

Central Spaces

Perspectives on the modern city centre after 1850



Urban Studies Seminar

Odense - September 14 2011

The urban studies seminar *Central Spaces* features five internationally distinguished scholars. Each will provide fresh perspectives on the ever-changing centre of the modern city as a junction of spatial politics, social interaction and networked technologies.

Central Spaces

International Perspectives on the Modern City Centre after 1850

It is a pleasure for MASKOT— the museums and archives of Odense and the University of Southern Denmark— to welcome you to Odense for an international seminar on the city centre of the modern era.

Seminar Theme:

As cities grew in the nineteenth century, strong forces began to converge at the city centre. The centre became a prism of modern urbanity, identity, meaning and power. Consequently, the design, definition and use of the city centre became tensely contested. Public authorities, political movements, property owners and a mixed group of everyday users, all with diverging ideas of the good city, struggled for dominance of the central urban space – and continue to do so today.

The seminar *Central Spaces* will explore how the concept of urban space can provide new insights into the forming of the modern city as well as urban life styles of work, leisure and consumption. Also, it will draw attention to the importance of technological networks - most of them aimed at or radiating from the urban core - and their altering effects on materiality and perception of space, time and society.

Seminar Programme:

- 9.30 Registration
- 10.00 Welcome and Seminar Introduction
 - Central Spaces of Mobility*
- 10.30 **Richard Dennis**, University College of London
 - The Architecture of Hurry*
- 11.20 **Hans Buiter**, Eindhoven University of Technology
 - Streets as socio-technological urban public spaces*
- 12.20 Lunch (sandwich included)
 - Division and Diversity in the City Centre*
- 13.20 **Mats Franzén**, Uppsala University
 - A divided City Centre and its Dynamic: The case of Stockholm*
- 14.10 **Kirsten Simonsen**, Roskilde University
 - The Rhythms of the City, the Essence of the City*
- 15.10 Coffee break
- 15.30 **Martin Zerlang**, University of Copenhagen
 - Modernist Architects and "The Heart of the City": Israel's Plads in Copenhagen*
- 16.30 Closing discussion

Abstracts of Papers:

Richard Dennis: *The Architecture of Hurry*

In *Howards End* (1910) the novelist E.M. Forster alluded to 'the architecture of hurry', referring both to a literal architecture of roads, railways and new buildings and to the architecture of citizens' lives: from daily routine to their lifetime careers. Drawing on examples from London, I will focus on different expressions of the tension between speed and hurry in central cities, from overarching concepts of time-space compression and creative destruction to the discipline of time in the lives of city workers and residents.

Hans Buiter: *Streets as socio-technological urban public spaces*

During the last decades of the nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth century streets in European cities were transformed from multifunctional, relatively empty, and rather disordered places into well-ordered and explicitly zoned spaces in which artefacts, systems and humans were given their own place. Street and squares these days are multilayered spaces with changed meanings as urban public spaces. In my talk I will explore the ways these changes occurred in co-construction with the technologies applied at those streets and squares from 1850 on until the present.

Mats Franzén: *A divided City Centre and its Dynamic: The case of Stockholm*

Since its inception in the second half of the 19th century, the city centre of Stockholm has been divided into two halves, one popular to the west, one bourgeois to the east. This division is still with us and has, in peculiar ways, shaped its dynamic all the time, through the Fordist into the post-Fordist era.

Kirsten Simonsen: *The Rhythms of the City, the Essence of the City*

The focus of this paper will be diversity. More precisely, it will address the problems of generalizations of urban life. I will pursue this line of argument firstly through a discussion of theories about modern urban life, and secondly by drawing upon cases from my own empirical research.

Martin Zerlang: *Modernist Architects and "The Heart of the City": Israel's Plads*

According to the modernist architects gathered in CIAM the park should not be located in the city, but the city should be located in a park without borders. Consequently, the question of the city centre was more or less ignored, until 1951 when "the heart of the city" became the main topic of the CIAM-congress. Since then the question of the heart or the core of the city has been a recurring question, and in this paper the question will be discussed in relation to the plans for a reconstruction of Israel's Plads in Copenhagen.

Practical Information

Date:

September 14 2011

Venue:

Historiens Hus
Klosterbakken 2
5000 Odense C

Reservation before September 6 2011:

The seminar is open to the public and free of charge (including coffee and a lunch sandwich). Since there is a limit to the number of participants, reservation is necessary. Please email jtj@odense.dk stating name and institution.

Ph.D.-Students and ECTS-value:

Ph.D.-Students will be awarded 1 ECTS-point for seminar participation with preparation by the Ph.D.-course authority of Institute of History and Civilization, University of Southern Denmark. Please ask for a reading list when registering for the seminar.

Organizers

Jens Toftgaard, University of Southern Denmark - Odense City Museums
Mikkel Thelle, University of Copenhagen - National Museum

MASKOT Network:

The seminar *Central Spaces* is hosted by the MASKOT Network. The network partners are:

Odense City Archive

Odense City Museums

State Archives - Funen

Institute of History and Civilization — University of Southern Denmark

Institute of Literature, Media and Cultural Studies — University of Southern Denmark

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