Kampen om Kommersen – kritik, motstånd och drömmar i den nyliberala staden

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Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to study the ways in which neoliberal hegemony is produced and the processes by which it is maintained, negotiated and challenged. I critically examine the decisions, reports and interventions that surrounded the local flea market Kommersen in Gothenburg during the planning process of a comprehensive urban renewal area called Norra Masthugget. The main research question is: for whom, how and to what ends is neoliberal hegemony upheld? In the first part of the thesis, I review the research literature related to the role of local marketplaces and culture in neoliberal urban planning processes. In the theory chapter I outline my understanding of methodological perspectives on ideology critique as well as Patrick Leary's notion of Keywords and Bourdieu's concepts of field, habitus and social space. I create a constellation and use a multimethods approach to better grasp the nonidentity of Kommersen.

The first empirical chapter analyses the report *Fallet Kommersen* from 2013. This report is an example of how an intervention that aimed to protect marginalized groups in the city becomes part of a larger branding project, and there takes on a different meaning. In the second empirical chapter, I analyse the concept of "Kommersen 2.0" and attempts to integrate progressive values into the brand identity of the area. When Kommersen was demolished, a local artist organized a funeral ceremony for the building and erected several monuments in defence of free culture. In the third chapter, I analyse how these agents initiated a wider discussion about the *right to the city* in relation to Kommersen.

To conclude, I argue that much of the meaning created around Kommersen is a product of ideology and an attempt to use Kommersen for commercial gain. I also show that hegemony is never total and discuss how different agents have challenged the land exploitation process in Norra Masthugget. Finally, I look at the ways in which consent has been created around Kommersen and how neoliberal ideology affects the way we think, act in and dream in the city.

Keywords: neoliberalization, critical theory, ideology, hegemony, flea markets, cultural studies, urban planning, activism, Gothenburg, artistic field, social space