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Theme: Information society and urban management

PLANNING THE NORDIC CITY UNDER LATE POSTMODERNISM: TOWARDS AN AFFIRMATIVE (BIO)POLITICS

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Abstract

The critique of capitalism within European architectural theory has regularly painted urban planning as the instrument of a repressive (now neoliberal) State, and as such as necessarily reductive of difference. Tracing the genealogy of that critique within architecture, I wish to ask: Is a critique of planning possible that tries to strengthen rather than weaken planning, which reveals its malleability and its points of inflection, and which focuses on where it intersects with moments of neoliberal governmentality in ways that empower it to act as a point of critical entry and change in relation to the machines of the “urban-industrial complex” and the State? Is an affirmative biopolitics possible in relation to the information society of the late capitalist city is immersed, and how can urban planning theorize such a politics? Taking these broad theoretical questions as a point of departure, my research addresses the contemporary urban development of the Nordic Region.

With that as a background, in this short presentation I wish to explore the kind of “work” that planning does in formulating policies. I wish to use this opportunity to myself perform a little work upon and through my discipline, and I intend to do this by furnishing the audience with a description of how planning “works” on other disciplines (specifically, architecture). Ultimately, by conceptualizing planning as a “container technology” rather than a “tool,” I argue for the possibility of an affirmative biopolitics and a feminist reconceptualization of what “progress” might mean in relation to this city. In this task, I draw heavily on the work of Michel Foucault, Luce Irigaray, Elizabeth Grosz, Rosi Braidotti, Zoe Sofia and Sven-Olof Wallenstein.