INTRODUCTION

Scandinavia consistently occupies the top of global happiness rankings. The Scandinavian "happiness" or well-being is often associated with democratic values, generous social welfare, socio-economic equality, and high levels of social and institutional trust.[1] Welfare policies in Scandinavia have traditionally addressed the whole population rather than targeting specific social groups or classes, generating inclusive welfare based on universal principles. In Denmark, Norway, and Sweden, the strong position of labor movements in the 1930s enabled political agreements between labor and capital in the three countries, which was essential for postwar developments of social democratic welfare states.[2] In these developments, architecture and planning were central. Scandinavian architects engaged politically in shaping society, and the 1930 Stockholm Exhibition launched modern architecture as a politically transformative force.[3] A common Scandinavian culture and history constituted the backdrop for Scandinavian cooperation, seen in the exchange of ideas between architects and planners from the three countries during the Second World War.[4] In the immediate postwar years, under a period of rapid modernization and economic development, new neighborhoods of affordable housing, cultural and social buildings, commercial centers, and supporting infrastructure were built across Denmark, Norway, and Sweden. This development was part of the physical realization of welfare state policies, translating Scandinavian social democratic ideals of universal welfare—or "welfare for all"—into space.

Despite the common perception that Denmark, Norway, and Sweden's universal approach to welfare transformed them into the world's most comprehensive, advanced, and successful welfare states, this political and spatial legacy is today being contested. Against a backdrop of increasing spatial segregation and rising inequality rates in the Scandinavian welfare states, the concept of "welfare for all" no longer enjoys the public and political consensus it did in the postwar years. Postwar architecture and planning, once seen as a medium of universal welfare, inclusion, and political participation, is now often associated with its opposites: alienation, exclusion, and isolation.[5]

In response to such contrasting and conflicting narratives, this publication examines the complex interrelationships between, and changes within, architecture and welfare in Scandinavia. We evoke four types of *formations*—which we understand as actions and processes that contribute to forming architecture-welfare relationships—namely, "Formations and Materializations," "Networks and Actors," "Debates and Critiques," and "Reconceptualizations and New Formations." These (plural) categories serve to differentiate, contest, challenge, and elaborate on the social democratic regime and the Nordic welfare state model. Through them, we aim

1 See Frank Martela et al., "The Nordic Exceptionalism: What Explains Why the Nordic Countries Are Constantly Among the Happiest in the World," in *World Happiness Report 2020*, ed. John F. Helliwell et al. (New York: Sustainable Development Solutions Network, 2020), 128–45.

2 According to the Danish sociologist Gøsta Esping-Andersen, the more comprehensive nature of social democratic regimes lies in the power of the labor movements in challenging capitalist interests and conservative ideas. See Gøsta Esping-Andersen, *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1989), 71.

3 See Eva Rudberg, *Stockholmsutställningen 1930: modernismens genombrott i svensk arkitektur* [Stockholm Exhibition 1930: the breakthrough of modernism in Swedish architecture] (Stockholm: Stockholmia, 1999). For the political role of Norwegian architects in the late 1930s, see also Anne-Kristine Kronborg's contribution in this volume.

4 See Espen Johnsen's contribution in this volume.

5 For analyses of the history of associating postwar architecture with problems, see contributions by Guttorm Ruud, Mikkel Høghøj, and Jennifer Mack in this volume.

to describe multiple, complex, changing formations of architecture and welfare within Scandinavia's nation states, with all of their social, cultural, and political similarities and differences. We present multiple interpretations of architecture and welfare, evoking a spatial, geographic, social, and temporal plurality that allows for a richer understanding of the physical, present-day welfare city and its architecture. These analyses provide insights into, and an overview of, the complex intersections that occur between architecture and welfare, offering essential support for future solutions, which necessarily must build on—and thus understand—what is already here. Moreover, the volume contains three visual essays, which each shed light on the complex realities of the welfare states in ways that are not easily summarized or integrated, thereby adding to a differentiated understanding and perception of architecture and welfare in Scandinavia. The book concludes with a reflection on the future of architecture and welfare, suggesting new fields of investigation and research.

FORMATIONS AND MATERIALIZATIONS

The formation of relationships between social values, populations, and physical materializations is essential to the development of welfare state architectures. The production of citizenship plays a particularly pivotal role in such processes. In "Formations and Materializations," a sociomaterial and political perspective is applied to three national contexts, each with their own sets of social values, social groups, and types of materializations.

Thordis Arrhenius analyzes welfare state housing through the case of the Swedish large-scale housing estate Navestad, which was designed and constructed in Norrköping between 1968 and 1972. Navestad's enormous, double ring-shaped housing complex, made of industrially produced concrete panels, was radically transformed and partly demolished at the end of the millennium as part of an extensive project to improve its sustainability. Arrhenius describes the stages of physical transformation of the estate's development, analyzing how such projects are perceived, redesigned, and advertised, and how ideologies and ideas of welfare are interchanging with architecture over time.

Often, Scandinavia is associated with playful innocence and the idea of happy childhoods, which has also become a cultural export. Martin Søberg interrogates this image through the Danish pedagogical ideology of *skrammellegepladsen* (the "junk playground"), where sand and scraps are the mediums for children's education in the welfare state. Søberg outlines how essential welfare concepts such as democracy, community, collaboration, production, and education were developed through children's constructions, which contrasted with the surrounding, more controlled, architectural environments of the housing estates.

Continuing with the theme of leisure, Beata Labuhn describes how mountain cabins form an essential part of Norwegian lifestyle and welfare perception. Norwegian leisure patterns have changed since the 1950s and while leisure itself results from welfare policies that ensure that the general population can afford vacations, this chapter sheds new light on transformations in the planning and

use of mountain cabins. Examining the planning discussions surrounding Norwegian mountain areas in the 1960s, the history of the Norwegian mountain cabin unfolds as a complex story of the individual and collective aspects of these second-home landscapes and their transformation in line with a distinctively individualistic and privatized form of well-being.

NETWORKS AND ACTORS

Formations are not merely spatial; the professional networks of architects and planners constitute formations of welfare state architecture in their own right. These actors establish an often-invisible infrastructure that has long been neglected in the research of postwar welfare architecture. However, as the contributions in this part of the book reveal, such networks and actors exert influence well beyond the domain of architecture and the axis that joins state and citizen—a key characteristic of the Nordic Model.

Espen Johnsen argues that postwar architecture is often considered a nationally isolated phenomenon, generally evoking matters of identity and regional character and frequently being analyzed from within a national narrative. Nevertheless, Scandinavian postwar architecture and welfare share a common ground in the meetings, collaborations, and networks which emerged between architects in neutral Sweden during the Second World War, even if they were consequently interpreted in different ways by the countries involved.

Another formation of Scandinavian ideas was the "export" of the Swedish ideas of housing and housing policies. Frida Rosenberg describes the Swedish welfare state from an American perspective by outlining the visits of the famous "houser" Catherine Bauer to Sweden. Rosenberg thus highlights the extensive international networking that moved ideas between the contrasting ideological contexts and welfare regimes of Scandinavia and the United States.

Welfare state architecture also entailed crucial redefinitions of the role and responsibility of the architect. Returning to the formation of Norwegian welfare state housing policies in the 1930s, Anne-Kristine Kronborg describes how socialist architects in Norway engaged not only in their own professional environments but also in political networks, becoming political actors directly involved in public information and developing policies for housing.

The formation of the Swedish building industry is central to understanding the Swedish welfare state. Matthew Ashton and Erik Stenberg remind us that before today's perceptions of concrete as an environmentally challenging material, historical attempts were made to combine the industrial production of prefabricated concrete panels with a sophisticated interest in fine-art concrete objects. Ashton and Stenberg describe the duality of concrete as a welfare state material in Sweden (with references to Norway), understanding concrete not only as a medium that conveys social agendas and messages of technological prowess, and materializes economic rationalities, but also a vehicle of technological, social, cultural, and artistic experimentation.

DISCOURSES AND CRITIQUES

Spatial and professional formations are accompanied by discursive formations in mass media, public debates, and professional critiques. The sociopathological critique and mass media public discourses of the satellite towns in the Nordic countries that circulated around 1970 form a historical background that, beyond its role in the neoliberal transformation of such areas, continues to influence how architects, planners, and others see and talk about these types of buildings and urban neighborhoods today.

Across Scandinavia, a certain stigma is attached to the architecture and planning of the welfare state. Guttorm Ruud notes the ways in which territorial stigma was created through the critique of satellite town environments built in the late 1960s and early 1970s. In particular, he addresses a special issue of the *Sinnets Helse* (Health of the mind) magazine, known as "the Stovner report," which fueled mass media outrage and determined how this place and its inhabitants—primarily children—were to be perceived. By tracing and reframing the outcries of "children in crisis" and the critique of their living environment in this infamous report, another side of welfare and the Norwegian satellite towns emerges.[6]

A related media discourse is described by Mikkel Høghøj, who examines the creation of a new social group—"the youth"—and their association with the urban spaces of postwar welfare state housing estates, in a move that laid the groundwork for today's tendency to link certain social groups and behaviors to specific environments.

Criticism of modern suburbs has tended to land in simplistic representations of inhabitants' lives, needs, and desires, and polemic rhetorical forms. Addressing a series of reports on three modern Swedish suburbs, Jennifer Mack questions the methodological aspects of this research and makes a case for the critique of their conclusions—which, much like in Norway, had lasting effects on the public perception of modernist suburbs and housing areas.

While mass media was essential for influencing public opinion, the architectural discourse was crucial for professional reflection. Parallel to the public critical discourse was a professional debate that addressed the roles and responsibilities allocated to the architects of the welfare state. Christina Pech describes the Swedish debate in 1972 around the radio program *Det stora sveket* (The great betrayal), which claimed that welfare state architects had betrayed their social ideals.[7]

A similar Norwegian architectural analysis of the "betrayal" of the postwar generation of architects is described by Martin Braathen. Addressing the declaration of a crisis in the discipline that was issued by Marxist architects in the 1970s, Braathen considers the generational politics of architectural critique. In particular, he notes how the young Marxists of the 1970s targeted their socialist forebearers, the architects of the 1930s, who abandoned their positions of class critique to instead become social democrats and build satellite towns.[8] Not only do Pech and Braathen place welfare state architecture in another historical light, but they also actualize the discussion of architects' role and social responsibility.

6 This is described in more detail in Guttorm Ruud, "Sites of Crisis. Histories of the Satellite Town" (PhD diss., The Oslo School of Architecture and Design, 2021).

7 See Christina Pech, *Arkitektur och motstånd: Om sökandet efter alternativ i svensk arkitektur 1970–1980* [Architecture and resistance: On the search for alternatives in Swedish architecture 1970–1980] (Stockholm: Makadam, 2011).

8 For an extensive discussion of Marxist architectural critique in Norway, see Martin Braathen, "The Magician and the Shoemaker—Debates on Open Form and Marxist-Leninism in Norway around 1970" (PhD diss., NTNU, 2019).

RECONCEPTUALIZATIONS AND NEW FORMATIONS

Together, these materializations, actors and networks, and debates and critiques constitute the foundations of a number of contemporary transformations and reconceptualizations of welfare state architecture and planning. The changes that followed these "formations" included neoliberal deregulations and privatizations, which were often destructive to postwar notions of "welfare" and its architectures. Importantly, contemporary neoliberal tools and methods were often developed from within welfare state politics, through guidelines, regulations, and procedures for urban analysis. Historical notions of welfare are thus paradoxically embedded in neoliberal policies. In this complex and contradictory reality, new and creative interpretations, analyses, interventions, and perspectives are critical to the tasks of renewing, reimagining, rediscovering, and suggesting social potential in relation to welfare state architectures, cities, and landscapes.

Writing about postwar large-scale housing estate landscapes in Denmark, Ellen Braae argues that recent transformations of these areas have led to the exhaustion of their common spaces. She investigates the transformation of Farum Midtpunkt, a housing estate built in the 1970s, and theorizes the concepts of relational public spaces and their publicness searching for adequate ways to understand the role of these estates' omnipresent open spaces. In a commentary on the urban ideals of the ghetto policies, she presents an innovative analytical framework that makes it possible to see existing sociospatial qualities in a new light, a move which might inform current and future transformations.

Criticizing the transition from buildings for education to buildings as financial instruments and profitable entities, Erik Sigge addresses the example of Akademiska Hus, a Swedish state-owned property manager. This enterprise, Sigge argues, offers a prime example of the neoliberalization of an architecture originally meant to facilitate Swedish welfare policies.[9]

The development of the welfare city contradicts idealized, static notions of the "welfare city" as something belonging to the past. After outlining a history of the concept, Tom Nielsen emphasizes the complexity and heterogeneity of the Danish welfare city as it is embedded in the historic urban fabric, emphasizing the importance of imagining possible ways forward toward new urban versions.

Specific forms of the Danish city have been packaged and exported as recipes for "the good life" and "livability." Addressing the Finnish implementation of Jan Gehl's Danish model for urbanity, Leonard Ma considers how "welfare" and "well-being" are exported and transformed into instruments of urban economic development, revealing affinities between neoliberal politics and welfare urbanism.

VISUAL REPRESENTATIONS

Three photographic essays act as dividers between the book's parts, providing perspectives and angles that problematize the visual formations of Scandinavian welfare state architecture. These essays show that architectural imagery is neither obvious

9 For an extensive discussion on this topic, see Erik Sigge, "Architecture's Red Tape: Government Building Construction in Sweden, 1963–1973." (PhD diss., Stockholm, KTH, School of Architecture and the Built Environment, 2017).

nor simple; rather, it conveys complex and contradictory messages, commenting on, contrasting, and illuminating idealized representations.

Aysha Amin's photographs of a transformed Danish housing estate evoke feelings of loss, but also of memory. The images are part of a search for the past that, while suggestively creating an emotional engagement with a seemingly abandoned and decaying physical environment, also offer a powerful critique of the rejection of welfare state architecture—not necessarily because of its architectural qualities but because of this environment's function as a setting for lived experience.

John Håkansson's close-up photographs of Swedish postwar suburbs contrast with monumental, heroic, or dystopic portrayals of mass housing. His photos challenge the emphasis on systems, repetition, and scale that are often present in the presentation of Swedish postwar architecture, as well as the rhetorical associations such imagery contain. The almost tactile surfaces in his photographs, which may be interpreted as formal abstractions or direct and everyday experience, remind us of more intimate features of the suburbs he visits.

For Ane Hjort Guttu, the visualization of satellite towns in the Norwegian welfare state confronts the impossibility of creating new imagery since every image appears to have already been photographed.[10] According to Guttu, we are so used to the historical photographs from architectural photographers and newspaper reportages depicting different postwar narratives (from heroism to critique) that alternative portrayals become almost unthinkable. Translated into the discourse of architecture and welfare, Guttu's photography thus suggests the difficulties of challenging established narratives and coming up with new interpretations, as one is always in danger of inadvertently reinforcing existing preconceptions instead of criticizing and challenging them.

WELFARE FUTURES

This book comes out of the research network *Nordic Models of Architecture and Welfare* (hosted by KTH Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm). Along the way, this research environment has connected several research projects, including *Reconfiguring Welfare Landscapes*, WELLAND (University of Copenhagen); Spaces of Danish Welfare (Royal Danish Academy in Copenhagen), *Forming Welfare* (Royal Danish Academy), *Restoring the Welfare State* (Oslo School of Architecture), *Architecture in the Making: Architecture as a Making Discipline and Material Practice* (Chalmers, KTH, and LTH in Sweden), *Architecture in Effect: Rethinking the Social in Architecture* (KTH), and *The Architecture of Deregulations: Politics and Postmodernism in Swedish Building 1975–1995* (KTH). These projects have produced a number of edited anthologies, including Deane Simpson, Kirsten Marie Raahauge, Katrine Lotz, and Martin Søberg's 2022 *Architectures of Dismantling and Restructuring: Spaces of Danish Welfare, 1970–Present*; Kenny Cupers, Helena Mattsson, and Catharina Gabrielsson's 2020 *Neoliberalism on the Ground: Architecture and Transformation from the 1960s to the Present*; Sten Gromark, Jennifer Mack, Roemer van Toorn, Hélène

10 For photographic representations of the Norwegian satellite town, see also: Ane Hjort Guttu, "Å bo i drabantby" [Living in a satellite town], *Byggekunst: The Norwegian Review of Architecture* 87, no. 3 (2005): 20–31.

Frichot, Gunnar Sandin, and Bettina Schwalm's 2018 *Architecture in Effect: Volume 1: Rethinking the Social in Architecture, Volume 2: After Effects*; Katrine Lotz, Deane Simpson, Kirsten Marie Raahauge, Kjeld Vindum, Mette Jerl Jensen, and Jannie Rosenberg Bendsen's 2017 *Forming Welfare*; Jorge Otero-Pailos, Erik Fenstad Langdalen, and Thordis Arrhenius's 2016 *Experimental Preservation*; and Helena Mattsson and Sven-Olov Wallenstein's 2010 *Swedish Modernism: Architecture, Consumption, and the Welfare State*.[11]

Although this book is part of a long series of discussions, projects, and publications, it is not meant to be conclusive—we aim to raise questions and challenge assumptions, inspire further research, and inform architectural and planning practice in contemporary welfare cities. In line with this aim, two research network members, Helena Mattsson and Deane Simpson, provide an independent reflection that adds new perspectives, raises new questions, and discusses future directions for research on the developing spatialities of the welfare state. They begin by addressing geographical exceptionalism and geographical bounding and close by expanding the notion of welfare to a planetary scale, ultimately transcending the Scandinavian perspective.

Thordis Arrhenius
Ellen Braae
Guttorm Ruud

11 Deane Simpson et al., eds., *Architectures of Dismantling and Restructuring: Spaces of Danish Welfare, 1970–Present* (Baden: Lars Müller Publishers, 2022); Kenny Cupers, Helena Mattsson, and Catharina Gabrielsson, eds., *Neoliberalism on the Ground: Architecture and Transformation from the 1960s to the Present* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2020); Sten Gromark et al., *Architecture in Effect: Volume 1: Rethinking the Social in Architecture, Volume 2: After Effects* (New York, NY: Actar Publishers, 2018); Katrine Lotz et al., eds., *Forming Welfare* (Copenhagen: Danish Architectural Press, 2017); Jorge Otero-Pailos, Erik Fenstad Langdalen, and Thordis Arrhenius, eds., *Experimental Preservation* (Baden: Lars Müller Publishers, 2016); Helena Mattsson and Sven-Olov Wallenstein, eds., *Swedish Modernism: Architecture, Consumption, and the Welfare State* (London: Black Dog Publishing, 2010).