n.d.; Maslow, 1943, Oxford Advanced Learner’s dictionary, n.d.)

"Belonging can refer to feeling attached, in the sense of being properly situated in a context and 'being home' inducting emotional attachment."
(Leach, 1997, p. 80; Hooks, 1990, 2009; Oxford Advanced Learner’s dictionary, n.d.)

emotional attachment, familiarity, and comfort (Hooks, 1990, pp. 383-386; 2009).

"Belonging can refer to a feeling of community, referring to the generation of collective identity in a group".
(Antonsich, 2010; Fortier in Leach, 1997, p. 80)

But belonging can also be seen as a synonym of identity referring to a sense of community (Antonsich, 2010; Fortier in Leach, 1997, p. 80), or a memory of attachment (Lovell, 1998). When this emotional feeling refers to a Place, it is called place-belongingness. Lastly, the formation of this feeling depends on the self, and the sense of attachment presumes a feeling of differentiation (Leach, 2003, p. 80).

Belong to a Place

Belongingness embeds different perceived notions. It can be perceived as a memory where the Place is told by its stories. Those narrations become part of the identity of the Place, at the same level as materiality and buildings (Lovell, 1998; ThinkingCity, 2018). The notion can also be perceived as self-embedded in the Place, where meaningful location shapes a collective identity and becomes part of personal narration. In

"The Place is told by its stories, and those narrations become part of the identity of the Place, at the same level as materiality and buildings".
(Lovell, 1998; ThinkingCity, 2018)

2017, a researcher at the University of Surrey shows that "meaningful places" is clearly acting in shaping people's identity. To this survey, 67% of young people reported that their meaningful space has defined who they are (ThinkingCity, 2018). When embedded into narration, belonging passes through time and persists as a collective memory (Lovell, 1998; ThinkingCity, 2018). Overall, belonging relates to be embedded in perceived emotional relations to the Place, defined by the degree of attachment to the location due to emotional and cultural bonds (Altman & Low, 1992; Hashemnezhad et al., 2013). When a Place becomes important for someone, a strong intrinsic connection seems to be created.

Some scholars describe different factors that induct a sense of belonging to emerge (e.g., Hashemnezhad et al., 2013, pp. 6-10; Scannell & Gifford, 2010, p. 3). The factors can be physical, social, cultural, but also linked to satisfaction and interactions related to personal subjectivity. The physical parameter refers to the degree of satisfaction toward a location, represented by activities and symbolic meaning. The social parameters connect the creation of Place belongingness to people participation and social engagement toward the location. The cultural factors address the values and meanings transported by the site. Place satisfaction is determined by the general perception of the Place qualities and security relating to both social and physical settings. The interaction one refers to located activities and interaction between Place and human. The personal factor is related to each person's sensibility, background, and subjectivity (Hashemnezhad et al., 2013, pp. 6-10; Scannell & Gifford, 2010, p. 3).

Impact and importance

For many, belonging is seen as an elementary human need. Drawing the history from our ancestries, belonging has always been instinctive

and there have been many things to belong to: tribes, lands, families, communities, religions, and many others (Boardman, 2022; Relph, 1996; Scannell & Gifford, 2010). When Abraham Maslow imagines his pyramid of needs, belonging comes just after physiological and safety needs (Maslow, 1943). From a collective perspective, belonging to a Place is even more important than the essential needs, as it is the foundation of our societal relations (Rebekka, 2016). For those reasons, the belonging is identified as one of the most relevant notions between Place and self and seen as authentic emotional relation with the environment (Hashemnezhad et al., 2013, p. 6; Relph, 1996; Scannell & Gifford, 2010).

According to several scholars, "Who I am" cannot be detached from "Where do I belong", and the formation of the self is interlocked with the sense of belonging (Loader, 2006 & Probyn, 1996 in Antonsich, 2010). This clear interconnection also emerges from the narration of Bell Hooks, a black feminist scholar on her journey home (Antonsich, 2010; Hooks, 1990).

Moreover, feeling disconnected from belonging can cause social and mental issues. Dislocation, displacement, and alienation are such present topics that it seems evident to address this discussion (Lovell, 1998; Pallasmaa, n.d.; Scannell & Gifford, 2010). Research shows that a relationship with Place can lead to a range of emotions going from love to fear and ambivalence. The loss of belongingness can generate a feeling of loneliness, stress, and incapacity to feel grounded in the society, the culture, nor the settings of our world (e.g., Boardman, 2022; Hooks, 1990; Pallasmaa, n.d.; Manzo, 2005 in Scannell & Gifford, 2010). For describing this alarming notion, Edward Relph defines "existential outsidership" as a new concept. He is depicting a new form of homelessness, not in the sense of not having a home, but rather as an existential form expressing alienation and the incapacity to feel places (Relph, 1996 in Pallasmaa, n.d., p. 86). Moreover, a misplaced setting or atmosphere can "alienate and disconnect us from social, cultural and human context" (Pallasmaa, n.d, p. 75).

"Belonging is identified as one of the most relevant notions between Place and self".
(Hashemnezhad et al., 2013, p. 6; Relph, 1996; Scannell & Gifford, 2010).

"The loss of belongingness can generate a feeling of loneliness, stress, and incapacity to feel grounded in the society, the culture, and the settings of our world".
(e.g. Boardman, 2022; Hooks, 1990; Pallasmaa, n.d.; Manzo, 2005 in Scannell & Gifford, 2010).

Behavior and the built environment

In the 1950s, ecological psychologists have started to research how humans behave in their daily environment. The researchers have drafted a possible interdependence between environment and behavior and observed that situation has a bigger impact on people's behavior than natural individual characteristics (Nasar, 2011, p. 168). From that movement emerged a new research field, the environmental psychology, studying the relationship and reciprocity between human behavior and the physical natural, and built environment (e.g. Gifford, 2014, Belle and al., 2005, Cassidy, 1997, Prohansky and al.,1970 in Sylvest, 2016, p. 23).

Researchers demonstrate that behavior can only be analyzed in their particular social and environmental contexts and in relation to the world.

Indeed, human relations and behaviors constitute the world people are inhabiting together (Suchman, 1993; Uzzek & R  thzel, 2009 in Sylvest, 2016, p. 26, pp. 40-41). The built environment is a milieu that enables and facilitates interactions, and where actions take place and relations happen (Frichot et al., 2018, p. 11). Furthermore, it should also be acknowledged that architecture is acting differently from art and sculpture, serving as a functional shelter that supports the emotional, social, cultural, and psychological demands of the users (Sylvest, 2016, pp. 40-41).

Scholars have found that external parameters influence human behaviors. It highlights that social, physical, and temporal characteristics are patterns that influence one's behavior (Nasar, 2011, pp. 162–169). Social characteristics refer to culture, age, and gender of the individual, while physical parameters concern shape, size, and characteristic elements of the environment. Those parameters have to be seen placed in a context and a certain time. Then, two essential processes happen. At first, a direct perception of these parameters, and right after a cognitive process that represents and categorizes the environment. Thus, human behavior is a contingent reaction that is affected by both feelings and reflective thoughts (Nasar, 2011, pp. 162–169).

For architecture, social science enables to describe and analyze the everyday world, how it is and how it is used in order to build knowledge that can inform future design (Nasar, 2011, p. 162). Moreover, disciplines such as anthropology have helped to describe different social groups and their needs, to give a better understanding of everyday life (Lawrence-Z  niga, 2011, p. 137). The application of other disciplines to the built environment practice has helped the field to engage with a multidisciplinary approach, view the different levels of our world, and address diverse interests within the same scale (Michelson, 2011, p. 125; Nasar, 2011, p. 162). By working with sociological concerns, the field of architecture also tackles questions of power and inequality among different groups such as race, gender, or social groups (Michelson, 2011, p. 125). This process involves architects in the creation of human places shaped according to their use, reducing the ignorance of part of the population (Lawrence-Z  niga, 2011, p. 137; Nasar, 2011, p. 163). This interdisciplinary practice engages architects in a better responsibility, phrasing the importance of their decision on the impact of a specific Place, defining uses and interactions, and engaging with "a social production of design" (Peters, 2021, p. 629).

Hence, architecture seems to be a tool to bring anthropological concepts to reality, and one of its main functions is to conciliate between humans and the world (Pallasmaa, n.d., p. 75). Architecture and urban space design can either strengthen or weaken the settings of the Place. The role of the designer recently is evolving toward an envy to shape the environment and encourage behaviors, and in some matters to emphasize the task of architecture to create mediation between humans and the world (Pallasmaa, n.d., p. 75).

Social, physical, and time characteristics are patterns that influence behavior.

(Nasar, 2011, pp. 162–169)

"Belonging in the environment is defined as the right to participate".

(Fenster, 2005, pp. 219–223).

"Belonging in the environment as the right to feel appropriate".

(Fenster, 2005, pp. 219–228).

"Belonging in the environment as the right to reclaim".

(Bell, 1999 ; Leach, 2002 in Fenster, 2005, p. 223)

Belonging and the built environment

For several years, topics such as materiality, form, and beauty have been addressed but recently interest for social and human-centered architecture is increasing (Casanovas Blanco et al., 2016; Hashemnezhad et al., 2013). As seen previously, the focus on a different layer of the environment through interdisciplinarity permits a shift in the perspective of the environment. Recently, design dealing with people's attachment and searching to create a sense of belonging have been better received and highly appreciated by citizens (Manzo & Perkins in Scannell & Gifford, 2010, p. 8). The search of belonging in the built environment can lead to the enhancement of different behaviors.

At first, "the right to participation" is an important characteristic to acknowledge in the pursuit of the feeling of belonging (Fenster, 2005, pp. 219–223) In *The practice of Everyday life*, Michel De Certeau (1984) defines a connection between belonging and use. Through this association, belonging is considered as a feeling through the daily use of the space, and sees "space as a practical Place" (De Certeau, 1984 in Fenster, 2005, p. 222). Belonging is then built on the accumulation of knowledge, experiences, and memories with the Place. The right to participate is also generated by activity on the Place and the general satisfaction around it (Fenster, 2005, pp. 219–223).

On the other hand, belongingness in the environment can refer to the feeling of understanding, aiming to create a "right to use completely the Place" and a "right to feel appropriate" to the context (Fenster, 2005, pp. 219–223). Parameters such as the arrangement according to needs, the feeling of local respect, and values matter (Building For Belonging, n.d.; Fenster, 2005, pp. 219,228). This connection between the right to participate and the right to feel appropriation is defined by personal narratives of people (Fenster, 2005, p. 228).

But sometimes, Place can also be claimed by daily encounters and generate a last form of belonging. Viki Bell defines repetitive claims of the natural and built environment as "performative and belonging" and highlights the generation of a certain right to use and the creation of attachment and then belonging to the Place (Bell, 1999 ; Leach, 2002 in Fenster, 2005, p. 223).

Belonging, new perspectives in discussion

But belonging might not be analyzed in the right way. If architecture must be linked with question of culture and identity, it is perhaps crucial to go beyond the generalization of a common sense of belonging and acknowledge diverse subjectivities. This vision aims to avoid a form of generalization and reductionism by looking at 'situated' and 'embodied' knowledge (Leach, 2003, p. 76; Morgan, 2012, p. 2). Furthermore, going beyond generalization is also to address other definitions of belonging. In the architecture field, the notion has largely been addressed as a synonym of community (Antonsich, 2010). Addressing it through its definition of

"If architecture must be linked with question of culture and identity, it is perhaps crucial to go beyond the generalization of a common sense of belonging and acknowledge diverse subjectivities".

(Leach, 2003, p. 76; Morgan, 2012, p. 2)

"being part of a system" and "feeling attached to something" (e.g., Leach, 1997, p. 80; Oxford Advanced Learner's dictionary, n.d.), can encourage an understanding of belongingness more in relation to connectivity and interaction. These definitions can allows a better translation to architectural practice.

Rather than a discourse of fixed roots, one can propose that belongingness is envisioned in the idea of Judith Bulter expressed by Neil Leach as a "transitory and fluid elaboration of territorialization". (Butler in Leach, 2003, p. 80). Indeed, belonging as all psychological mechanisms is not static, and evolves over time. Due to its ever-changing constitution, past, present and future social patterns must be considered (Rebekka, 2016).

Moreover, the narration of the Place belongingness needs to deem objects and their embodied meanings, as a complex system and give signification to different milieus (Bhabha, 1990; Leach, 2003, p. 76). Such an approach inducts a relationship between a given situated object and social behavior. That is bringing the notion closer to the dynamic behavior of the "Habitus" defined by Pierre Bourdieu (1972). "Habitus" is when a person inherited the parameters of a situation and modifies it into a new situation. Niel Leach emphasizes in the concept of the "Habitus", "the need for praxis to 'unlock' the meaning of an object" to allow meaning/object to be defined by their uses and interactions (Bourdieu in Leach, 2003, pp. 76–79).

Glossary

I Attachment I Assemblage theory I Belongingness I Local agent I Satisfaction I
Sense of Place I Situated Approach I Situated system I Situated Belongingness network I
Subjectivity I Traces

The glossary act as an interruption in the master’s thesis to define key concepts and definitions that matter in the understanding of the following chapters and methodology. The notion are placed in the alphabetic order and propose a brief defintion linked to the scope of research.

→ Attachment

Attachment refers to two-parts connected to each other "something we connect something else with" or an intermediate element between two objects "a thing that joins two things together". Attachment can be physical, mental, social, and cultural. The relationship created between two parts is fragile (Laura, 2020 in Krogh, 2020, p.64-65). In the thesis, the term primarily refers to the emotional bond.

→ Assemblage theory

Gilles Deleuze defines Place as an assemblage, where ‘things’ are interlinked to each other in a system, and entities in the process of becoming. The perception of Place through assemblage theory is to be perceived as the search for particular essences rather than an eternal quest for fixed meanings (Dovey, 2010, pp. 22-33 and Muminovic, 2015, pp. 301-306). This approach shifts the understanding of an object from what it "is" to what it "does" (Altés Arlandis in Gromark, 2017).

→ Belongingness

In the thesis, belonging is addressed in a broader sense and tackled beyond the synonym of community. The definition used refers to "being part of a system" (Collins English dictionary, n.d.; Maslow, 1943) and "feel attached to something" (Leach, 1997, p. 80; Hooks, 1990, 2009; Oxford Advanced Learner's dictionary, n.d.). Indeed, belongingness is addressed in relation to connectivity and relationality. The term is approached in the research as a notion dependent on perceptions and individual meanings, and therefore contingent on the situation.

→ Inven(s)tory

Terminology developed and used in the thesis to describe a detailed accumulation of stories from a situation in the shape of a collection.

→ Local agents

Terminology used in the research to describe encounters of the location interacting passively or actively with the situated system. Local agent can be visible or invisible and refers to both human or non human encounters.

→ Satisfaction

Satisfaction refers to the appreciation of an agent for the situation. It addresses the participation of the encounters in specific uses and activities of the context. The notion is addressed in the thesis to understand the role of local agents in the situated system through the research of physical connections (Hashemnezhad et al., 2013, p. 6-10; Scannell & Gifford, 2010, p. 5).

→ Sense of Place

The concept of sense of Place is, on the one hand, a subjective perception referring to emotional bond toward a location, but, on the other hand, a dependant relation to external objects, subject to objectivity. The concept is both embedded in psychological and physical meanings (Hashemnezhad et al., 2013).

→ Situated approach

Situated approach emerged from the feminist movement in architecture in the late 1980s. Defined primarily by Donna Haraway in her essay *Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective*, 'Situated Practice' engages in three main notions: Situation (knowledge), position (subjectivity), and location. (Haraway, 1988, p. 581-586).

→ Situated belongingness network

Terminology used in the research to describe complex connections specific to situated circumstances and location. The network is explored through a map organized around 3 metrics, visibility, scale, and movability. The map is an adaptation of the "*acteur réseaux*" map from Bruno Latour to the specificity of the belongingness' analysis (Latour, 2005).

→ Subjectivity

Subjectivity refers to the fact of being influenced by an implicit bias, personal ideas, feelings or opinions, rather than by strict facts (Oxford Advanced Learner's dictionary, n.d.).

→ Traces

Terminology used in the research to describe pieces of story or history left by others on their way.

Situated belongingness

Situated Knowledge Theory

Situated Knowledge | Donna Haraway | Subjectivity | Positionality | Feminist approach

→ In which context Situated knowledge emerged and how can the notion be defined?

→ What embracing the situation, position, and location give to the approach of architecture?

→ How can Situated theory be expressed in praxis?

Introduction

Nowadays, for some, the world is facing a “general crisis”, tackling environmental, economic, societal, and ethical questions. Nancy Fraser, a philosopher, condenses that the crisis is about care deficiencies and global warming (Fraser, 2017; Frichot et al., 2018, p. 1). The actual situation is problematic and generates a lot of questions regarding planning, sustainability, and transformation. But, what has to be seen as a general concern is “the absence of situated, local agency and actors” (Grillner, 2014, p. 89). Surrounded by planetary urbanization fear, disorientation, and increasing social inequalities, Alberto Altés Arlandis warns us to “not fall into the trap of believing that technology will solve our societal problem”. (Altés Arlandis, 2017, p. 275). If architecture seems to be a tool to address challenges, it should participate in a form of responsibility and become socially relevant. Such questions around the practice are raised, pushing architects to rethink methodology, values, and interests (Schalk et al., 2017, p. 13).

"Architecture should engage in new forms of practices that recognize the particularities of our contemporary time while being aware of our past fragilities".

Therefore, architecture should engage in new forms of practices and theories that recognize the possibilities and particularities of our contemporary time while being aware of the fragilities of our past. This practice addresses possible alternative or ‘other’ futures in order to give an appropriate answer to the challenges to overcome (Doucet & Frichot, 2018, pp. 4-5). The discipline deals with a certain form of criticism concerning the space-social relationship in order to continue addressing shifting society and context. For some, those alternative practices must be activated from a point of view of ‘Situated knowledge’ and aim for more meaningful and responsible practice toward the world (e.g., Altés Arlandis, 2017; Doucet & Frichot, 2018, Haraway, 1988).

History: Context of the emergence of Situated knowledge

In the 1970s, emerged a radical movement of feminist approach striking to eliminate patriarchy and fighting for the rights for all voices and

viewpoints (Hooks, 2000 in Schalk et al., 2017, p. 13). They shared a belief that women have the right for equality and freedom and that patriarchy is disadvantaging women through a nonequal division of activity, labor, and access to resources (Day, 2011, p. 150). The consideration of the feminist approach to architecture has brought a new perspective to analyze the discipline. Since the 1970s, major topics addressed were regarding “public/private space”, “woman and transportation” and “woman and safety” (Day, 2011, pp. 150–161). The emphasis on gender has enriched architecture and urban design with higher considerations of the human experience to Place with a focus on users, acknowledging differences among women such as race, class, religion, and physicality. This approach has showcased that part of the users was not represented and may mask various needs and perceptions of the built environment (Rakodi, 1991 in Day, 2011, p. 151). Moreover, the discipline has engaged in power relations and its impact on the built environment. (Day, 2011, p. 150).

20 years later, Liz Dillier and Jennifer Bloomer devoted effort to address interdisciplinary approach to spatial practice and criticized the sterility of the architectural process. With this development of perspective, the vision has evolved from a tool of analysis to a “Critical” way of practicing architecture engaging in discussion about the role of praxis and theory. Jane Rendell calls “Critical spatial practice” “to describe both everyday activities and creative practices which seek to resist the dominant social order of global corporate capitalism” (Frichot et al., 2018, p. 18; Rendell, 2019).

In the meanwhile, the rise of Practice-led/based research largely influenced by Henri Lefebvre and Michel De Certeau has offered another critical representation of space. They have distinguished two types of practices, the “strategies or representation of space” that enhance existing “social and spatial order”, and the “tactics or spaces of representation” that aim to question and criticise the strategies (Rendell 2014, p. 119; Rendell, 2019).

Emerging from this critical questioning, a last wave of feminism arises also described as “post-structuralist”, “decon”, or “post-modern”. They address architecture around the central question of identity and subjectivity, based on Donna Haraway, ‘Situated Knowledges’ and call for “position, situation and location” (Frichot et al., 2018; Haraway, 1988; Rendell, 2019, p. 13). Different from the first waves aiming for equality in the patriarchal society, the last wave addresses the difference, the interdisciplinarity, and the changing social conditions (Frichot et al., 2018, pp. 2–3). Feminist work produced in the 1980s is radically different than the one produced in the late 1990s (Frichot et al., 2018, p. 13).

The work of contemporary feminist practitioners is calling attention to the need for connection between theory and practice emphasizing the process, embedded in interdisciplinarity, as well as “collectivity, subjectivity, alterity, performativity and materiality highlight” (Rendell,

"The vision has evolved from a tool of analysis to a “Critical” way of practicing architecture engaging in discussion about the role of praxis and theory"

(Frichot et al., 2018, p. 18; Rendell, 2019)

Situated Approach has been define by Donna Haraways in her essay Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective (1988).

2019). Moreover, Jane Rendell sees this practice as the appropriate way to address “the three-stranded collapse of ecology, energy, and economy” (Rendell, 2019).

Definition

To define situated practice, it is essential to refer to the core theory and address the essay of Donna Haraway ' *Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective* (1988). In her text, objectivity is continuously under discussion, aiming to define a feminist objectivity. She calls for a doctrine of “embodied objectivity” as a way to understand social, technical, and psychic systems, that allow “deconstruction, connections, and transformation”. In an “embodied objectivity”, the knowing self should be partial. The essay argues against “irresponsible knowledge claimed”, referring to unlocatable arguments or singular points of vision that can lead to a form of “relativism and totalization”. Feminist objectivity stands for “Situated knowledges” (Haraway, 1988, pp. 581-6).

In Haraway's point of view, positionality is essential. “Subjectivity is multidimensional”, and so the vision needs also to take a different position into account (Haraway, 1988). Questioning how, from where, with who to look at the object, how should the protagonist be positioned? For example, she is raising those questions: “How to see? Where to see from? What limits to vision? What to see for? Whom to see with? Who gets to have more than one point of view? Who gets blinded? Who wears blinders? Who interprets the visual field? What other sensory powers do we wish to cultivate besides vision?” (Haraway, 1988, p. 587). Positionality must be seen as a way to ground the practice and as a form of responsibility.

Lastly, Haraway is calling for the acknowledgment of both the subject (body-specific) and the object of study (site-specific). The viewer (object of knowledge) should be considered as an actor, part of the system to avoid false interpretation. One should neither be considered as the only knowledgeable object nor as a simple viewpoint.

Therefore, ‘Situating Practice’ engages in three main notions: Situation (knowledge), position (subjectivity), and location.

Situated praxis

The use of ‘Situating Practice’ is seen as a possible way to generate an ‘other’ future and overcome the actual “crisis” (Doucet & Frichot, 2018, p. 1-6; Rendell, 2019). Hélène Frichot and Isabelle Doucet recognize that the reconnection of theories “as a practice” is an essential point to address (Doucet & Frichot, 2018, p. 2). Therefore, they have raised three necessary interrogations to address: What is the methodological consequence to consider theory as a practice? What matters to the understanding of architecture? What kind of stories emerge when situated agents are respected? (Doucet & Frichot, 2018, p. 2).

Overall, it seems crucial to work from “within” the site, in order to grasp and engage with all the complexity of the Place and avoid a “distant and autonomous” position (Doucet & Frichot, 2018, p. 2). In the end, concepts applied to a site have the power to change the location, because the architecture practice always entangles with elements of the context such as “lives of people, places and things” (Doucet & Frichot, 2018, p. 1). In that sense, architecture is a dependent practice, attached to others, from the first stage of design to its inhabitation (Till, 2009, p. 45). Therefore, to generate architecture that cares and emerges from the location, it is essential to take part in the site and become aware of the situation. Alberto Altés Arlandis proposes the term “to architect”, to describe the effect as the result of this appropriation of the site on the design (Altés Arlandis, 2017, p.276).

Moreover, there is a claim for responsibility and the consideration of architecture as an “enabling practice”. (Till, 2009, p. 45,60,61) ‘Situating practice’ is not about a false vision of transcendence but about a practice that can “become answerable” by taking care of alternative objectivity and partial knowledge. It is a matter of seeing opportunity in a context, and not addressing the typical scheme of problems solving approach, but raising the questions such as, “What are the capabilities of the Place?” (Till, 2009, pp. 60–61), “How will the design alter the condition of the Place”, “Who might benefit from the change?”, while acknowledging the possibility to learn from the site, gaining knowledge for future practice (Grillner in Fraser, 2014, p 79). Donna Haraway calls this practice “response-ability” (Haraway, 2016). It is an optimistic approach, but it must be considered as situated not as an idealistic way of conceiving architecture (Claesson, p 52; Till, 2009, pp. 60-61). Situating practice addresses a humble way to shape the world, for a better but not perfect future. In that sense is calling for responsibility, particularity, and partiality (Till, 2009, pp. 60-61).

By addressing a “situated and embodied” position, the aim is to resist “to ready-made concepts” (Doucet & Frichot, 2018, p. 1; Griller, 2017, pp. 208-210). It is inherent to embrace a diversity of viewpoints as well as subjectivities. There is a need to stop evaluating architecture based on ‘objective’ criteria such as rationalism, proportion, function, but instead open to cultural and social parameters (Till, 2009, p. 56). ‘Situating Practice’ should address the multiplicity of local agents, ecological, technological material, social, economic, and political (Frichot, 2018, p. 8). The subjectivity of the viewer depends on many factors such as social, cultural background, time, gender, the actual location, and problems which one is facing at the time that should be considered and explored. The “implicit bias” as the feminist scholars are describing, is an unconscious pattern that predefines already certain notions or ways to address decisions (Saul in Frichot, 2018, p. 166). It appears essential that engaging in this subjectivity should also be seen in the modes of representation to express in the best way the situation in which the subject is immersed (Frichot, 2018, p. 118).

"It seems crucial to work from "within" the site, in order to grasp and engage with all the complexity of the Place and avoid a "distant and autonomous" position".

(Doucet & Frichot, 2018, p. 2)

"Situating practice is calling for "responsibility, particularity, and partiality"".

(Till, 2009, p 60-61).

Feminist objectivity as defined by Donna Haraway is "embodied objectivity" that allows "deconstruction, connections, and transformation" to avoid generalization. Feminist objectivity stands for "Situating knowledges".

(Haraway, 1988, p. 581-6)

Recently, different actors have been addressing Situated knowledge in practice. In the Architectural Theory Review, volume 22, issue 1, edited by Hélène Frichot and Isabelle Doucet (2018), practitioners express different takes on the theory to put in praxis. For some, it takes the shape of a detailed unpacking of a specific object. Others consider more the complex use of embedded knowledge in one object to gather stories, economical, societal, and political understanding. A third group addresses it in the form of speculative design based on social commitment or material speculations (Elzenbaumer, 2018; Gabrielsson, 2018; Lefebvre, 2018; McGaw, 2018; Sacks, 2018; Walls, 2018).

In the search for understanding a situated belongingness in a specific context, an unpacking of encounters of the location is relevant. Those agents can then be explored separately in detail to inform on embedded knowledge, to later reconstruct a complex understanding of the situation as a whole.

Situated Belongingness Approach

- Subjectivity | Situated Knowledge | Response-Ability | Belongingness | Approach
- How looking from situated approach to belongingness help to move beyond generalization?
- What matter in the analysis of the belongingness status of a Place?
- How the method address a different way to map the site to research for situated belongingness?

Subjectivity of the author

As explained earlier in my personal motivation, the definition and questions around the notion of belonging are central in my development. What probably matters in the context of the approach’s conception is also my own perception and relation with belongingness and the space surrounding me. Even if situated approach does account for much further subjectivities, recognizing my own implicit bias and vulnerability to situations matter in the approach. Understanding my personal experimentations with belongingness and objectives behind the process can help to grasp the approach and situate the initiated thoughts.

For me belonging, has taken different forms. My first connection to belonging has probably been with close members of my family, in what people usually define as ‘home’. But later, when you can develop your own sense of belonging, a lot of other parameters come into account. For me, it is now probably more about finding harmony, a setup where I feel understood and protected. Belonging for me, can be generated by a collection of objects properly assembled by myself, by a selection of people surrounding me, or a certain setting when I am expressing myself. But I also found belonging in situations that were not related to me, as in natural environments or into some buildings. I see my sense of belonging for ‘things’ both stable and continuous but also as a breath in the moment. For me, it can be dependent on atmosphere, activity, human, luminosity, color, sound, and memories. But overall today, what I think I am looking for, is to feel in harmony and understood by surrounding agents.

Situated approach on the sense of belonging

As explored before, belonging is a relevant notion to address, but we must operate a shift of perspective regarding the way we are perceiving it (e.g., Leach, 2003, p. 76; Morgan, 2012, p. 2). The sense of belonging is dependent on perceptions and individual meanings, and therefore contingent on the situation (e.g., Hashemnezhad et al., 2013; Lovell, 1998).

"We need to move beyond binarities of human / non human & subject / object to address the milieu as a complex system".

For those reasons, and the fact that situated approach addresses a resilient way of practicing architecture, it seems appropriate to dare addressing belongingness from a situated knowledge perspective. If belonging is considered in its definition as a way to "be part of a system" in connection with other parameters, moving beyond binarities of human / non-human local agents and subject / object dichotomy seems crucial (e.g. Oxford Advanced Learner's dictionary, n.d.). In that sense, one should deem to address the milieu as a complex system. In addressing a different type of consideration, one should implement interdisciplinary thinking. Both the notion of belonging in architecture and the situated practice encourage a multidisciplinary approach. These synergies sound certainly appropriate and have the capacity to generate much relevant knowledge of the site.

Furthermore, both concepts are deeply entangled into people, Place, and things' concern, but what differs is the universalization that is given to the concept of belonging. It sounds evident, that we must move beyond this concept, and start considering plurality in belonging. If belonging is about social self-construction with a Place, one should address different subjectivities and search for specific embodied and situated knowledge. By considering belonging, as a feeling of attachment, this approach sounds much relevant as it addresses the perceived and cognitive function of each other. Besides, it is relevant to remember that grasping one's subjectivity is to understand one's stories in the present time but also acknowledging one's history.

"Belonging from a Situated perspective is much about social, spatial, and temporal parameters, defined by attachment and satisfaction to the Place".

If belonging is linked to a lot of social parameters, other external concerns remain, engaging in the conception of the notion. The construction of belongingness is also generated by the recurrent use of a Place and by perceived satisfaction to the Place. Therefore, bringing the perspective of 'others' and acknowledging different practices of the space seem essential to grasp the plurality. Specific built environments can also strengthen diverse behaviors. For those reasons, grasping the connection between 'things' and their milieus are fundamental. Moreover, the concept of temporality must be acknowledged. Time is an essential parameter to consider in the research for belongingness as situation is in constant change. The notions and feelings related to the notion are not existential nor obligatory eternal but evolve in time depending on external but also personal parameters. In the examination of attachment and satisfaction, acknowledging the concept of time is then evident.

Belonging from a Situated perspective is much about social, spatial, and temporal parameters, defined by attachment and satisfaction to the Place. Lastly, acknowledging the dependency of the subject on the situation analyzed is apparent. The engagement of situation's viewer matters, their positionality, their subjectivity, their partiality, and their own bias to allow knowledge to be situated in particular circumstances. But, one must not forget to refrain from using knowledge applicable elsewhere but use their position to acknowledge 'other's'.

The process of Situated belongingness approach

The situated belongingness approach is thought for architects and planners willing to understand and design toward a local belongingness. The approach aims to get a deep embodied knowledge about the existing belongingness scheme through decomposing the Place's encounters and mapping their relationalities, to later engage in the reconstruction of a knowledge and (re)act with a design suggestion to emphasize the belongingness in the situation. The approach needs to be applied from 'within' the location to gather situated and embodied knowledge.

1 STEP 1
Situation analysis:
Embracing stories

- + Gather traces of local agents both visible and invisible in an Inven(s)tory
- + Follow different agent and embrace their subjectivity empathetically
- + Represent graphically all the agent in a spatial map

One needs to first visit the site without any pre-conceived ideas to be applied in the specific situation, in order to address the situation as (un)partial as possible. By visiting the site, alone, for the first time, the opportunity to immerse fully in the location needs to be taken to start acknowledging the existing local agents of the situation. The local agents are both human and non-human elements of the site interacting actively or passively in the situation. They can be from different scales, from a materiality to a larger, even impalpable scale. The first visits aim to collect leftover traces of those agents. For that purpose, it is essential to find a personal way to be able to describe the observations gathered from the stay, to re-tell these stories. It could take various forms, such as text, photography, quick sketches, journal, and many others gathered in an inven(s)tory. The essential in this part is to find a way to explore which elements one emphasizes and remembers, rather than representing preconceived norms that one believed in before being in the situation.

During the following visits, it is pertinent to embrace different subjectivities and look at the site from different positions in the location. An empathic way to see things needs to be developed in order to address each of the chosen agents and to understand their relationships to other. Those stays aim to note and reveal stories of the site. They can refer to common visible activities but also showcase more unusual scenes. For every visit, it is pertinent to start from a different observation position and decide on an agent to follow for the stay while being vigilant to an unexpected event from another agent. The aim of this part is to unpack elements of the site from different nature, to first understand them alone with their embodied knowledge.

By acknowledging different positionalities of the site at different times, one is revealing some of the unnoticed parts of the location. Nonetheless, another stratum seems not accessible from the only layer of the direct observation on the location. Bruno Latour in *Paris: Ville invisible* (1998), addresses invisible objects to reveal Paris, from small to big, human to natural to make progressively Paris visible again (Latour et al., 1998, p. 51; translated from french by the author). For that, Latour explores uncommon although mundane layers such as pipes networks, underground systems, local associations, political opinions, surveillance cameras, street

names, archives, to see Paris from another perspective and express the coexistence of many in the territory (Latour et al., 1998). In the same way, the approach tends to reveal agents perceived as invisible. Deep research of leftover (hi)stories traces needs to be conducted to find existing knowledge and make the invisible agents accessible. The research could take various forms depending on the case, such as historical research based on findings on the site, interviews, short discussions, research on media and citizens' opinions, analysis of movement, archives, graphical representation, etc. The understanding of the location's visible agents can be useful for the discovery of the less visible ones. While looking at the location, questions such as what are the local agents in this situation?, who matter in the understanding of the context?, and what information is relevant to collect to understand the interconnections between agents?, need to continuously be addressed throughout the all process.

In parallel, a spatial map is made representing the location and highlighting each of the local agents identified. This can be materialized as a plan, an axonometry, or any other spatial related documents suitable for the situation. This step support a wider understanding of the spatial relationship between the agents and put in resonance the visible and invisible agents. They are added to the spatial map in a distinguishing manner to start visualizing overlapping interactions between them.

2 STEP 2 Situation understanding: Representing stories

- + realize a short description of each of the agent
- + highlight characteristic (hi)story and understanding

After a first observation phase, preliminary findings regarding the situated system can then be delivered. The agents can be explained both on their own but also in relation to the others in the situated system. Therefore, the method is to create a short description for each of the addressed agents to describe their nature and an embodied knowledge. The agent is listed with one of its most representative stories extracted from the traces found on the location.

The story refers to traces reported by the viewer from the site and (hi)stories consist of existing knowledge found about the agent's existence. They are adorned with a brief subjective understanding of the agents in relation to the system. The agents' nature is compared to the others' using the three metrics of visibility, scale, and mobility.

While working at the findings stage, it is important to still sit at the site to continue being aware of the location's situation and be inspired by the actual context. While realizing the cards, it is relevant to keep track of the agents' order of appearance. This step can be interesting to realize and self-reflect on the importance and connection of some agents.

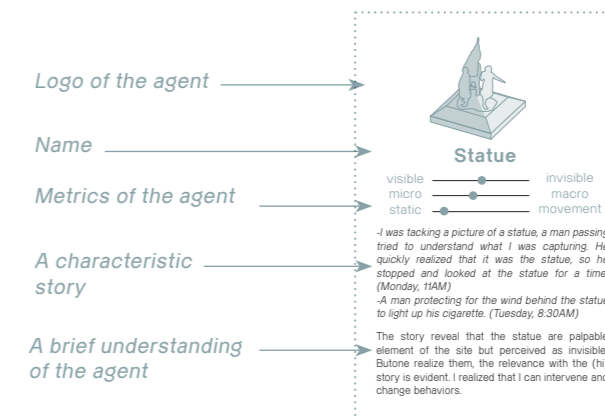


Figure 1: Example of a local agent card annotated (author)

3 STEP 3 Situation findings: Connecting stories

+ Map the local agents in the situated system map

+ Identify specific/ network patterns

+ Select local agents to explore further

Addressing the connection of a system existing between the various agents is, to a certain extent, to understand the belongingness' status of the location. Belonging is defined in the research as "to be part of a system" and "to feel attached to something or someone" (e.g., Leach, 1997, p. 80; Oxford Advanced Learner's dictionary, n.d.). Both of those definition induct that the agent is considered as entangled to a network and is able to affect it. While the first definition addresses more physical connections, the other one refers to a more ontological perception involving a socio-cultural investment of the agent. To understand the existing network, the approach use an adaption of the «acteur réseaux» map developed by Bruno Latour (2005) in *Reassembling the Social* to the specificity of the belongingness' analysis (Latour, 2005). The developed map is named Situated belongingness network, and aims to understand the agents' nature through their complex network according to 3 metrics, visibility scale, and movement. Those parameters enable the understanding of different way of belonging and so interacting, that can be more physical or mental. Visible agents highlighted from the site and invisible ones' research via existing knowledge can then be mapped out following the three metrics explained earlier to support their placement on the grid.

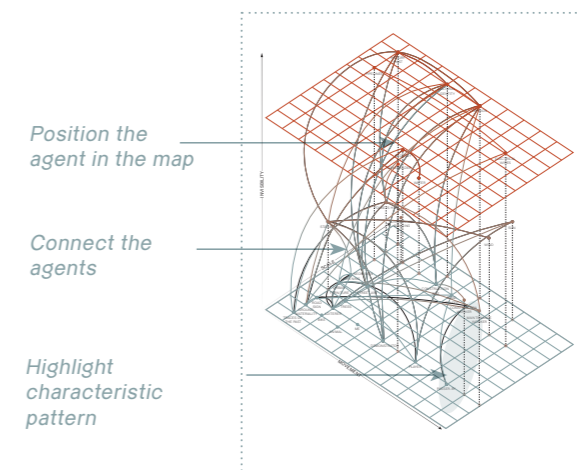


Figure 2: Template of the situated belongingness network map (author)

4 STEP 4 Agent findings: Valuing stories

+ Analyze the chosen agents

+ Explore the local agent's attachment and satisfaction to the situated system

After having placed the agents on the map, the aim is to connect them depending on their relation to others based on the understanding of the traces and (hi)stories collected. The thread can refer to a spatial, physical, or mental connection. Then, from the mesh of connections can be extracted characteristic patterns such as hyper connected network of agents opposed to disconnected ones. The use of such a map aims to highlight different interactions or even detachments between elements of the system.

The next step is to analyze in detail the most distinctive agents. Their specificity can be due, for example, to the presence of many connections, at the inverse to a total disconnection with the network, or to a solitary position on the map. When focusing on these few agents (4-5), and their connections to the general system, one addresses indirectly the other connected to them. This step helps to keep the existing level of complexity while breaking down the system into several connected pieces to make the study accessible.

The deep analysis start with a short introduction of the agent, followed by a study of the its status of belongingness. A study focusing on the position of the agent in the situated network by using the two belongingness analytical metrics extracted from the theory, attachment and satisfaction.

Attachment refers to two-part connected to each other, «something we connect something else with» or an intermediate element between two objects «a thing that joins two things together» (Laura in Krogh, 2020, pp. 64-65). This fragile relation can be physical, mental, social or cultural. The interconnection of two agents together can allow them to become tangible and visible. It can be the result of a specific affection between them or an appropriation from one to the other. The matter that connects them «holds a stickiness». Both agents on each side hold their own stories, and have their own practice, materiality, being, scale, but together they are creating a common story. This embodied sticky knowledge opens up a better understanding of the situated system. Becoming aware of those existing connections for an agent can help questioning where the agent is, who the agent is, and who the agent is with. For that reason, attachment is one of the marks of belongingness. Being aware of those connections and their constructions can help in the finding of elements generating belongingness or disconnecting the agent from the system.

Satisfaction refers to the appreciation of the agent for the situation. It addresses the participation of the element in specific uses and activities in the context. Satisfaction interrogates the behavior generated through those connections both, from the agent to the situated system and inversely from the system to the the agent. Addressing the satisfaction to understand belongingness helps questioning the role of the local agent in the situated system as well as the element's position and well-being in the context. (Hashemnezhad et al., 2013, p. 6-10; Scannell & Gifford, 2010, p. 5)

The belongingness metrics in the approach represent analytical tools to remember when addressing the agents but they should not be put into a specific order, neither represent strict paragraphs as both notions are deeply entangled with each other. Therefore the text is not divided in paragraphs but instead is annotated to clearly understand the different parameters of belongingness. This step encourages one to self-reflect

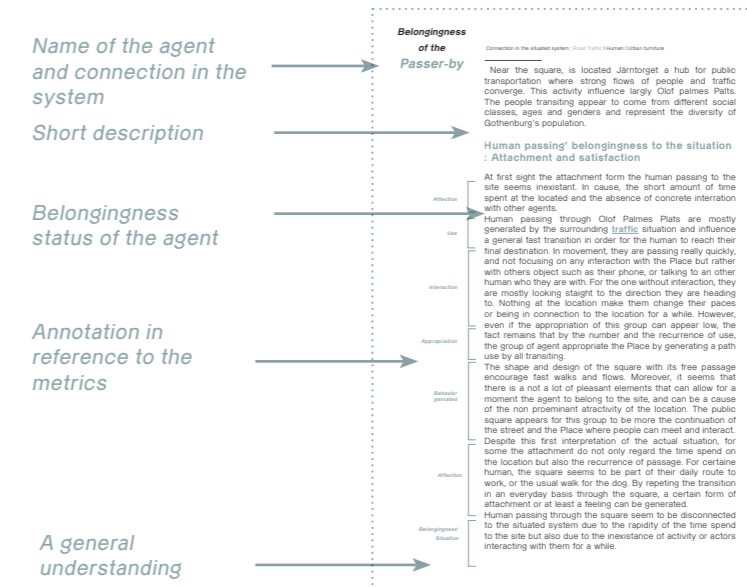


Figure 3: Example of detailed description of an agent (author)

a posteriori and allows to identify parameters responsible for the belongingness in the situation.

After having deeply questioned the site, compiled various knowledge from different positionalities and then decomposed to reconstruct an understanding of the situated network in detail, the main challenges and concepts for the situation can be carried further in the design process in (re)action of the situation. The belongingness metrics can then become design and reflecting tool to enhance the belongingness in the situation in this last stage. The situated belongingness approach emphasizes all along the process the importance of continuously be connected to the situation even after the analysis phase by working from «within» the location. The process becomes less linear and allows for reflection and discussion always entangled with the situation. It aims to map the site in a different way by acknowledging usually forgotten stories and thus encounters. This approach to the site analysis offers then other perspective that can inform the research with embodied knowledge to propose situated design action.

5 STEP 5 Situation suggestion: (Re)acting to stories

+ Extract concept from the understanding of the element generating belongingness

+ Continue using Attachment and Satisfaction as design and reflecting tool

A Place to belong

Situation descripiton: Olof Palmes Plats

Olof Palmes Plats | Folkets Hus | Site description | Locality | Gothenburg

- Why the site is relevant to applied the situated belongingness approach?
- How the location is usually describe?
- What is the history of the location?

Relevance of the site

The site around the Folkets Hus (People’s House) and Olof Palmes Plats in Gothenburg is undergoing a major shift. Located in west of Sweden, the Place is in the western central part of the city in the district of Linnéstaden. It is situated at the junction of three main districts, the old neighborhoods of Haga and Majorna and the currently in development one of Masthuggskajen. The location has a long history with the city and gothenburgers seem to have developed stories around it. It has been a place for public gathering as the name suggests but nowadays it is more a transitional Place. The site is one of the network hub of gothenburg distributing people throughout the city. Recently, a new development has been envisioned for the Folkets Hus and the new district nearby. The role of the square will then extend to one of the entry points of the new neighborhood. This shift of the Place is marked by strong citizen’s opinion highlighting a certain attachment or disconnection. The evolution from cultural activities to more economical ones opens reflection around the People’s House of Gothenburg and the possibility for the citizens to still belong their.

The Place is suitable for the application of the situated belongingness approach for several reasons. On one hand, the site is already envisioned as an active network of the city suggesting a high connectedness of the location. On the other, the heritage but also the actual citizen’s opinion suggest attachment or disconnection, making the Place a relevant location to observe (hi)stories and understand belongingness. In fine, the Folkets Hus and Olof Palmes Plats offer the possibility to envision through design a Place where local agents belong.

Brief history of the location

The Folkets Hus and Olof Palmes Plats have strong (hi)stories with the city that is relevant to begin from.

At the end of the 19th century, the workers of Gothenburg established around Järntorget with the desire to create a center for their activities. 40 years later, with the intensification of their occupations, the Arbetareföreningen (Workers' Associations) of Gothenburg needed larger and more functional facilities, the Folkets Hus. The concept of Folkets Hus (People's House) was first adopted in 1890 in Kristianstad and was later established in cities all around Sweden by the arbetarrörelsen (labor movement) (Om Oss – Folkets Hus Göteborg, n.d.). For some, the Folkets Hus were seen as a political and civic centers, but others perceived them as community houses proposing cultural and educational activities. In the 1930s, the initial purpose of protecting 'the freedom of speech', lost its importance for the benefit of a community center. Between the 1940s and 1960s, the Folkets Hus were highly visited for cultural events, lectures, discussions, and films. The organizations were run by independent associations sharing the same house (Berggren, 2013 in Dvorak, 2021, p. 23).

The Folkets Hus had the ambition to be a center "for meetings, entertainment, and culture."

(Om Oss – Folkets Hus Göteborg, n.d.; Tidslinje – Stadsutveckling Göteborg – Göteborgs Stad, n.d.)

In Gothenburg, the first building of Folkets Hus was commissioned in 1944, at what seemed a natural place for gathering and related to the labor party's history, near Järntorget. They demolished the old wooden buildings to make space for the Folkets Hus. The building designed by Nils Einar Eriksson had the ambition to be a center "for meetings, entertainment, and culture" (Om Oss – Folkets Hus Göteborg, n.d.; Tidslinje – Stadsutveckling Göteborg – Göteborgs Stad, n.d.). In 1949, the first building Fackföreningshuset (Trade Union House), a nine-story high building was completed, and 2 years later the house was supplemented with the Möteshuset (The Meeting House). Later, in 1956 a new section at the east of The Folkets Hus was added, containing the Draken (Dragons) cinema and the Vågen (The Wave) Dance club. The block of the Folkets Hus hosted diverse programs such as theater, cinema, meeting room, restaurant, forming a cultural center where people gathered and shared experiences. In the 2010s, an extension to the Möteshuset building added an extra floor on top of the building. More recently, the Folkets Hus association sold the building to a private company Balder, and a refurbishment and newly constructed 100m high hotel is ongoing and planned to be completed in 2023 (Om Oss – Folkets Hus Göteborg, n.d.; Tidslinje – Stadsutveckling Göteborg – Göteborgs Stad, n.d.)(Erséus Arkitker, discussion, 2022.02.23).

In front of the Folkets Hus, a public square, the Olof Palmes Plats, historically linked to Järntorget and the gothenburg workers, got its name on August, 27th 1986, from a reminiscence of the labor movement. The square got its actual triangulare shape of 2500m2, after being separated from Järntorget by the new road and collective transport. Elements of the historical relation of the Place with the worker party and the Iron movement can be found on the location through the statues and busts. A lot of refurbishments of the square have been realized in the past, due

to in particular traffic rearrangements. Today, Olof Palmes Plats is deeply connected to the transportation and transitional Place of Järntorget, a main transport hub of the city.

In the following years, the city wants to propose a new development for the square, researching how the Place can become more "pleasant, safe and accessible" and promote art and culture (Masthuggskajen Genomförandestudie Programhandling, 2019; Tidslinje – Stadsutveckling Göteborg – Göteborgs Stad, n.d.). Recently, the Folkets Hus and Olof Palmes Plats have been added to the extended development project of Masthuggskajen. This has informed a new design perspective, such as the decision to build a high-rise hotel and turning some of the functions of the Folkets Hus into hotel facilities. It also emphasizes the vision that this site needs to become the new interaction, transition, and entrance between districts (Masthuggskajen Genomförandestudie Programhandling, 2019). (Erséus Arkitker, discussion, 2022.02.23).

With this background in mind, one can interrogate the notion of a Folkets Hus for the city and local agents considering that the building is owned by a private company with an economic agenda. This interrogation also concerns the development of the square as the entrance of the hotel and outside serving will be on the space. Moreover, the location of the site, entangled in the traffic and the new development, seems to be a challenge to embrace. Those disconnections make the interaction, for now, invisible and one can ask: Within this transitional Place can the site become again a square and a building where people belong?



Figure 4: Orthophoto of the Gothenburg city center.

● Folkets Hus

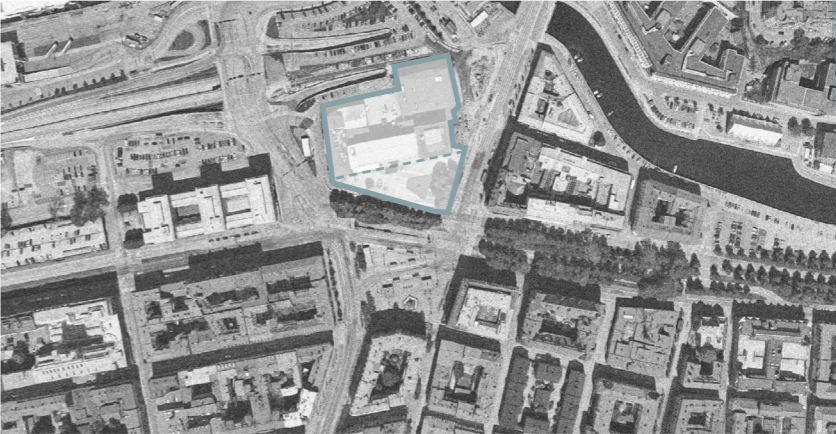


Figure 5: Orthophoto of the neighborhood of Majorna, Haga and Masthuggskajen

■ Olof Palmes Plats

Process description

In this chosen location, I use the Situated Belongingness approach explained in Chapter 2. However, the process of the research is iterative and both the application and the writing of the method are much entangled in the time process. The main intention with the method is to be able to understand different belongingness existing in the location by mapping the existing local agents and comprehending their connectivities and interactions. In relation with the use of situated approach, I decide to situate my discourse and tale of the approach application in the present tense.

I use two main actions to emphasize traces of (hi) stories left by visible and invisible agents."

The local agents are both human and non-human elements of the site that are interacting actively or passively in the situation. The agents can be from different scales, from materiality to a larger, even impalpable scale. I am looking for traces of those local agents both visible and invisible. For that purpose, I use two main actions to emphasize them, the first one is to impregnate myself «within» the site and highlight traces left by visible local agents with personal representation. The second one is to research existing knowledge through archives, disscussions, and people’s opinions to visualize possible invisible layers of agents.

With this in mind, I map the agent’s connections by embracing and representing empathetically their subjectivities. By highlighting different interactions or even detachment, the aim is to address the notion of belongingness, and for some local agents to study deeply particular attachment and satisfaction regarding others from the system.

From the mapped situated network, a concept as a test-design is envisioned to enhance belongingness locally. Through the whole process, I am sitting at the location as much as I can to work in connection from «within» the location.

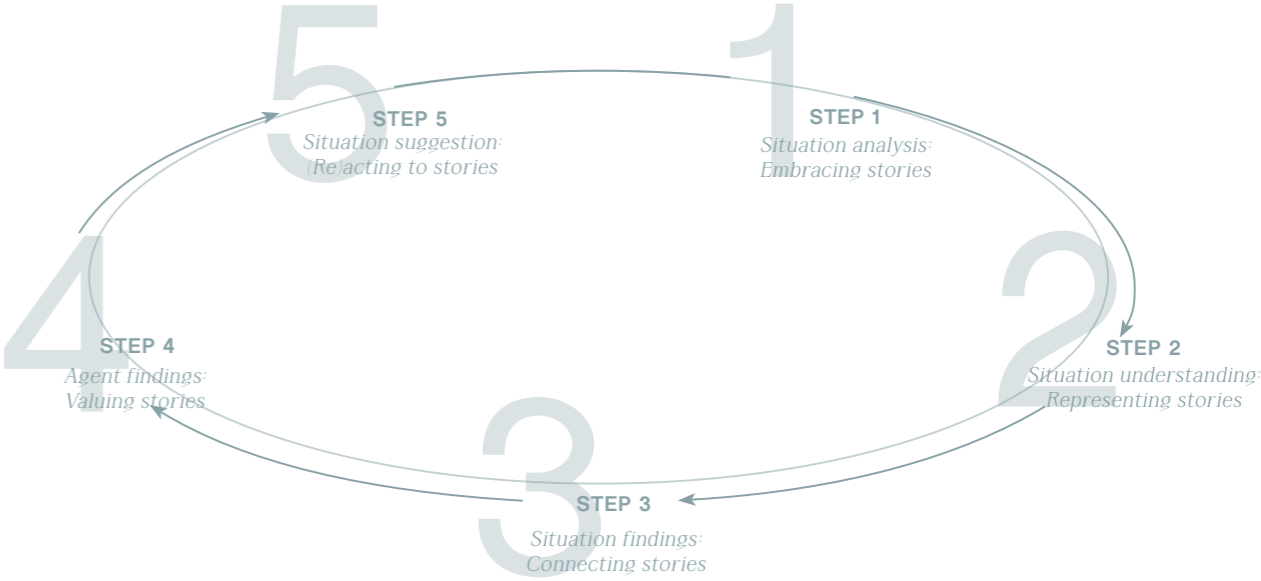


Figure 6: Process diagram of the Situated belongingness approach (author)

1 Situation Analysis: Embracing Stories

Belongingness | Approach application | Local agents | (In)Visible | Inven(s)ories

→ How to gather, represent and value stories left by others on a location?

→ How to acknowledge other stories usually left ?

→ How to re-tell stories gathered from a time being?

1st action: Gather observations of visible local agents

In order to get knowledge regarding the site and understand the existing local agents' system, my first step is to gather knowledge by observing the site, impregnating myself within it and researching traces of visible local agents. I went to the site 16 times between the 5th of February and the 10th of May at different moments of the day to harvest stories and emphasize visible agents. When I am going to the site, I am always sitting at a different spot, and observing. The first agent that I see, is my point of departure. I am embracing their positionality re-telling their stories, while staying open to shifting to another agent if something happens to be predominant.

Due to the location and transitory activity on the square, I do not discuss with a lot of different people. I feel a bit misplaced to stop them in their way and I am only starting to discuss with people that I am seeing several times or that I perceive open for conversation. For those reasons, I choose to work with a less intrusive method. During my stay, I am representing my gathering with three different personal modes of representation, hand drawings, photographs, and writings to catch the traces and fix the knowledge of the situation.

The drawing is for me a tool to re-tell stories of agents that I see while being on the location. When looking at them, I draw with my pen, their position, their interaction with the space, their actions at the moment. But I am also grasping some informing details and characteristics of the agent as a specific materiality, a color, an attitude, or a specific emotion. I am also representing visible or invisible connections between agents. All those specificities, I am trying to express with quick sketches annotated with keywords, to fix traces of an agent's passage through the location.

Another tool for me is photography. With a fixed lens on my camera, I am exploring the site, moving from one position to another to enhance different parameters. With a rather small frame, I am choosing to convey situations such as a person's interaction, a dialogue between materialities,

a discussion with the time, and a movement. I am also realizing that by taking pictures of elements of the site, I can influence new behaviors. And my unusual position in the location can generate questions. In my process, photographs are both important at the time that I am taking the picture for the reflection of a certain positionality, but also when I am later editing and processing them. Posterior to my stays, I am editing photographs in black and white with an intense grain. The process aims to open up to another perspective, with a certain rawness, to limit the influence of the technology. When looking back at the photographs, other elements appear and become relevant. During that reflecting time, I am also annotating them with text and quick sketches, putting them in resonance with my drawings.



Figure 8: Photography of a Passer-by (author)

While sitting at the location, I keep track of what happened by writing down stories. Highlighting common as unusual actions or events. The stories are compiled in a journal referencing the time of the day. Compared to the two other modes of representation, writing helps me to synthesize in one sentence a key moment.

These tools help me to gather an inventory of stories, the inven(s)tory, of traces collected while being on the site for a time. The temporality is also a highly relevant parameter. During different times of the day or weather, new elements become progressively visible. Some of the agents are in fact tangible elements of the site but not perceived as visible. Only with the time and the connection through other visible agents, they do finally enter in resonance with the visible layer of agents and become accessible to me. By embracing these parameters, I am managing to see different elements from the site that need to be considered and start understanding the system in which they are connected and interacting. The stories extracted from the site help me to start interrogating their specific belongingness to the site through their satisfaction and attachment, envisioning belongingness through interactions.

Staying at the site as much as I can strengthen my connection to the location to produce situated observations, embodied knowledge".

Following the site visit, I am also developing beside a graphical representation of the situation to attach my knowledge to an existing spatial map of the location. By realizing an axonometry, I am opening to another scale and position. With this media, I am trying to express a story with different actions and small details. The document can then be read at different scales. Working with several perspectives in one document is relevant to my process to get a broader picture of the scene without forgetting small elements and interactions that matter in the location. The axonometry becomes a working document where I keep adding different local agents in order to understand their relationships in terms of space and scale. The visible local agents observed on the site are highlighted in blue to make them prominent in the reading of the document.

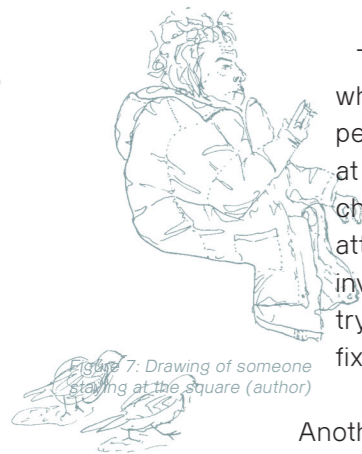
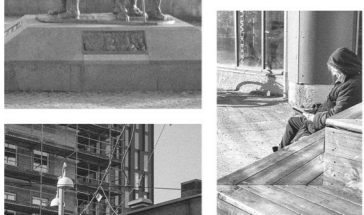


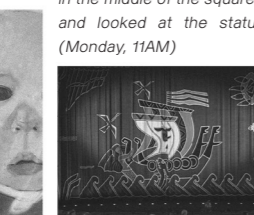
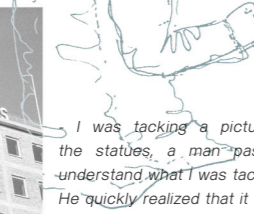
Figure 7: Drawing of someone staying at the square (author)



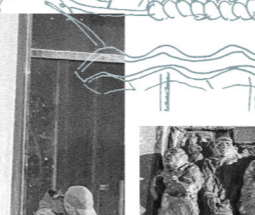
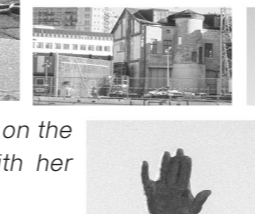
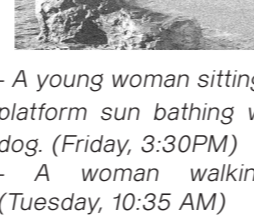
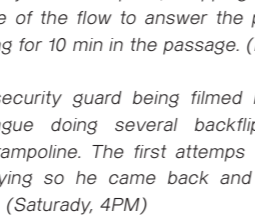
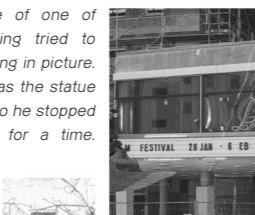
- A woman with a stroller crossing the square (Tuesday, 10AM)
- Two friends meeting near the statue and leaving a few seconds after. (Saturday, 4PM) (Saturday, 2PM)



- A woman reading her book while sunbathing on the bleacher. (Saturday, 4:30 PM)
- A man walking, texting with his phone and looking at the ground. (Tuesday, 10:35 aM) AM)



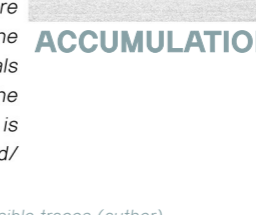
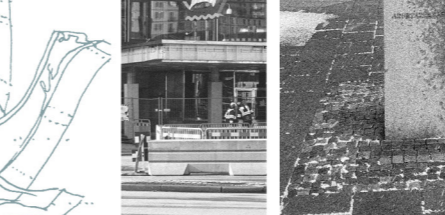
- Two children were jumping and passing between the statues in the middle of the square. They were using it as playground. The mom switched directly posture when she saw others looking at her kids, asking them to go down and stop. (Saturday, 4PM)
- A man walking, texting on his phone and looking at the ground. (Tuesday, 10:35 AM)



VISIBLE AGENTS OF OLOF PALMES PLATS



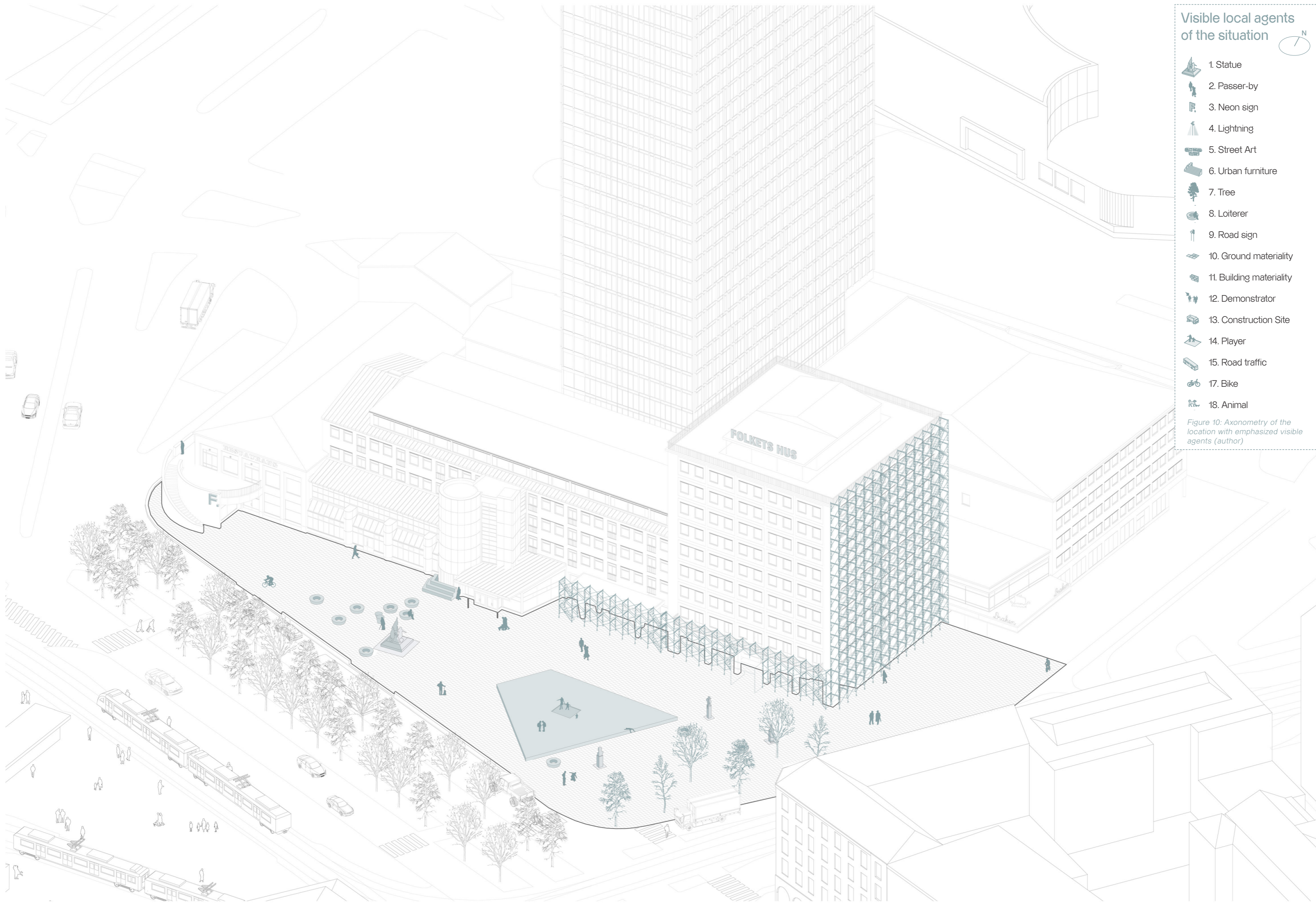
-A couple meeting on the Place, probably for breaking up. They are sitting on one of the benches. The girl reapplying make-up straight after on the square. (Friday, 4PM)
- Several people smoking cigarettes. (Thursday, 12PM)



ACCUMULATION OF TRACES

The ground materiality is different around all the statues from the rest of the square. Pavements are surrounding all the statues' pedestals while the rest of the ground materiality is plate stones in red/white tonalities.

Figure 9: Collage of visible traces (author)



Visible local agents
of the situation

1. Statue

2. Passer-by

3. Neon sign

4. Lightning

5. Street Art

6. Urban furniture

7. Tree

8. Loiterer

9. Road sign

10. Ground materiality

11. Building materiality

12. Demonstrator

13. Construction Site

14. Player

15. Road traffic

17. Bike

18. Animal

Figure 10: Axonometry of the location with emphasized visible agents (author)

2nd action: Gather knowledge of invisible local agents

In the process and through discussions and readings such as *Paris: Ville invisible* by Bruno Latour (1998), I realized that a part of the information was missing due to the only description of visible leftover traces in the environment. Indeed, even if I was exploring the site in detail and getting interested in really small specificities and elements of the situation perceived as invisible, a stratum of information was absent.

I therefore research existing traces that could inform me about invisible elements of the site that are not directly visible. Their invisibility lies in the inaccessibility of knowledge of them at the time being on the location. The information can be attached to a different time or even era or a different stratum which is not visible from my position. Although the elements are not visible from the first layer of observation, they still are highly relevant in the situated system. It makes sense in a situated approach to go beyond the visible to acknowledge diverse encounters. Nonetheless, there are also intangible agents which are visible but hard to physically grasp that I categorize as invisible. This can refer to natural elements for example. Therefore, I am investigating through several ways to access the invisible agents' traces.

My first path of investigation is through research on the internet and social media. Initiated already in the beginning of the process, I realized that the matters found could be relevant to study further. By researching with keywords related to the location such as «Olof Palmes Plats»,

#Olofpalmesplats
#FolketsHus
#FolketsHusUt-
veckling
#Masthuggskajen

«Folkets Hus utveckling», on social medias (*Instagram, LinkedIn, Facebook group «Yimby» or «Masthuggskajen»*), I am looking at different posts and especially at the comments and reactions of people. I am also reading the local press *Göteborgs-posten*, for articles regarding the location. These relevant pieces of information inform me about people's opinions about the location. It appears that people might be more descriptive and critical behind their screens while writing a comment, so the information collected is probably honest. Moreover, users are sometimes debating in the comments which provides me with diverse opinions and argumentations. Thanks to these platforms, I got access to complementary information and the population's opinions without the certainty if they frequent the location. The quantity of posts and comments about the location show me people's attachment to the location or at least that a group of people has feelings about the site.

To continue gathering more traces and have a better understanding of the ongoing development, I contact different stakeholders in connection with the project. I first discuss with the architecture firm which has been working on the development of the Folkets Hus since several years. On the 23rd of February, I discuss with an architect from Erséus Arkitekter. (Erséus Arkitekter, discussion, 2022.02.23). The design studio is now designing the Draken Hotel, a new addition to the Folkets Hus. They are also in charge of the functional reorganisation of the existing building. During the meeting, we discuss about various topics, such as the changes in the neighborhood, the evolution of the Folkets Hus, and the decisions

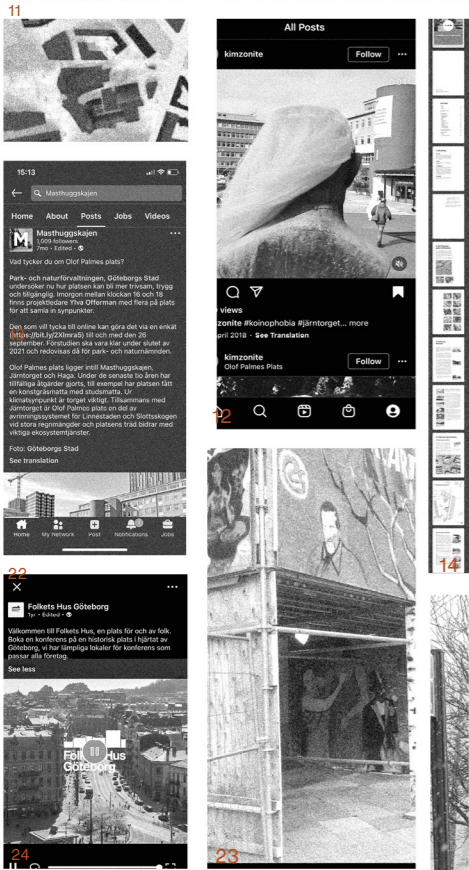
informing their design on the location. Finally, we also address the fact that the public square in front of the Folkets Hus was not part of their design development, and that they have no idea about what will happen there.

Following that relevant meeting, I research who is in charge of the location, and if someone is currently working on a new design. I find out that Olof Palmes Plats is managed by the department «Park och naturförvaltningen» (Parks and nature management) of Gothenburg municipality. After several research on the internet, I discover that the city planning office is currently analyzing the possibilities of the square so I decide to ask for a meeting. On the 15th of March, I meet with two persons from the municipality (Park och naturförvaltningen, discussion, 2022.03.15). We discuss their ongoing analysis report*, the finding of the form they sent to the citizen, the history of the location, and their expectations regarding the future development of the square. A week after, I get access to the report online. The discussions and the report inform me on other invisible parameters influencing the situated system such as historical stories and technical networks of the location. I am also requesting some archives from the municipality office revealing other layers of the location, such as plumbing, electricity, but also different constructions on the site from different periods.

Following the gathering of all those traces left by invisible local agents or by others regarding them, I decide to address them in the same axonometry map of the situation than the visible agents. This process helps me to re-establish equality in terms of visibility. By adding this new stratum, I am able to observe their spatial relations, scales, and connections to the situation. The invisible local agents gathered from the exploration are highlighted in red to make them prominent in the reading of the document.

*Förstudie
Olof Palmes
Plats, mars
2022 is the latest
report published
by the «Park och
naturförvaltningen»
GöteborgStads
concerning the future
development of the
square

INVEN(S)TORY



lig mötesplats blir till och
ågen flyttas från

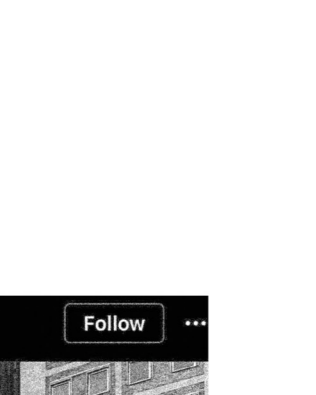
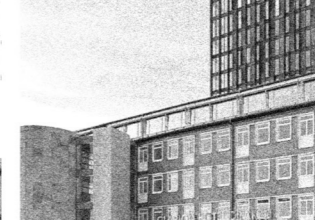
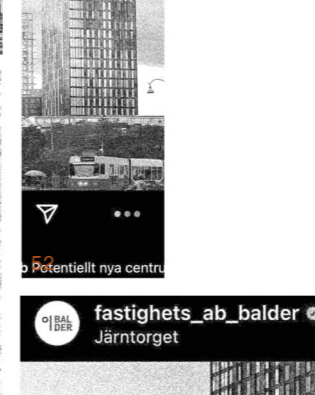
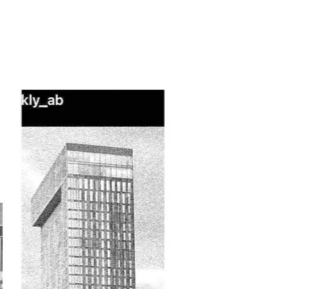
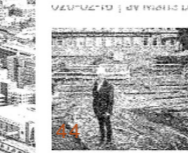
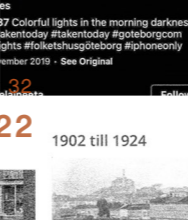
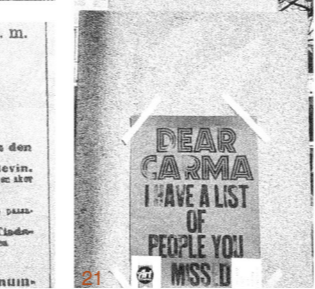
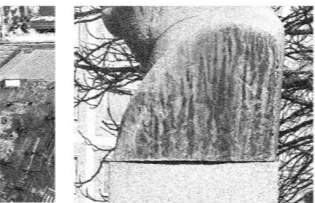
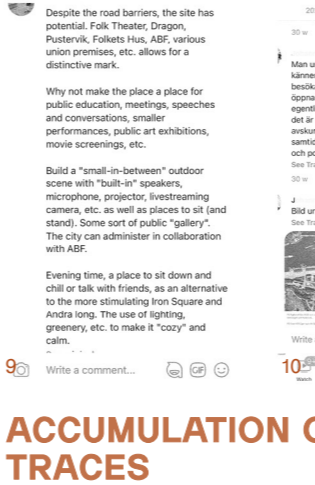
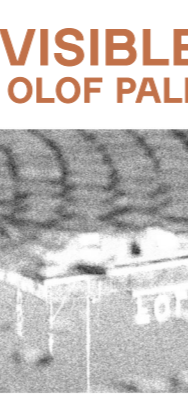
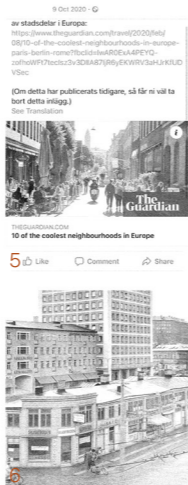
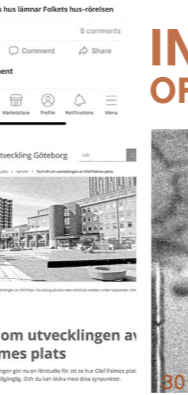
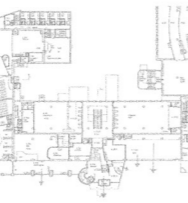
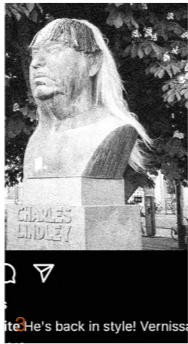
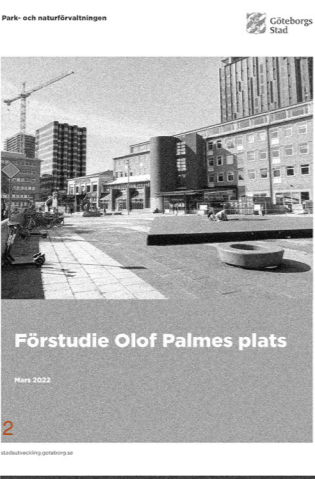
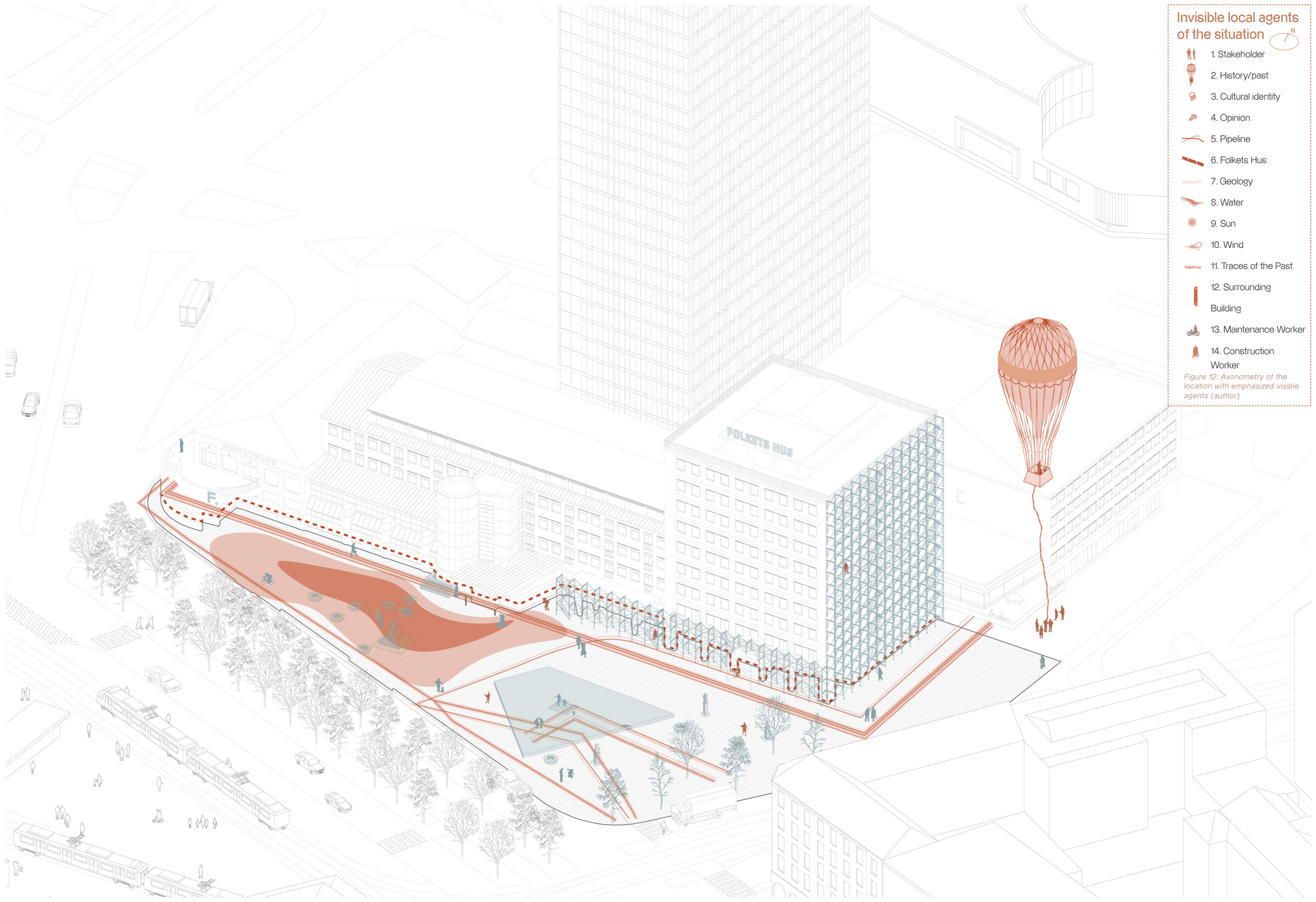


Figure 11: Collage of (in)visible traces for reference see page 87 (author)

Järntorget – mellan folkhem och miljardärer

Reportage • GP har kartlagt vad som hände när Folkets hus blev en kommersiell verksamhet och hur bygget av hotell Draken påverkar Järntorget.



Invisible local agents of the situation

- 1. Stakeholder
- 2. History/past
- 3. Cultural identity
- 4. Opinion
- 5. Pipeline
- 6. Folkets Hus
- 7. Geology
- 8. Water
- 9. Sun
- 10. Wind
- 11. Traces of the Past
- 12. Surrounding Building
- 13. Maintenance Worker
- 14. Construction Worker

Figure 12: Axonometry of the location with emphasized visible agents (author)

2 Situation Understanding: Representing Stories

Local agents | Visible | Invisible | Positionality | (Hi)Stories | Situated System

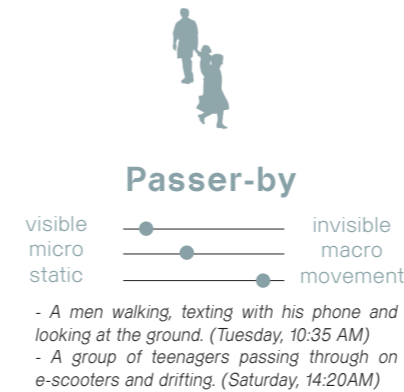
- How to describe the local agents of Olof Palmes Plats?
- How to correlate agents to each other?
- How to acknowledge and value other stories usually left ?

Following the accumulation of observation and traces, each identified local agent interacting in the situation is shortly described in a systematic process. As they are from different natures and scales, I need to study them deeper on their own to be able to grasp the whole situated system.

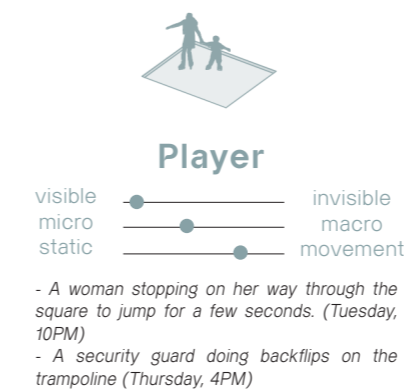
They are first described in terms of their visibility, scale, and movability with the help of a slider to be able to apprehend them to each other. A chosen story extracted from the gathered traces supports the agent's short description, it can refer to a sentence from my journal describing it in the situation, a piece of text extracted from an article or social media, or a quotation from the recently published report of the municipality (Park och naturförvaltningen, 2022). This extracted story reflects traces left by others or re-tell stories. A subjective interpretation and understanding of the agent's relation to the system is added to complete the description. Agents identified as visible are colored in blue tone while the ones perceived as invisible are showcased in red tone. The human agents are defined in the overview according to their action on the network as they have the possibility to interact in different manner, and therefore need to be split into several agents.

The position of the slider is defined after the observation stage. The visibility parameter refers to the presence of the element in the system. The least the visible agent is perceived as acknowledged by others, the more invisible it is. In that sense, an agent that can't be seen but which is still part of the system is categorized as invisible. The next slider representing the size, allows me to notice the presence of different scale agents and understand the relationship that they can have with each other. The movability of the agent is measured with the last slider. The more an agent is moving and actively interacting, the more it is categorized as in movement. These metrics allow me to identify the agents which could create a physical connection with others as well as the ones which are more passive, and allow for a more social or cultural connection.

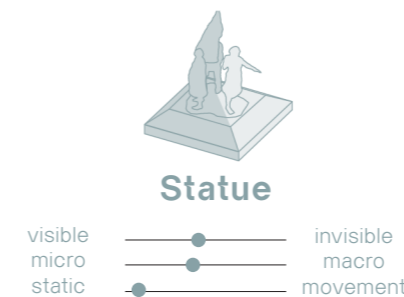
The local agents are stored in the overview map organizing them according to their order of appearance in the accumulation phase. This informs on their direct visibility but also showcases the flow of my thoughts in the apprehension of the situation, and the successive emergence of invisible agents.



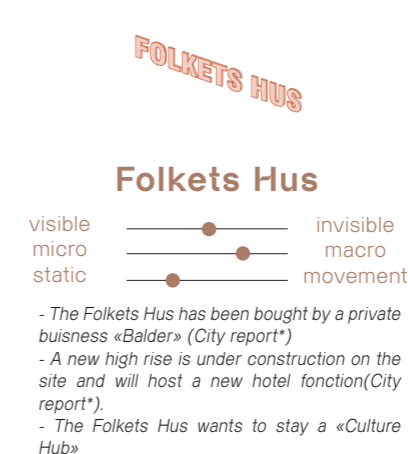
This highlights that people pass through the square without showing a lot of attention to the space. The square appears to be a transitional Place for this agent and nothing seems to stop them in their action.



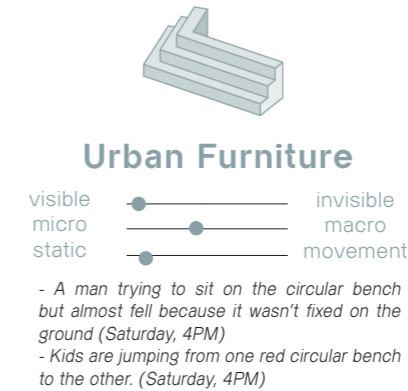
The observations show that the trampoline is seen as a playful occasion for all. I see this as an example of an element that can stop people on their way through the square and offer a moment of appropriation.



The stories reveal that the statues are palpable elements of the site but perceived as invisible. But when one realizes them, the relevance with the (hi) story is evident. I realized also that I can intervene and change behaviors.



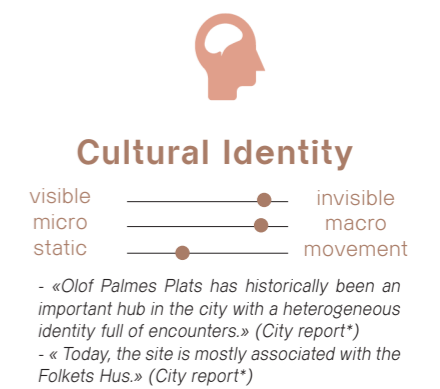
The Folekts Hus is living a huge transition in terms of activity and users. The new hotel function and outdoor service are challenges to address. The building is collectively known but perceived as invisible with the construction site.



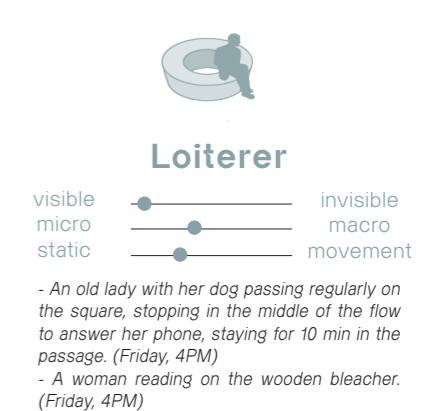
The furniture is not used a lot and doesn't seem to be attached to the Place. They seem to have been placed on top of an existing layer. The disposition of the furniture and their materiality doesn't encourage the human agents to stay on the location.



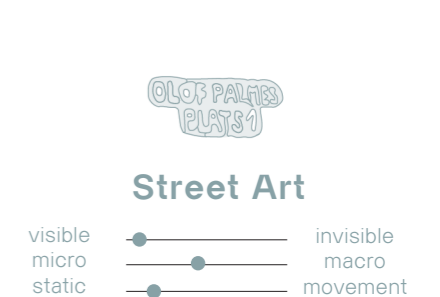
The red neon signs present all around the Place seem an element of attachment for people that are embedded in the location and a strong part of the Place's identity.



The identity of the square tends to decrease. The site seems to be more an entrance to the Folkets Hus or a transitional square rather than a meeting Place as it was in the past.

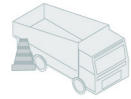


The observation showcases that this agent interacts and spends time in the location, but overall the interactions are rather on a short time period.



The street art seems to represent elements of the (hi)story of the Folkets Hus and public spaces. I think the art has been made legally, and encourages people to still feel attachment while the construction site is ongoing.

*(Park och naturförvaltningen, 2022), City Report translated from swedish by the author.



Construction Site

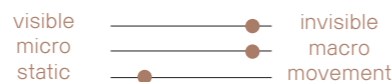


- A man staying under the scaffolding to be protected from the wind. (Tuesday, 6PM)
- Two guardians staying under the scaffolding during the night. (Saturday, 10PM)

The construction site covers the ground floor of the Folkets Hus and makes the building invisible to the human agents. The scaffolding structure becomes urban furniture or shelter for their users of the square.



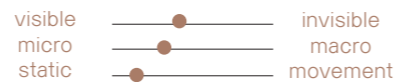
History / Past



- «To facilitate the shipping of iron, the iron wave was moved from Brunnsparken to the actual Olof Palmes Plats» (City report*)
 - «In 1872, an air balloon was established for leisure.» (City report*)
 - "The Place developed into a lively meeting place" (City report*)
- The square is marked by past history and evolution, centered around three main axes, the iron work, the entertainment, and the meeting place for citizens.

Folkets Hus

Trace of the past



- The traces of the old letters on the red tower of the MötetsHus are still visible. (Tuesday, 10AM)
- The traces of graffiti on the pedestal and the furniture are still visible
- « In the middle of the square they used to be a cherry tree planted in memory of Olof Palme» (City Report*)

Some traces of the past are still visible in the location reminding us of former activities legal or not. They represent the liveability of the square.



Road Traffic



- The traffic is intense and people in their car are honking. (several times)
- Teenagers are passing with e-scooter through the location. (Saturday, 4PM)

The intense traffic around the square impacts the activities of the location and influences people transiting through the square. Transport modes such as bikes and e-scooters are passing through the square. The noise intensity is pretty high but the human activity is less intense than on Järntorget.



Road Sign

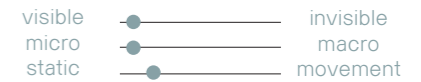


- Many road signs are located on the square and refer to the car passing next. (Friday, 11AM)

The signs are located without any order on the square and some of the road signs are on the square even if they are targeting the car users. The only sign regarding the square and concerning the trampoline is located at the eastern extremity of the square hidden under a tree.



Ground Materiality



- The tiles do not represent anymore the colored pattern initially though for the square. The tiles seems to have been moved anarchically. (Saturday, 4PM)
- « Many of the slabs are cracked.» (City report*)

The ground materiality reveals the movement of the ground beneath and reflects the different changes through the years. Actually, they seem dissociated from the rest of the context and damaged.



Lightning



- The space is dark by night and people are avoiding the square (Wednesday, 9:35 PM)
- The infrastructure light up only the statues (Saturday, 11 PM)

The lightning is not sufficient and their inaction enhances the feeling of insecurity and reduces the number of people passing. On the other hand, the lightning seems to have been positioned to reveal the statues during the night but they persist in being invisible as no one dares to pass through the square.



Stakeholder



- We don't know what is happening for Olof Palmes Plats (Discussion 23/02)
- The new owner Balder asked for a refurbishment of the square (Discussion, 15/03)

The different stakeholders from the site don't seem to be in real connection neither working coordinately. The difference between the public and privately owned parts of the site seems to cause a gap in the discussion. The multiplicity of actors also increases the difficulties.



Tree



- There are seven trees (Chesnut) positioned on the eastern side of the square. (City report*)
- «The trees are considered to be relatively low nature value (...) rare lichens have been found in the vicinity.» (City report*)

The trees are detached from the location and their position at the extremity of the site highlights it. However, the vegetation seems to act as a good buffer for the dense traffic around.



Pipeline



- «Olof Palmes Plats has several different types of pipes that need to be taken into account» (City report*)

Invisible from our point of view, a huge system of piping flows under our feet at Olof Palmes Plats. Transporting water and energy, the pipes are buried 1 to 4 meters underneath. This large activity is essential for a functioning city.



Geology



- «The site lies on a thick layer of clay (...) because the ground is not piled it sinks and the difference is greater toward the eastern facades.» (City report*)

The soil underneath the location influenced its evolution through the time. This invisible actor impacts deeply the existence of the square and the possible activities to add in order to not impact more the sinking. It also induces different qualities of spaces between east and west.



Water

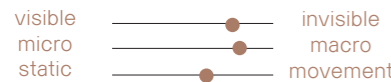


- «Olof Palmes Plats is located adjacent to a stormwater route.» (City report*)
- «Water accumulates on the western part of the square and during heavy rainfall a large puddle is formed» (City report*)

Large water puddles can happen on the location and impact the operation there. The water obligates other agents to change their habits such urban furniture and human agents.



Opinion



- «The wishes of various groups are (...) to see more greenery, more seatings, play area and room for larger public gatherings. (City Report*)
- «When seeing the render of the outside place of the hotel, citizens called the municipality to interrogate on the future of the public space.» (Discussion, 15/03)

Gothenburgers have strong opinions about the location. This showcases that the future of the square matters for citizens and highlights the existence of a certain attachment.



Animal



- A lot of pigeons are walking near the trampoline platform (Thursday, 10AM)
- A dog passing with a grand mother (several times)

On Olof Palmes Plats, animals interact from time to time with other agents such as birds in the trees, or pets being walked around. This fact shows that the square is satisfying for animals even if there are not a lot of greeneries and that the square is also placed on a recurrent promenade path for some.



Bike



- The bikes are organized anarchically and people are waiting in queue to pass over the bikes to access the trash can (Wednesday, 12:40PM)
- All the bikes fell on the ground due to a wind gust (Thursday, 10AM)

The shared bikes are taking a large space of the square near the fence. They are positioned in line but the wind pushes them to the ground and some furniture like the bin become inaccessible. This highlights a wind problematic at the square.



Sun



- A woman is sunbathing with her dog on the green platform (Saturday, 4PM)
- « Olof Palmes Plats site is facing south and receives sunlight most of the day (...) there is nothing really shadowing the site.» (City report*)

The sun is an intangible agent largely influencing the activity on the square such as the people staying on the site, the presence of animals, and the growth of greenery. This quality also influences a welcoming feeling.



Wind



- A man is standing behind the statue to protect himself from the wind. (Tuesday, 10AM)
- Two people protecting from the wind under the scaffolding. (Saturday, 11PM)

From time to time, a strong wind can occur on the location. Human agents are using other objects accessible in the location such as the statues and the scaffolding to protect themselves. There is no furniture accessible on the site that is allocated to this function.



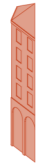
Demonstrator



- Every 1st of May, people are meeting on the square to manifest. This year it did not happen. (Sunday, 2PM)
- Poster of protestations are stuck on the pedestal of the statues (Friday, 4PM)

Olof Palmes Plats is perceived as a Place for collective representation and manifestation. The quality of the square as an open space, and its popular character, make the space a perfect location in the city to show an opinion.

*(Park och naturförvaltningen, 2022). City Report translated from Swedish by the author.



Surrounding Building

visible micro static invisible macro movement

- "Olof Palmes Plats is adjacent to Järntorgstan and Pustervik" (City report*)
- Red neons sign on all the surrounding buildings were illuminated. (Saturday, 11 PM)

The adjacent buildings are creating a coherence on the surroundings. They share all a red element, a neon sign and a common history.



Maintenance worker

visible micro static invisible macro movement

- A maintenance worker came to pick up trash near two people. (Tuesday, 8AM)
- One worker came to charge the shared bikes in his truck. (Tuesday, 10AM)

The maintenance workers are barely visible agents of the location. They come for a short period, and act on the situation doing what they are here for. Other agents do not really care about their presence and tend to act as if they were not there.



Construction worker

visible micro static invisible macro movement

- 5 construction workers walking through the square and leaving for lunch (Thursday, 12PM)
- Two workers hiding themselves from the wind under the construction site (Tuesday, 4PM)

The construction workers are part of the location for a certain time. They are barely visible at the square as they are working on the construction site in the periphery. They only become visible when they enter and exit their work place, but also when they take a break on the square.

3 & 4 Situation Findings: Connecting & Valuing Stories

Belongingness | Situated Approach | Relationality | Connectivity | Network map

→ How to represent the relation between the local agents?

→ Which agents to value in the situation?

→ How to describe one agent in relation to its attachment and satisfaction to the situated network?

Mapping the situated network

With the precedent stage, I gathered knowledge and understood the visible agents as the invisible ones. During that process, I also started to categorize them according to three metrics, visibility, scale, and mobility to grasp their differences.

In order to understand the existing belongingness of a situation, it is essential to refer to its two main definitions, the notion of "feeling attached to something" and the other of "being part of a system" (e.g., Leach, 1997, p. 80; Oxford Advanced Learner's dictionary, n.d.). Both of them induct that the agent is considered as entangled to a network and is able to affect it. While the first definition addresses more physical connection, the other one refers to a more ontological perception involving a socio-cultural investment and affect of the agent. Therefore, it makes sense to look at those identified agents in relation to each other and map their interconnections.

By using the situated belongingness network map defined in the Chapter 2, I place the local agents, following the metrics stated earlier. They are also colored regarding their visibility respectively in blue or red tones. The agents are then connected with a thread to highlight existing relationships in the situated system. This thread highlights a spatial, social, cultural, or mental relation.

Lastly, in this graph, I decide to position myself also in the situated system, to acknowledge my positionality in this research. As I have, myself, cause some reactions by my action, and as I have acknowledge all their subjectivities and recognize my own implicit bias, I am part of this system. However, even if I am deciding to be part of the agent and place myself on the map, I choose to not connect myself with the other agents, and not disturb the organization. I am trying to enter the situated system to understand it from «within» but I am also aware that I don't have the same position and role in it.

The first definition addresses a more physical connection, while the other one refers to a more ontological perception involving a socio-cultural investment and affect of the agent.

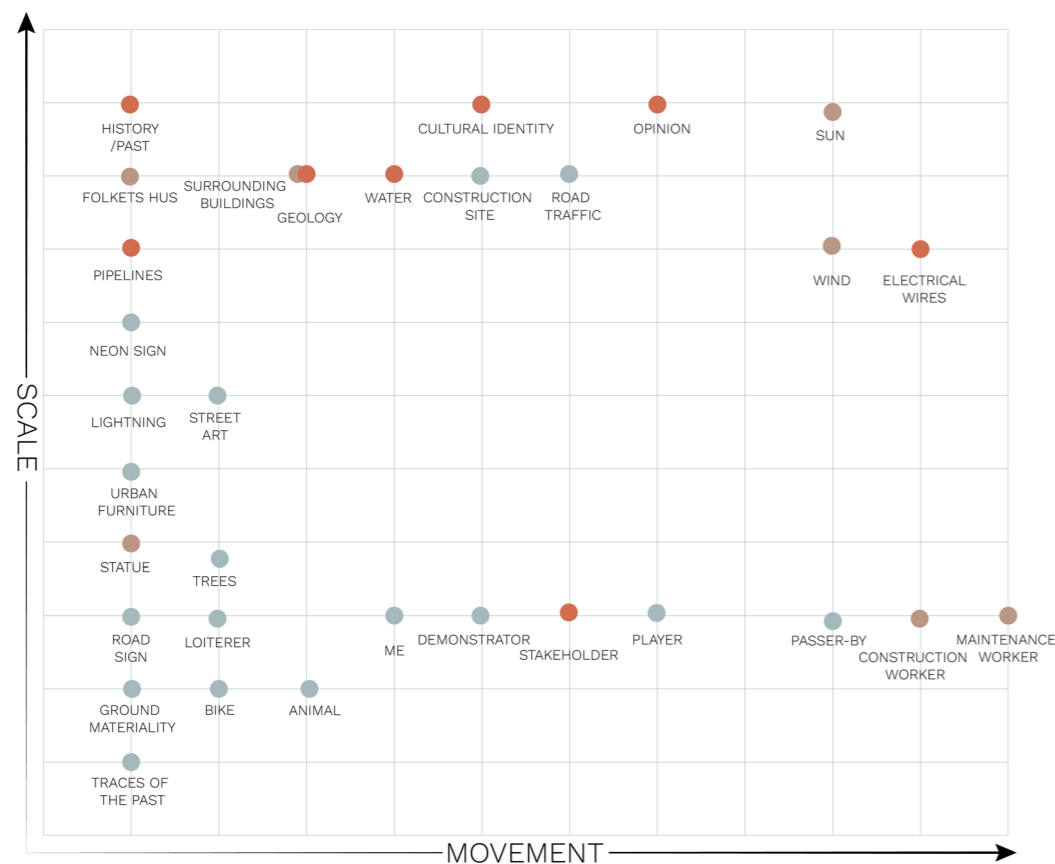
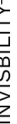


Figure 13. Map of local agents according to scale and movability metrics (author)

Finally, after the selection of the characteristic agents, I am deciding to not detail more any infrastructure. In that situation, other elements reveal to be more relevant to address and contrast with the habitus that architects have to often focus on infrastructure and less on other essential parameters. In that situation, I still envision their worth by mapping them but I am also critically analyzing their importance in that specific context.



MOVEMENT-

Belongingness of the History/Past

→ Connection in the situated system : Cultural identity | Opinion | Statues | Street Art | Folkets Hus | Neon sign | Surrounding buildings |

Olof Palmes Plats is a square full of history. A continuity of events, from the workers party till the Gothenburg’s Folkets Hus has forged the site as it is today. All those (hi)stories are encouraging a common identity and a perception as a Place for people. Some agents of the network are transposing that common knowledge on the location.

History/Past’s belongingness to the situation : Attachment and satisfaction

Affection

The history/past agent is deeply embedded with the location. Since 1650, Olof Palmes Plats has been a meeting Place for the workers but also for people from different social classes to express *opinions*. Through the centuries, Olof Palmes Plats as well as the *surrounding buildings* have evolved as a Place for entertainment in town, sharing some common aesthetics such as a red letters *neon signs*.

For citizens, the location has been since then perceived as a Place for people, encouraged also by the establishment of the cultural *Folkets Hus* (Park och naturförvaltningen, 2022). The activities on the location have forged a strong identity and have anchored collective memories and a distinct *cultural identity*.

Behavior generated

The location is protected for its historical worth in the National Heritage "Stadslager från 1600-1700 talen", highlighting the cultural value of the urban tissue (Park och naturförvaltningen, 2022, p.20).

Interaction

Nowadays, the history tends to become invisible in the situation and the new development will probably emphasize this feeling even more. Since the new proposal have been broadcasted, several citizens have been reacting on social medias expressing their opinions and attachment to the location. The agent is intangible but represents a high potential to connect with other agents of the network through socio-cultural attachment.

Appropriation

Nonetheless, they need another agent to transpose the attachment and make it tangible for others. At the location, some agents tend to keep some memories alive such as the *statues* showcasing (hi)stories,or some recent *street arts* on the construction site elements representing the location through historical events, activities and personalities. Both agents are re-telling stories by proposing a reinterpretation that can then be appropriated by one and others.

Belongingness' Situation

Even if the agent is really present in the network, it tends to become progressively invisible in new development. But the History/Past agent is an important element of the network which has the possibility to generate strong social and cultural attachment. But to make them visible, they need others which could transpose this mental connections.

Belongingness of the Urban Furniture

→ Connection in the situated system : Loiterer | Sun | Player | Statue | Scaffolding |

On Olof Palmes Plats, different urban furniture is available and placed at different spots on the triangular-shaped square. Three different types of seatings are available, 12 torus-shaped benches, a wooden bleacher, and a large turf platform. Are also on the site, three flower pots, one garbage can, and one trampoline on a platform.

Urban furniture’s belongingness to the situation : Attachment and satisfaction

Affection

The urban furniture seems to have been placed on top of an existing context and represents a quick add-on by the municipality. Therefore, it does not seem completely attached to the situation or the identity of the site.

Use

The urban furniture is used by the *loiterer*, for a time on the square, to sit for a while, drink a cup of coffee, discuss with someone, or *sunbathing*. It is also used by the *player* on the site, and especially the trampoline that represents the major piece of furniture and is highly appreciated. Different types of people are using it from children to adults and most of the time, the interaction only lasts for some seconds/minutes. The trampoline also attracts people that are just passing by for some jumps. Most of the activity linked to the urban furniture happens on the turf platform and wooden bleacher, the red benches are barely used, old and quite unstable.

Physical appreciation

On the other hand, other agents from the site such as the *statues* or *scaffolding* tend to have the function of urban furniture which showcases also a lack of equipment. Even if the available furniture is used, it is not in a good shape and only a small amount of people stop to stay for a while on the location. It seems that people interacting with the square are working nearby or using the gym facilities. In the municipality survey, people emphasized their desire for more seating areas of different kinds and playful furniture (Park och naturförvaltningen, 2022).

Behavior generated

Moreover, the actual furniture is fixed and can’t really be rearranged in the space and therefore does not facilitate a certain appropriation.The urban furniture seems to connect directly in the situated system with humans but does not seem to be interconnected with other agents. Only the red color of the unused benches can refer to the historical context with a reference to the labor movement.

Appropriation

Interaction

Belongingness' Situation

The actual urban furniture does not seem well connected to the situated system but is an interesting tool to make connections with the future and create some bridges between different agents. The actual trampoline is the only element that manages to catch the interest and therefore reveals a possible inspiration for the design.

Belongingness of the Ground Materiality

→ Connection in the situated system : **Geology** | **Water** | **Surrounding buildings** | Folkets Hus | **History/Past** | **Cultural identity** | Building materiality | Passer-by | Loiterer | Player | Animal | Urban furniture | Lightning | **Statue** |

At Olof Palmes Plats, the materiality of the floor is composed of concrete slabs from two different tonalities, a red and lighter color. Around the statues leftover pavements are still visible and connect with the slabs. The concrete materiality applied in 1978 formed a stripped pattern that has been dispatched in the time.

Ground Materiality’s belongingness to the situation : Attachment and satisfaction

Affection

Use Appropriation

Affection

Behavior generated

Interaction

Belongingness' Situation

The ground materiality is highly connected to the actual ground of the location and have followed its evolution. The materiality reveals *geological* and *water issues*. It has followed the porosity of the clay earth underneath greating some relief and water puddles, but also revealling some failure through materiality cracking. Moreover, this tension in the ground is also visible with the *surrounding buildings* and especially the *Folkets Hus*, where ramps have been added at several places to reconnect elements together.

The agent is living with the location both iphysical but also *historical*. The presence of different materialities and this duality between the pavement stones and concrete slabs reveal different eras.

This is also highlighted with the evolution of the tiles pattern. The choice of the colors around red and lighter tonalities seems to refer to the historical red color attached to the location, and enhance the *cultural identity* of it.

Moreover, one can consider that this silent agent has seen many events and other agents passing and staying on them, such as the *human agents*, *the animals*, *the urban furniture*, *the lightning* but also the *statues*. Some of those agents are even connected physically in the ground materiality. These interactions are also deeply entangled with the physical situation of the ground

Nowadays, the ground materiality doesn’t seem to support the actual tensions with the ground neither follow its evolution. It would be relevant to work with smaller tiles enabling the materiality to follow the earth movement. This encourages to work with the specifities of the site such as the water and the position of the path to enhance their visibilities and accessibilities. Nonetheless, some aspects seem essential to preserve such as the pavement surrounding the statues, and a combination of red and lighter tonalities. The ground materiality is an agent of the network that can support socio-cultural attachment.

Belongingness of the Passer-by

→ Connection in the situated system : Road Traffic

Near the square, is located Järntorget, a hub for public transportation where strong flows of people and traffic converge. This activity influences largely Olof Palmes Plats. The people transiting appear to come from different social classes, ages, and genders and represent the diversity of Gothenburg’s population.

Urban furniture’s belongingness to the situation : Attachment and satisfaction

Affection

Use

Interaction

Appropriation

Behavior generated

Affection

At first sight, the attachment from the human passing to the site seems inexistent because of the short amount of time spent on the location and the absence of concrete interactions with other agents.

Human passing by Olof Palmes Plats are mostly due to the surrounding *traffic* situation that influence a general fast transition in order for the human to reach their final destinations. In movement, they are passing through quickly, without focusing on any interaction with the Place but instead are focusing on other objects such as their phones or talking to the other human with them. For the ones not interacting, they are mostly looking straight in the direction they are heading to. Nothing from the location makes them change their paces or be in connection to the location for a while.

Even if the appropriation of this group can appear low, the fact remains that by the recurrence of use and crossing, the agent appropriates the Place by generating a path used by all transiting.

The shape and design of the square with its free passage encourages fast walks and flows. Moreover, it seems that there aren't a lot of pleasant elements that can allow the agent to belong to the site for a moment which can be a cause of the non-prominant attractivity of the location. The public square appears to be more a continuation of the street than a Place where people can meet and interact.

Despite this first interpretation of the actual situation, for some, the attachment does not only depends on the time spent on the location but also on the recurrence of passage. For certain human, the square seems to be part of their daily commute to work, or their usual dog walk. By repeating a transition through the square regularly, a certain form of attachment or at least a feeling can be generated.

Belongingness' Situation

The Passers-by seem to be disconnected from the situated system due to the rapidity of their stay on the site but also the inexistence of activity or actors interacting with them for a while.

Belongingness of the Statue

→ Connection in the situated system : History/Past | Ground materiality | Human agents | Wind | Urban Furniture

Two statues and two busts can be seen on Olof Palmes Plats. The main statue is located in the center of the square, while the three others are along the street on the east side of the square. The sculptures have been installed in the location between 1926 and 1986 and refer to the local history of the iron workers and the labor movement

Statue’s belongingness to the situation : Attachment and satisfaction

Affection The statues are strongly attached to the *history* of the site, as a reminder of *past* events. Their patina shows the evolution of materiality through time and their expressivity transcribes a lot of feelings: the fear, the belief, the willingness, and the toughness of the period. The statues are attached physically to the site by their *ground materiality*. The pedestals of the statues are surrounded by pavements, which show a probable reminiscence of old ground materiality.

Physical appreciation On the other hand, this highlights a certain disconnection with the rest of the ground. It is also emphasized by the height of the pedestals, sometimes more than 2 meters high. This gives the statues a higher point of observation on the situation but in some cases disconnects them from possible interactions. In contrast, even if the statues seem to be strongly attached in the past, it remains that they are currently not in discussion with other agents and therefore tend to be invisible.

Behavior generated

Interaction The statues seem to have been put on a scene but are not integrated into the current context. They are static elements of the system and to be highlighted, they need the interaction of other agents. *Human agents* passing through the site and interacting with them such as kids playing on the statues, or a human protecting from the *wind* behind them can make them relevant again.

Appropriation But also with indirect actions, like myself taking a picture, a poster taped on a pedestal, or a colored wig positioned on their head. In that situation, the use of the statue can easily relate to the interaction between *urban furniture* and *human agents*.

Use These marks of appropriation by others create a bridge to reconnect the statues with other agents in the situated system. Moreover, the unusual aspect of the use of the statue creates a disconnection to the everyday reality and allows the liveable agents to be suprised and maybe stop for a while to reconnect with the statues.

Belongingness’ Situation The statues in fine seem to be a relevant element of the site to address as they seem to transport the history and culture. But they definitely need to be highlighted to become visible again and connect the other agents of the situated system.

5 Situation Suggestion: (Re)Acting to stories

- Olof Palmes Plats | Connection | Belongingness | Attachment | Satisfaction
- Within this transitional Place can the location become a Place where local agents belong?
 - How to enhance the situated belongingness in the transitional square of Olof Palmes Plats?
 - How to propose a design suggestion as an understanding of the gathered embodied knowledge?

Approach to praxis, a concept for a design suggestion

In that situation and after having explored the mechanics of the location’s situated network, I can envision proposing an embodied test design to enhance belongingness. During the first time of the exploration, I considered the ground floor of the Folkets Hus as an interesting place to enhance belongingness in the location and give back the space to the citizens. However, through my observations and descriptions of the traces left by the agents, I realized that the public square is under developed and have a lot of potentials. Moreover, it appears that the building will probably no longer support many public functions, but that some rooms will still stay accessible to the public. In order to make them truly accessible and address the changing activities and users, the square has a high role to play.

By working with Olof Palmes Plats, the aim is to influence a bigger change in the location regarding the local belongingness. The Place is a transitional square but has the potential to host some functions enabling the citizens to spend some time there to strengthen their belongingness. Belongingness is acknowledged in the process for its connectivity and in regards to interactions. Therefore in this situation, new additions need to support the creation of micro-interactions to enable connections with the transitional agents.

Designing in (re)action to the situation is the main aspiration. On the one hand, in the sense of reacting to the situated stories gathered from the location by acknowledging them and responding to some of them. And on the other hand, by re-acting on the specific location based on what is already existing as a continuation. In that sense, the test design should embraces two essential points, the relation with the *(Hi)story* of the location that seems to be one of the specific markers of the situated attachment, and the acknowledgment of playfulness for all to enhance the satisfaction of agents and support the creation of micro interruptions.

To enable those more socio-cultural connections, some visible agents have been identified as being able to serve as bridges for the more invisible ones to make them accessible. In that thought, the *statue* agent has been recognized as a present element of the context that can support the creation of new attachment and satisfaction if they are made visible. On a second time, the *urban furniture* and *ground materiality* can also support new interactions, but, new elements of these categories need to be envisioned while preserving their natures and positions in the system.

Lastly, acknowledging that belongingness is multiple in the location is evident and therefore, a variety of spaces and experiences should be considered to be designed.

The proposal starts from the statue agent as they are our visible fixed elements that need to be preserved and have the possibility to support interconnections. In order to answer to some of the stories and make them accessible, the 4 statues are re-envisioned following three main ideas.

The first one is to make them available and accessible by working with the height of their pedestals, their positions on the square or other elements that can help their accessibility. The second is to develop areas around each of them by revealing them with the help of the *urban furniture* and *ground materiality*. Both agents can also create new links with *History/Past* agent and enhance playfulness. The third one is to position the path based on the analysis of the actual flows and the wish to make agents passing through those areas by taking them through a journey.

To support spontaneous stop in the transitionality, main activities that have the potential to trigger passer-by and connect them with others from the network are placed right next to the paths, while more static interactions are located in the periphery as well as some greeneries to create a protection from the traffic. By creating different levels of interactions possible, the aim is to envision different types of attachment and satisfaction. The test design is imagined both for solitary and collective activities, understanding and encouraging different types of belonging.

1 / Around "I arbete för arbete" statue, the area is designed to continue encouraging public gatherings and collective expressions.

2 / Around "Järnbare" statue, the design supports the understanding and memory of (hi)stories around the Iron workers. The statue is moved to face directly Järntorget.

3 / Around "Charles Lindley" and "Hjalmar Branting" busts, the design enhances another time of the (hi)story where the Place was focussing on entertainment. The design suggestion brings back the stories of the air balloon that was floating around the area through new playful sittings.

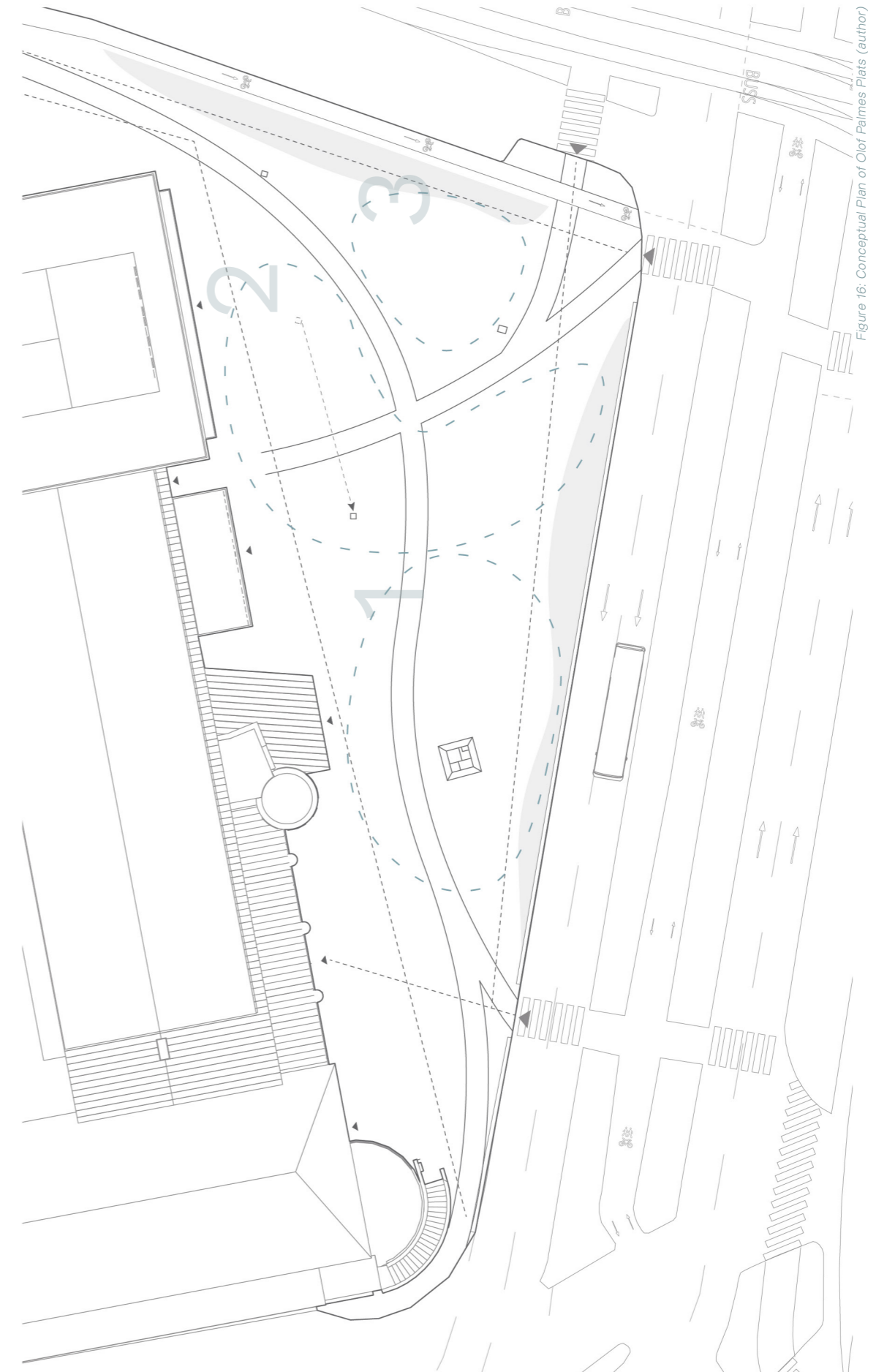


Figure 16: Conceptual Plan of Olof Palmes Plats (author)

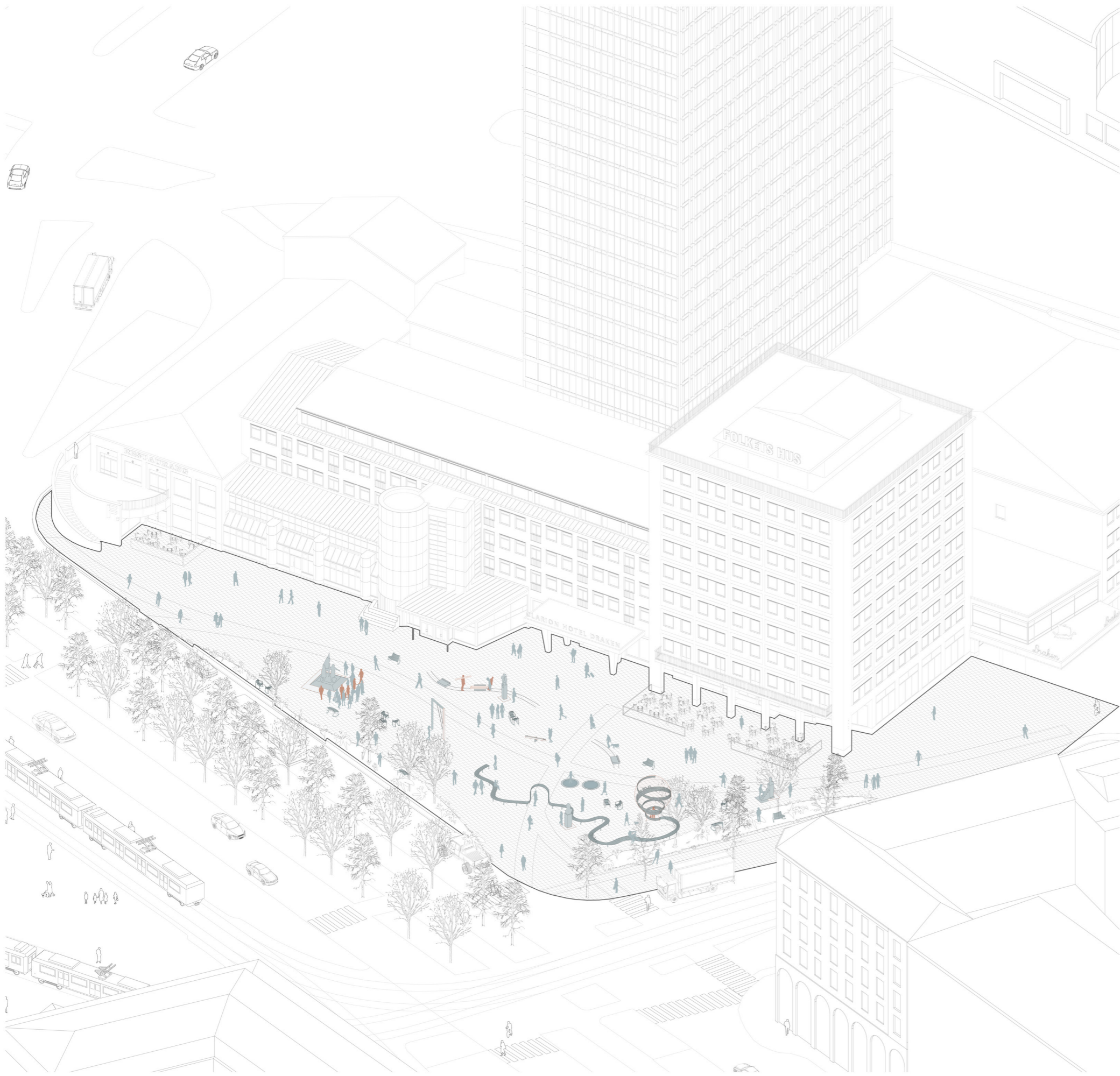
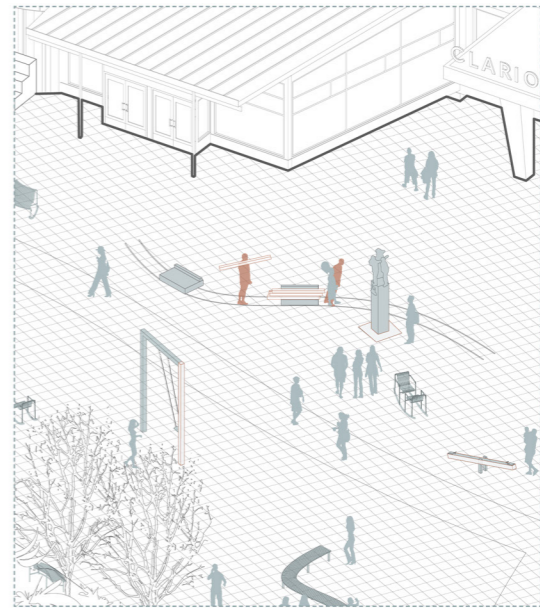


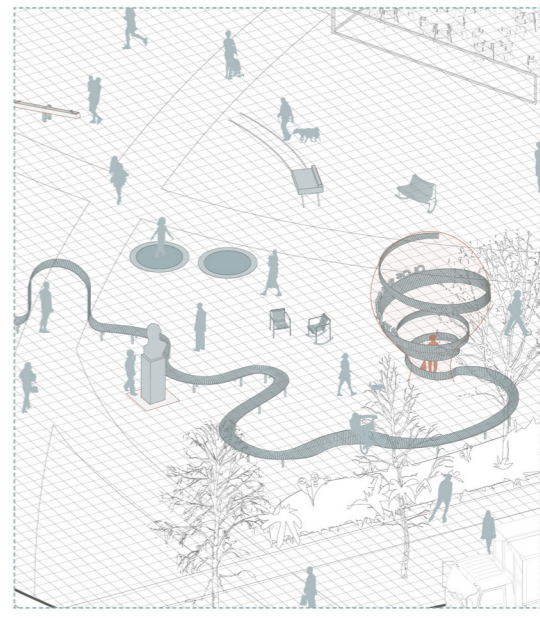
Figure 17: Conceptual axonometry of Olof Palmes Plats (author)



The pedestal of 'I arbete fôt arbete' is lowered to facilitate interactions. Old pavements around the statue are kept and re positioned.



The pedestal of 'Järnbare' is lowered and new furniture is positioned around. They make reference to the Iron wave through the use of large bended metal pieces attached to furniture and a playful bench on rail.



Around the busts a new furniture revealing the old story of an Air ballon is installed. It allows to seat, protect from the wind, be closer to statue and remember a collective history.



Figure 18: Perspectives from Olof Palmes Plats (author)



Critical reflection, and beyond

Concluding discussion: throwback to the research

With the aim to answer the research question: *How can architecture enhance situated belongingness through embracing, valuing, and (re) acting to stories?*, the thesis has researched and answered the following.

The thesis has explored the notion of belongingness in relation to architecture and the Place. Through the literature study in the first chapter *Space, Place, Belongingness*, belonging was addressed as a high degree of sense of Place characterized by a collection of both physical and social elements enhancing a specific attachment and satisfaction to the Place. The research has recognized belongingness as a crucial subject to be addressed in the pursuit of social architecture. It has shown how it might intervene in the construction of significant feelings such as fear of loneliness, insecurity, or even dissociation.

For the purpose of understanding the elements that matter in the formation of belonging, the research has investigated different definitions of the term. The thesis has deemed to address belonging beyond the commonly used definition referring to a sense of community, but rather in a broader sense in regard to architecture and the existence of a network being at the origin of it. Belonging was defined as "being part of a system" and "feeling attached to something", to both describe physical but also affective connections that can occur (e.g., Leach, 1997, p. 80; Oxford Advanced Learner's dictionary, n.d.). These definitions have set belongingness in relation to connectivity and interaction and have allowed to conceive it as a complex notion dependant on the situation and contingent on time and network. Besides, the thesis has also recognized the necessity to approach the subject in consideration of plurality, subjectivity, and embodied knowledge.

In the second chapter *Situated Belongingness Approach*, the thesis has brought forward *Situated knowledge* as an approach capable of embracing the complexity of belongingness and that can support a complex definition of it contingent on situation and subjectivity. Indeed, when belonging is defined as "being part of a system" (Oxford Advanced Learner's dictionary, n.d.), calling for an approach able to understand the whole system is crucial in the thesis. By addressing belongingness through a situated approach, acknowledging the situation, position, and location, the thesis has continued to question the elements that matter in its understanding. The situated lens on belongingness has helped to map the situation in its complexity, allowing one to move beyond agents dichotomies such as human/non-human, visible/invisible to in fine address the system as a whole.

Theory and reflection developed during the process were transferred to praxis to provide an appropriate approach to study and design for situated belongingness. The developed approach envisioned belongingness in the relationship and interactions between local agents. It was developed simultaneously with an application in-situ. It has been thought to give a

direction rather than an explicit method to follow, as the application of the approach depends on both the situation and the subjective representation of the practitioner.

In the third chapter, *A place to belong*, the approach has been applied in a location to continue iterating the Situated Belongingness approach. The location around the Folkets Hus, already envisioned as a network with a questioned attachment and satisfaction, has been considered as a suitable situation for the application. The approach suggested working from 'within' the site and researching at first for the traces and (hi)stories left by others in order to grasp the situation and the elements that count in the understanding of the situation. By embracing and representing pluralities of agents' subjectivities, other (hi)stories have emerged which allowed for another understanding. It has set out the site analysis as a form of deconstruction and unpacking to reveal some of the local agents that matter, to later reconstruct knowledge through the understanding of the situation's network of belonging. The situated belongingness network map has allowed to highlight different types of network both mental and physical that can lead to different connections. A suggestion for a situated test design has emerged as a (re)action to the gathered embodied knowledge. It proposed to enhance local belongingness through the creation of (micro-)interactions around existing agents' (hi)stories from the location.

This thesis made me realize that belongingness is an extremely complex notion, hard to grasp and difficult to study. With a thousand of questions at the beginning of the process and different directions to take to understand what is lying behind belonging, I had to tackle various theories to find a way to address this notion lying in between physicality and sociality. I see now this overall complexity of the research as an essential and needed component that has allowed me to deeply address belongingness in regard to architecture.

That reflection led me to one final question: Who gets to decide belongingness? As a designer, I can impact and influence local belongingness through some deliberate choices that I make. During my thesis process, I took position regarding what to observe, value, and react on in my design. At certain points, I then gave agency to some agents to allow the complexity of the decomposition to work. This approach for the design praxis sets out another way to approach the decision-making process. By working in close relation with the location, I then can base all my reflections from a researcher position aiming to understand the milieu instead of taking an autonomous position. If I choose to draw on a situated account and open myself to different kinds of sources embedded in the location, I then directly put myself in a position to be affected by the terrain. This approach to praxis pushes me to first take the time to grasp the local situation before even thinking about acting.

Nevertheless, the agent is the one deciding at the end to belong or not in a particular location. Belongingness is a subjective notion depending

on many factors that regard one and other self opening to the situation. Therefore, a design for belongingness must be tackled by different disciplines and concerns to acknowledge the large spectrum of factors influencing belongingness. Each of these disciplines can only take the position to suggest some connections and interactions and therefore can not impact the other self reaction to the proposal. As a designer, I need to position myself as one among these different practitioners and aim to collaborate and acknowledge a diversity of sources to base my reflections on, to imagine enhancing belongingness.

Opening Discussion: questioning our role

Developing and reflecting on this approach shows that "we", as architects, planners, and researchers caring about situated and embodied knowledge have a role to enhance belongingness in the location we are working with. If we dare to address the site from 'within' and embrace the present encounters, we do open ourselves to 'others' stories that matter in our understanding of the situation. Our discipline, when it calls for interdisciplinarity and a holistic method, can address the whole system while keeping the complexity alive. What matter in our approach to the site are, the way we are valuing some details and encounters, the way we are re-telling their stories gathered from a time being, and the way we base our design suggestion as a (re)action to the situated and embodied knowledge.

However, today three problems seem to coexist, the time, the cost of those situated practices, and the perceived role of the architect. In practice, our role is often defined to answer a pre-established program without questioning much the relevance of the location. We, therefore, in such position come to address the location in a dominant posture, considering mostly infrastructural problematics to finally change the location through pre-existing knowledge that we end up applying in every location.

But, "we" who are calling for appropriate, social, and situated architecture need to take the challenge to question our role and practice. What if we were reflecting the power relation of the architect by taking another posture toward our milieus. Imagining that we can situate our position in the context by addressing ourselves as another agent visiting the location with the aim of empathetically listening and understanding the encounters. What if we were considering questioning the location as a way to generate situated design answers. Acknowledging the local encounters as a source of stories and histories, to work in "response-ability" (Haraway, 2016) by decomposing the embodied knowledge of the location to reconstruct a meaningful complex understanding. What if we were considering working from 'within' the location at all stages to rethink the taxonomy between analysis and praxis. Encouraging ourselves, to question the location and connect with others' stories. What if we were moving beyond the dichotomies between human/object to recognize a form of coexistence and network. What if we were considering architecture as one tool able to enhance behaviors. Giving us the possibility to address larger problems.

What if we were designing for the location and its encounters, for people, things, and Place. Delivering an answer in consciousness rather than responding in autonomy to aesthetic or financial agendas. What if our role was not considered only as a designer but also as an interdisciplinary mediator practitioner, keeping a holistic view while seeing the complexity. Giving us the power and the time to address the location and propose resilient and situated answers.

Outro: Beyond and behind the research

Finally, this thesis' exploration has raised the broader question of our profession's mode of practice. By exploring situated knowledge in my research on other perspectives on belongingness, I have found an approach that resonates with me and have changed my own practice of architecture. This thought brings me back to one of my first readings and the three questions addressed by Hélène Frichot and Isabelle Doucet in the *Architectural Theory Review* (2018). After all the time spent researching, I then realized that these questions were actually central in my work. Within the framework of this thesis, I would therefore like to give a subjective answer to them. I am reflecting as "we", to situate myself but also architects, planners, researchers, and people caring about situated knowledge.

"Firstly, we ask: What are the methodological and ethical consequences of considering theory as a practice?"

(Doucet & Frichot, 2018, p. 3).

By exploring what Donna Haraway calls '*Situated knowledge*' and acknowledging the situation, position and location in our design praxis, we take the opportunity to engage with different positionalities and an empathetical positionality. In calling this approach, we do resist to generalization and dichotomy between elements to finally address the location's particularities while generating embodied knowledge and situated answers (Frichot, 2015 p. 28) (Debaise, Doucet, Zitouni, 2018, p. 9). Situated praxis drives us to deem our own positionality in the discourse and reflect on the way we want to approach architecture. With the understanding of this theory, we do address the site in praxis with a different positionality and perspective. A position where we allow ourselves to be affected by the situation rather than taking a superior and "autonomous" position (Debaise, Doucet, Zitouni, 2018, p. 15). Situated approach encourages us to understand carefully a limited situation by caring about the connections and effects of the existing network before acting (Doucet, Debaise, Zitouni, 2018, p.15).

In the case of my research, considering *Situated Knowledge* as a lens for my praxis is certainly changing my way to approach and map the location. By engaging with theory in the first instance, I dare to acknowledge my positionality and reflect on my role regarding the location, the encounters and their network. The situated theory pushes me to redefine the notion

of belongingness in relation with the specificity of my approach. Those much crucial steps, are leading me, to first question the site in its whole complexity, exploring it from 'within' with different perspectives, before thinking to design.

"Secondly, we take this challenge as an invitation to expand our understanding of what should be included in the discussion of architecture, which is also to ask what "matters" to the understanding of architecture?"

(Doucet & Frichot, 2018, p. 3).

This invitation from situated theory to address a location with another perspective, drives us to reflect on the elements that matter in the understanding of a specific situation. We, then have the legitimacy to acknowledge and give agency to stories and encounters that are too often forgotten or unusual. By using the situated lens, and exploring a relational approach, we do deem the encounters as entangled to a network, and therefore question their attachment rather than their autonomy (Doucet, Debaise, Zitouni, 2018, p.15).

With my research, I am acknowledging the call for situated knowledge to extend above dichotomies by going beyond the infrastructural problematics and opening myself to non-human encounters as well as invisible ones. This reflection leads me to question the prevalence of the human 'within' the network, reflecting on the connectivity between human and things, and valuing 'other' agents such as urban furniture, statues or opinions. While asking what matters we do also ask how it does. In this research, the encounters are studied in relationship to each other in the local network. The thesis does point out that elements which matter in the studied location, are contingent and specific to gathered leftover (hi) stories.

"Finally, what kinds of stories emerge when we respect the situated nature of the spaces, buildings, plans, and issues we study? And how do these stories make a difference?"

(Doucet & Frichot, 2018, p. 3).

While using a situated praxis, we do become more sensitive and empathetic toward the situation. We develop a form of consideration for the complexity of the location allowing other stories to emerge. The situation is thus looked from another positionality and perspective, and one of our roleS is then to see the values and to care about those stories (Doucet, Debaise, Zitouni, 2018, p.9). In respect to them, we must dedicate time for both letting them happen, as well as reflecting on them to go deeper than the first visible stratum of the site. In the same matter, gathering situated knowledge from different disciplines and sciences widens the scope of our

observed stories to consider the whole system. We have the responsibility to re-tell those (hi)stories to others and to replace certain back in the center to give them the agency they deserve (Doucet, Debaise, Zitouni, 2018, p.9).

In the case of my thesis, by unpacking first the system I get to understand it from different perspectives, embracing and representing encounters (hi)stories visible and invisible. While comprehending the agents in their relationalities, I value the one representing a worth for the understanding of a local belongingness to in fine reconstruct and re-tell a complex story of the location. By addressing a critical mapping of the situation, I emphasize and give agency to certain elements that were not visible before. While working from 'within' the site, I observe other encounters that would not have been found from elsewhere. The gathered stories situated for the time being, compose an embodied knowledge that informs my design as a (re)action, both in the sense of the comprehension of the local (hi)stories but also as a re-action in continuation with the existing.

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List of figures

Figure 1-3. Document from the author

Figure 4. Map from the author, realize from an extract of Google map (2022) Gothenburg. Available at: <https://www.google.com/maps> (Accessed: 15 mars 2022)

Figure 5. Map from the author, realize from an extract of Google map (2022) Folkets Hus. Available at: <https://www.google.com/maps> (Accessed: 15 mars 2022)

Figure 6-8. Document from the author

Figure 9. Inven(s)tory of visible traces. collage from the author, based on production of the author.

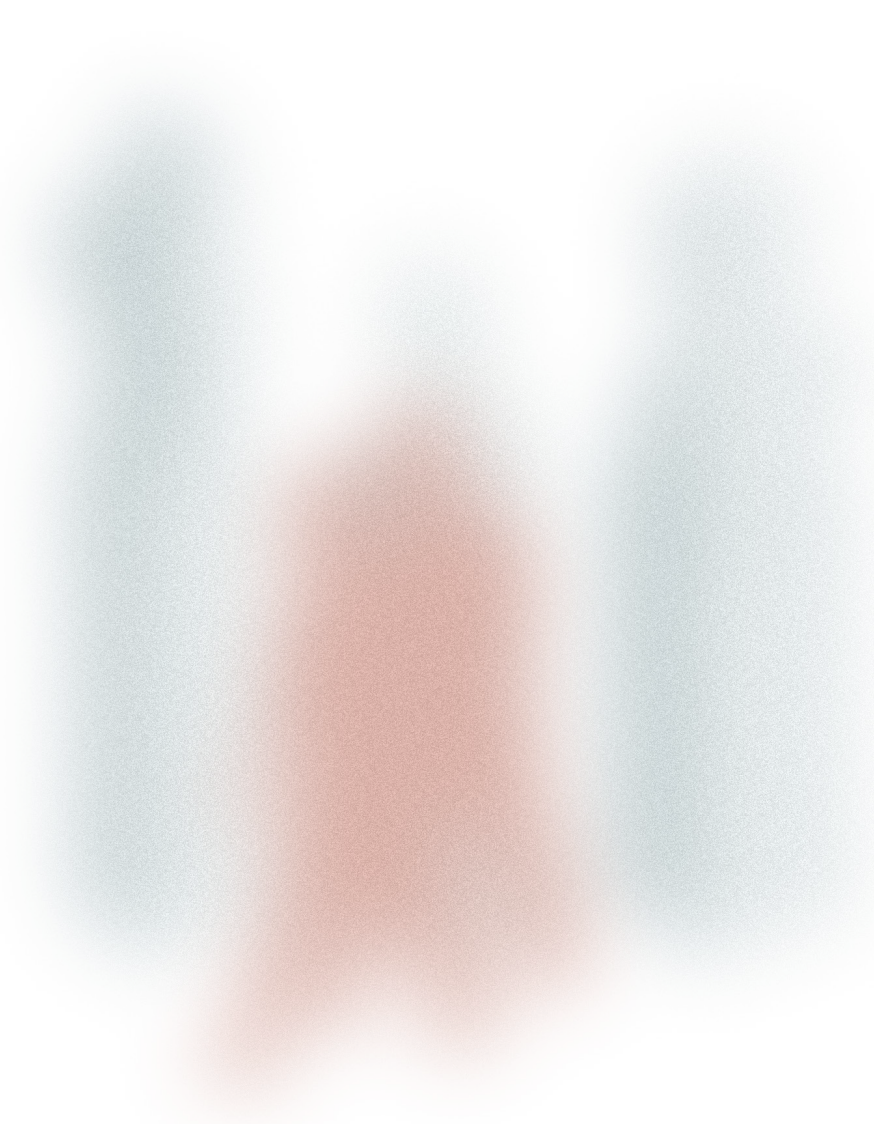
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Figure 11. Inven(s)tory of invisible traces. collage from the author, references use in the collage:

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Figure 12-18. Document from the author



How can architecture enhance situated belongingness through embracing, valuing and (re)acting to stories? Why belonging is a crucial topic to address in architecture? What matters to grasp belongingness in the built environment? How to perceive belongingness to avoid reductionism? How to re-tell belongingness stories gathered from a time being? What is the role of the architect? How to address a responsible and resilient practice in architecture? What matters in the study of architecture?