

The Interplay Between Architecture and Politics in Social Democratic Sweden of Folkhemmet (1932-1976)

Original

The Interplay Between Architecture and Politics in Social Democratic Sweden of Folkhemmet (1932-1976) / Lux, Eugenio - In: DASP Yearbook 2025. Environments / Burgassi V., Della Scala V., Guidetti E., Nannini S.. - ELETTRONICO. - Torino : Politecnico di Torino, 2025. - ISBN 979-12-81583-41-2. - pp. 96-97

Availability:

This version is available at: 11583/3006876 since: 2026-01-23T10:09:05Z

Publisher:

Politecnico di Torino

Published

DOI:

Terms of use:

This article is made available under terms and conditions as specified in the corresponding bibliographic description in the repository

Publisher copyright

(Article begins on next page)

**DASP
YEARBOOK
2025**

ENVIRONMENTS

Editors

Valentina Burgassi
Valerio Della Scala
Elena Guidetti
Sofia Nannini

Editorial coordination and graphic layout

Lorenzo Murru
Simone Parola

Based on the layout designed for the 2023 edition of the Yearbook
by MONO.STUDIO | Ilaria Bossa

Publisher

Politecnico di Torino
Dipartimento di Architettura e Design
Dottorato in "Architettura. Storia e Progetto"
2025

ISBN

979-12-81583-41-2

Copyright

Released under a Creative Commons license CC-BY-NC-ND 4.0,
<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>

This Yearbook presents the outcome of ongoing research works.
All the materials are the intellectual property of their respective authors and should not be reproduced without their explicit consent.
Every effort has been made to identify the copyright holders of texts and images reproduced in the present publication. The DASP coordinator is available for any issue or request.



**Politecnico
di Torino**
Dipartimento
di Architettura e Design



DASP YEARBOOK 2025

ENVIRONMENTS

PhD in Architecture.
History and Project

DAD | Department of Architecture and Design
Politecnico di Torino

TABLE OF CONTENTS

38th CYCLE

012

39th CYCLE

040

40th CYCLE

078

006

FOREWORD

008 **PREFACE**

Filippo De Pieri

010 **INTRODUCTION** DASP PhD Program: A Critical Overview

Valentina Burgassi, Valerio Della Scala, Elena Guidetti, Sofia Nannini

110

AFTERWORD

112 **CHALLENGING KNOWLEDGE AS A COMMITMENT TO THE FUTURE**

Ana Tostões

114

DASP IN 2025

117 **COURSES**

119 **ACTIVITIES**

121 **PUBLICATIONS**

123 **PEOPLE**

40th

CYCLE

The Interplay Between Architecture and Politics in Social Democratic Sweden of Folkhemmet (1932–1976)

Eugenio Lux



Cycle 40th
Supervisors Filippo De Pieri, Sofia Nannini

Captions

Figure 1 - Per-Albinhusen, Ålstensgatan 40, Bromma, Paul Hedqvist with Olle Engkvist (1932–33), by DigitalMuseum.

Figure 2 - Erlanderhuset, Fyrvärkarbacken 21, Marieberg, Henning Orlando (1960–62), by DigitalMuseum.

Figure 3 - Palmes radhus, Tornedalsgatan 31, Vällingby, Bertil Karlén, Josef Stäck, Jon Högjer e Sture Ljungqvist (1952–55), by DigitalMuseum.

Sources

Arrhenius, T., Braae, E., & Ruud, G. (Eds.) (2025). *Architecture and Welfare: Scandinavian Perspectives*. Birkhäuser.

Mattsson, H., & Wallenstein, S. (2010). *Swedish modernism: Architecture, Consumption and the Welfare State*. Artifice Incorporated.

Swenarton, M., Avermaete, T., & Van Den Heuvel, D. (Eds.) (2014). *Architecture and the welfare state*. Routledge.

Östberg, K. (2024). *The rise and fall of Swedish social democracy*. Verso Books.

How did architecture embody, influence, and mediate the political ideals of the welfare state, and in what ways did it contribute to the construction of a collective identity, social equity, and the everyday life of its citizens?

History, according to the Benjaminian conception of “jetztzeit”, is marked by revolutionary moments where things collapse to reorganise into a new order. The 1930 represents for Sweden the “modernism’s breakthrough” (Rudberg, 1999) and the beginning of a new transformative era for the country. The process of modernisation of the state, anticipated in the 1930 Stockholm Exhibition and theorised in the book-manifesto “acceptera” (Asplund et al, 1931), was definitively established during the “folkhemmet” (1932–1976), a long term political programme of welfare state policy under the government of the Swedish Social Democratic Party. Since the 30s functionalism, in Swedish “funkis”, became the new standard for architecture and planning, as it marked a break from national romanticism and nordic classicism and a way to minimise construction costs and to provide more living space for low-income families. During this forty-year period, societal power structures changed: urbanisation accelerated and infrastructures improved significantly with many environmental implications (i.e. resource exploitation in the Norrland). Thus architecture in Sweden became a tool for the political design of the city to create a more equal, prosperous and fair mass society. Swedish neutrality during both World Wars and the non-alignment during the Cold War allowed the country to live in an incubator-like state and to develop modern architecture and urbanism as a propaganda tool for “the middle way” (Childs, 1936). Swedish architecture and planning became famous for their pragmatic, problem-focused stance. The “social democratic management of the city” (Tafari, 1973) operated by architects with a strong social orientation, both animated by concerns for ideological (social-democratic) and practical (functional) matters, produced excellent results in the growth of the cities, public building and housing. The country can be seen as a model for the relations between architecture and politics, environment and construction, and “acceptera” could be perceived as a social-democratic programmatic manifesto in terms of architecture and planning for the years to come. Today we are approaching fifty years since the end of the social democratic state model, a sufficiently long period to assess the welfare state in its entirety, complexity, and importance over its 44-year span. The 1932–1976 periodisation, borrowed from politics – the government led by Per Albin Hansson, Tage Erlander, and Olof Palme, each of whom lived in modern mass housing blocks – is relevant to architecture as it encompasses a range of different phases of the urban transformation and building regimes (Gullberg and Kaijser, 2007): the expansion of functional row houses in the inner suburbs (1930s–40s), the creation of satellite towns later called the ABC-stad (1950s–60s), the Miljonprogrammet (1960s–70s) and finally the renovation of “the hearth of the city” (1960s–70s). The chosen ends have also a reflection on the major urban transformation in the city of Stockholm: indeed 1932 is the year of the competition for the masterplan of Normalmalm area (350 participants including Alvar Aalto and Le Corbusier) and 1976 coincide with the conclusion of major urban transformations such as Sergelstorg and Kulturhuset and Sveriges Riksbank. Moreover, the 1932 coincides with the start of construction of the Tunnelbanan and 1976 represents the final phase of the Miljonprogrammet which territorial spread was made possible by the development of large-scale public transport system. The proposed ends could be perceived anomalous as they cross the boundary marked by the Second World War but is motivated by Swedish neutrality and non-alignment in the conflicts. The caesura represented by the war for those belonging to the major belligerent nations, is absent in the Swedish context. It could be argued that Sweden lives its “short century” (Eric Hobsbawm, 1994) even faster and within the proposed periodisation: before 1932 Sweden is a 19th century country, after 1976 Sweden becomes the most “Americanised country” in Europe.

#acceptera, #folkhemmet, #funkis



PEOPLE

Academic Board

Filippo De Pieri (coordinator)
Francesca Frassoldati (vice-coordinator)
Alessandro Armando (vice-coordinator)
Gaia Caramellino (vice-coordinator) *
Gustavo Ambrosini
Maria Luisa Barelli
Camillo Boano
Michele Bonino
Luca Caneparo
Michela Comba
Giovanni Corbellini
Antonio De Rossi
Giovanni Durbiano
Paolo Mellano
Sergio Pace
Riccardo Palma
Edoardo Piccoli
Matteo Robiglio
Michela Rosso
Marco Triscioglio

Elena Vigliocco
Chiara Baglione *
Isabella Balestreri *
Giovanna D'Amia *
Alessandro De Magistris *
Roberto Dulio *
LIU Jian **
YANG Rui **
ZHANG Li **

* Politecnico di Milano
** Tsinghua University

Advisory Board

BAO Li (South-East University Nanjing)
Denis Bocquet (ENSA Strasbourg)
Roberto Cavallo (TU Delft)
Jörg Gleiter (TU Berlin)
Florence Graezer Bideau (EPFL)
Valérie Nègre (Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne)

Tutors

Valentina Burgassi
Valerio Della Scala
Elena Guidetti
Sofia Nannini

Program Management

Antonietta Cerrato
Walter Da Solter

PhD Candidates

40th Cycle

Mariolina Affatato
Alp Arda °
Miriam Brignolo
Irene Carrozzo
Abdulrahman El-Taliawi
HUANG Jingxiang
LIU Ziwei
LIU Siyi
Eugenio Lux
Lorenzo Murru
Simone Parola
Anna Proskuriakova
Rayna Razmilic Triantafilo
Natalia Voroshilova
ZHAO Manli

39th Cycle

Sarah Becchio
Saurajeeta Bose Paul
Danilo Bulatović
Marco Celenza
Alessandra Faccini
Giorgia Greco
Ezgi Nur Güngör
HU Ruotong
JIN Shuang
Caterina Juric
LIU Yuxuan
Alessandro Lovisolo
Marta Rossi
SHEN Pan
Jowita Tabak °
WANG Jiayi
WANG Li
ZHANG Xinwen

38th Cycle

Paolo Bianco
CHEN Dingran
Michele Di Marco
Mitesh Dixit
Andrea Gillone
Giulio Gonella
GUO Beini
Valentina Labriola
Federico Madaro
Michele Rinaldi
Federica Serra
Laura Villa Baroncelli
WU Hongye

° Students' representatives



The chosen topic “environments” as a title for this compilation is a strong topic. Dealing with changing contexts, the themes under research, analysis and critical interpretation by the PhD candidates epitomize contemporary social issues, reflecting the era in which we live in and demonstrate the power of architecture in addressing the challenges of the future.

Ana Tostões, Afterword

