



PA:CS ²⁰²²

ALIENATION IN SECOND HOME CULTURE
CONTEXT: SWEDEN

WRITING ARCHITECTURE

written by
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IMAGE N°2 – PHOTO OF THE SWEDISH WEST COAST

I

INTRODUCTION

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I INTRODUCTION

01/03

“He [the stranger] comes into contact only with individuals, and is not organically connected to familial, local, or occupational networks”.

GEORG SIMMEL

SOZIOLOGIE. UNTERSUCHUNGEN ÜBER DIE FORMEN DER VERGESELLSCHAFTUNG. BERLIN: DUNCKER & HUMBLLOT, 1908.

S. 509-512.

I INTRODUCTION

01/03 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The culture of second homes, fritidshus, is a commonality in Swedish architectural history. Even more so, it is looked upon as part of our cultural heritage, both in its intangible and tangible form.¹ The purpose of this essay will be to look upon the feelings of exclusion or elitism that may or may not exist in the context of second homes. I will inquire into the meeting of a new culture, as a foreigner or stranger. How is it experienced, as a newcomer, to see this culture of fraternizing in small ‘colonies’ in nature, is it something that can be taught, learned, or shared with ‘others’ of alien backgrounds?

Does elitism and alienism exist in the context of second home culture? How is it manifested in the intangible accessibility to second home areas, when different layers of socio-economic groups and people of other ethnic backgrounds approach?

¹Bohusläns museum, “Sommarstugan”; Västarvet, “Fritidshuset - kulturarv och välfärdssymbol.”

I INTRODUCTION

02/03 METHOD

This paper will be based on several methods, working with an experiential mindset, supported by statistics and numbers from Statistics Sweden, Central Bureau of Statistics. Interviews are conducted with four people, who have relevance here, because of their backgrounds and relation to second homes in Sweden. There is a wish to continue with interviews, and the ones transcribed for this essay are to be seen as the beginning of a collection of data.

One interview is with Maria and Jacek Zalecki, an architect couple based on the outskirts of Gothenburg, who are quite comfortable economically. They are my parents. So, it is to be known beforehand that the interview becomes a private conversation, tugging at known actions, references, and assumptions from the experiences of existing and living with them both. My mother talks of not being a victim in the themes we touch upon, and she supports (and questions) my father's depictions of earlier years where they both were living in Warsaw, Poland. The positive effect of having this pair of interviewees as part of the project is, that throughout the process, I've been able to get back to them and rephrase certain questions that become more relevant as the text progresses.

The second semi-structured interview I have conducted is with Anna Gullstrand. She is also a close person to me, and again I am heavily pressuring the fact that this text is partial to my subjective experiences, networks, and archives of knowledge. Anna is a good friend of my parents, and I have brought her perspective in firstly because of her personal connection to the second home culture, but also because of her perspective on how my parents have accustomed to Sweden, both as a place and as a culture.

Counterpoising, I bring in a third perspective. It is based a bit more on general knowledge and facts, but nonetheless, it is an assumption and individual recapitulation I ask for. This is based on emails and a semi-structured interview with the organization Majblomman through their national spokesperson Liv Landell Major.

I INTRODUCTION

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My reflection on this is that I need to care for, listen to, and question things in my immediate environment. That includes my own mind, constantly making myself question the subjective way this essay is written. The text should be a place to dissect and digest ponderings on the theme of strangers and the culture of second homes.

Lastly, I have not only used statistics and subjective references, but also a framework of theory based on G. Simmel and J. Derrida's mentioning of 'strangers' and 'outsiders'. Through this I hope to be able to bring some thoughts on identity, psycho-geographical notions and the need to fit in.

I INTRODUCTION

03/03 STATE OF THE ART

Themes of socioeconomics, displacement and rurality have been touched on many times before. There are also previous publications on the concept of second homes, with perspectives from environmental impact to more pragmatical dissertations on planning problematics or how second home culture impacts rural areas and the displacement of local inhabitants.² What I think is intricately connected with my own take on this, is the dissertation by Susanna Rolfsdotter Eliasson published in 2020. Her doctoral thesis talks of the choices people from a middle-class background take when purchasing a second home, why these choices are made and what other influences may take place during this process.³ The aspect of class and identity is in focus here as well, but the author doesn't stay as much with the theme of the stranger or other. It is instead her interviewees' answers that show what processes and thoughts can come up when purchasing a second home in Sweden. Especially in her third chapter, the interviews come in to play, and here our methods are overlapping. To present conclusions based on personal views is not something I take lightly, and as Rolfsdotter Eliasson also mentions, it is through transcription and the digestive process, that the distance becomes big enough to bring something useful from the interviews.

“It is in the context of transcription, by the desk, that the distance is re-established, and the analysis is made possible (Ehn & Klein 1994, Klein 1990)”.

ROLFSDOTTER ELIASSON, “LÄNGTANS & DRÖMMARNAS HUS:”

² Clout, “Second Homes in the United States”; Persson, “Fritidshuset Som Planeringsdilemma”; Marjavaara, *Second Home Tourism*.

³ Rolfsdotter Eliasson, “Längtans & drömmarnas hus:”

I INTRODUCTION

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“Dialogical narrative analysis is used in the dissertation to emphasize how personal experience narratives, as well as narrative identity representations, are continuously constructed in dialogue. The interviewees' stories are examined using William Labovs' (1972) model for analysing personal experience narrative with special emphasis on the narrative element of evaluation. The concepts of personal narrative explanatory model and compensatory arguments are presented in the dissertation as further analytical tools”.

ROLFSDOTTER ELIASSON, “LÄNGTANS & DRÖMMARNAS HUS:”

Her method of analysis is something I also will apply, but with the note that this is indeed not a doctoral thesis on 200 pages, like hers is. Nevertheless, it is interesting to see how the personal narratives act as one of few sources in other texts, too.



IMAGE N°3 – STILL FROM INTRO “SUMMER INTERLUDE” BY INGMAR BERGMAN 1951

II

THE SECOND HOME

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II THE SECOND HOME

01/03 THE SECOND HOME CULTURE

“In the introduction to Coppock’s *Second Homes: Curse or Blessing?* (1977), a second home is defined as a ‘property owned or rented on a long lease as the occasional residence of a household that usually lives elsewhere’ (Coppock, 1977, p. 3). Others use the same definition or similar ones (Barnett, 2014; Dijst et al., 2005; Shucksmith, 1983; Visser, 2003; Winkler, Deller, & Marcouiller, 2015). Acknowledging that such an inclusive definition can hold quite a wide range of different types of second homes and second-home landscapes, Coppock briefly discusses characteristics of second homes (purpose-built and converted), their shifting style, and their uneven distribution.”

BACK, ANDREAS, AND ROGER MARJAVAARA. “MAPPING AN INVISIBLE POPULATION THE UNEVEN GEOGRAPHY OF SECOND HOME TOURISM.”



IMAGE N°4 – “ON THE WAY TO THE BEACH, SUMMER OF 1960”
VERONICA NAGY & BOHUSLÄNS MUSEUM

II THE SECOND HOME

01/03 THE SECOND HOME CULTURE

Throughout your life as a Swede, you can meet the second home in many ways. A second home is a place many hold dear, it is available to people of certain socio-economic backgrounds more than others, yet it shows in statistics how common it is to have access to a second home. Over 50% of the Swedish population has access to one.⁴ Access is defined both through ownership but mainly with the question of whether a person has resided in a second home over the past 12 months, or not. Far from everyone owns a second home, but it is indeed a big part of our culture to experience sections of the year, often the summer, in one. The term second home has many definitions, but I read it with the word ‘fritidshus’ in the back of my mind. This translates directly to ‘free time house,’ pointing to the spatio-temporal use of this place. Statistics mention the Nordic countries having the highest number of paid vacation days per year, showing that time to re-charge is very valued.⁵ The second home becomes more than a holiday home, a vacation home, or a simple cabin - no matter the typology, it is a place where people spend a lot of their time. To devote and dedicate time to a place creates a certain bond and relationship, which I think suffices as the reason for using the term ‘second home.’ You sit in your furniture that is no longer in use in your first home, you stand on the rug that did not fit back in the city home, you have your cups, plates, forks, and knives, which were inherited and are of importance to you, but are not your main style choice - the second home houses many layers of second-ness. It is a place to retreat to, leave your everyday life behind in, and a place to celebrate what is sought after, in an otherwise stressful life.

⁴ “Tillgång till Fritidshus.”

⁵ Oyster, “Which Country Gets the Most Vacation?”

II THE SECOND HOME

01/03 THE SECOND HOME CULTURE

Of course, this has not been the case for most of the time of the phenomena's existence in Scandinavia. The availability of recreational time has been built up for years; industrialization, which was a late bloomer the Nordic countries compared to the rest of the western world, resulted in a big middle class with a stable welfare system in place through the works of Per Albin Hansson, then leader of the socialist party.⁶ The defining of the 8-hour-working-day and the vacation law came into place during the 1930s. This law was then updated throughout the 20th century and today most full-time working people have five paid weeks of vacation in a year. Especially after WW2, Swedish economy was at a more stable and flourishing place than most of European countries and the rest of the world, as their involvement did not result in the need of costly rebuilding projects and similar investments. The economical surge gave opportunity for the housing market to bloom in the 1960s and 70s, which in turn was noticed in the second home market.⁷ Today, second homes are certainly also newly built, but most of us associate the summer getaway with a simpler lifestyle, adopted from the 1930s culture of wellness and ascetic life in contact with nature.

In pop culture the depiction of the Swedish second home recurs thousandfold: Books, podcasts, songs, and films all mention directly or passively how important the second home culture is to a typical Swede. Ingmar Bergman has several films with a setting in the archipelago, there are television series like *Skärgårdsdoktorn* and *Saltkråkan* take place and let us know who summer guests are and who are not.⁸ The iconic comedy movie *Att angöra en brygga* written by Tage Danielsson, a very big personality in the history of Swedish culture, was one among many depictions of what the 'Swedish Summer' really means to the people of Sweden.⁹ The humorous approach of moments in the context of the second home range from the way two characters greet their guests at the dock, to how tricky it can be to sail.

⁶ Hering, "Social Policy and Welfare, Nordic Cooperation"; "Folkhemmet"; "Sommarens nygamla statussymbol - sommarstugan - Stil."

⁷ Persson, "Svenska Fritidshus - En Historia."

⁸ *Vi på Saltkråkan*; Bergman, "Summer Interlude"; *Skärgårdsdoktorn*.

⁹ "Att angöra en brygga (1965) - SFdb."

II THE SECOND HOME

01/03 THE SECOND HOME CULTURE

If one has not grown up with the same references, the concept of a second home neither sparks a feeling of nostalgia nor cherished memories per se. A large part of the population has neither interest in owning nor visiting a second home. They may think that good values and positive effects are not particularly excluded to spending your summer in the Swedish countryside. Then there is, I would argue, a part of the population that may be new to the context and are often dissociated from partaking in the inner core of 'Swedish-ness'.

In addition, statistics show that children of so-called 'new Swedes' have less access to second homes compared to their equivalent with Swedish-born parents.¹⁰ It is a place where generations of a family spend time, the now older siblings split their time between which weeks they can go in summer, whole areas suddenly come alive during the warmer season.¹¹

In *Summer Interlude*, the youth spend long days by the water, swimming, listening to the radio, having coffee in their garden, letting the salt from the sea retract their skin, as it slowly gets hot in the not-so-often-occurring Swedish sun.¹² In the first episode of Astrid Lindgren's *Saltkråkan*, the main character Tjorven runs between red fishing huts on an archipelago island on the Swedish east coast. There is a steamboat arriving on Monday, and she greets the new summer guests who are to stay in the house next to theirs for the whole summer. The sun is shining, and her parents are working, as they are locals living on the island. Meanwhile, Tjorven herself gets to know the summer guest children, and a typical picturesque Swedish summer maintains the backdrop of the story. It is also toyed with, as a sarcastic poke to the romantic idyll pushes on the comedic aspect of the show. Heavy rain, awkward comments from islanders about the arriving summer guests, the imagined summer dream perforated by the bad state of the house they are to rent. These small anecdotes are only working because

¹⁰ SCB, "Stora skillnader i barns tillgång till fritidshus."

¹¹ Gullstrand, Interview with Anna Gullstrand.

¹² Bergman, "Summer Interlude."

of the obvious contrast to the way most Swedes associated to summer in the times the show was aired. Other moments in the show are showing the first wasp sting of the vacation, how to fish with a net, how to care for a home and wash dishes in a bucket. The simple lifestyle is represented over and over in the everchanging quaint island TV show.¹³ It is a life of cherishing what is not forever there, capturing a feeling of freedom and leisure, even described as a time that feels like a wormhole, a section of your life where you are forever protected.¹⁴ Likewise, it is often the place for authors to place themselves, to draft stories of failed family relations, of the isolation, or of the likeliness that a sect will be taking over.¹⁵ It is multifaceted and does not always bring happiness and calm. The pandemic especially has shone a light on how skewed these areas of vacationing can become, how the municipal responsibility for health care and other facilities suddenly become overloaded, as non-permanent residents flood the small villages, where normally only a few families live.¹⁶ I argue that there are several things that may not work well with having a second home - but I cannot deny that it has a big place in my (and other people's, apparently?) hearts.

For us to understand these threads that connect identity, class, cultural inclinations and behaviors, we must go more thoroughly through the history of second homes, especially within the Swedish context. That is what the following sub-chapter will do, pointing back to beforementioned things, giving it some background and solidity.



¹³ Vi på Saltkråkan.

¹⁴ "Sommarens nygamla statussymbol - sommarstugan - Stil."

¹⁵ Midsommar.

¹⁶ Andersson, "Kommunalråd."

II THE SECOND HOME

02/03 HISTORY & TYPOLOGY

“The second home phenomenon is not new. For example, the affluent people in ancient Rome had their country villas in the surroundings of the empire’s capital, the Russian tsars had their winter palaces, and the 18th century Parisians had their Maisons de Plaisance (Clout, 1972). What is new is the increase in the scale of second home ownership in most Western countries in recent decades (Dijst et al., 2005). In many parts of the world, second homes are the destination of a substantial proportion of domestic and international travelers, and the number of available bed nights in a second home often rivals or even exceeds that available in the formal accommodation sector (Hall and Müller, 2004). However, nowhere in the world is second home ownership as common as in the Nordic countries”.

MÜLLER, DIETER K. “SECOND HOMES IN THE NORDIC COUNTRIES:
BETWEEN COMMON HERITAGE AND EXCLUSIVE COMMODITY.”
SCANDINAVIAN JOURNAL OF HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM



IMAGE N°7 – GÖRANSSON FAMILY AT
THEIR SECOND HOME IN ÖREGRUND
(CA 1900) BY TOMMY HJORT

II THE SECOND HOME

02/03 HISTORY & TYPOLOGY

Around the shift between the 18th and 19th century, upper class citizens would want to get away from the city during the summers because of street odors becoming worse in the heat. This created a pull out towards the nearby areas with greenery, waters, and other gifts of nature. Comparably, the middle class would also go for their vacation, law bound of 2 weeks by 1938, but in a much hastier manner. While the upper class enjoyed their time in purpose-built summer villas, homes of just as high standard as their equivalent first home in the city, the middle class would go either for a day trip to the archipelagos or visit their family home in the countryside.¹⁷

Summer housing owned by richer families around the turn of the century were called ‘Sommarnöjen,’ which were summer resorts or residences with a quirky name built by the words summer and pleasure. The name of these residences came into fashion during the middle of the 18th century, and these second homes would normally be near bigger cities, situated in archipelagos or in mansions in the countryside.¹⁸ Sometimes they were rented, mostly they were owned. It could also be a building that was inherited from their family, mansions and villas owned by previous generations of wealth. Whoever had time and money enough to go away during summers would do it from the late 1700s and onward. This became common throughout nearly all class levels in society, as laws and regulations were updated throughout the 20th century.¹⁹

In summers, as wealthier families would go to their Sommarnöje, and where a father typically was the breadwinner, they would all move homes for a few months. The father would therefore be more fluid between first and second home, working every day as his family took their time off. This was the main reason for the summer residences being situated so close to metropolises.²⁰ The alternative for the middle-class families was, as partly mentioned above, local pick-nicks and day trips to the archipelago, which became accessible in the early 1900s when steamboats got their regular schedule set up.²¹

¹⁷ Höglund, Thorén, and Kronblad, “1 July 2022”; “Sommarens nygamla statussymbol - sommarstugan - Stil.”

¹⁸ Rolfsdotter Eliasson, “Längtans & drömmarnas hus:”

¹⁹ Västarvet, “Fritidshuset - kulturarv och välfärdssymbol.”

²⁰ Höglund, Thorén, and Kronblad, “1 July 2022.”

²¹ Persson, “Svenska Fritidshus - En Historia.”

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02/03 HISTORY & TYPOLOGY

Vacation options were not as available this early on for this part of society, as they were needed at work whilst their bosses' families had vacation without any hassle. This was especially the case for the working class.²² To be noted, at this time the primary amount of Sweden's inhabitants still lived on the countryside, and many sources seem to say that these people did not have the need for a place to retreat during summer months.²³

So, what was in it for the working class? In the shift of the century there were two women who came to initiate the so called 'Kolonirörelsen,' the people's allotment movement, which had roots in Germany and came through Denmark to Sweden, much with the help of Anna Lindhagen and Anna Åbergson, one of the two initiators.²⁴ This type of refuge was seen as a productive way to access a plot to grow vegetables and other crops, while giving space for the worker to have a break from the busy working weeks the rest of the year. It was already happening in the UK as well as Holland, based on the industrial revolution breaking a bit earlier than in Sweden. The first allotment garden in Sweden was in Malmö, Pildammskolonin, and was set up in 1895.²⁵ The urbanization that followed the industrial revolution was one of many reasons as to why allotments became so popular throughout Europe. These places were initially created to make space for fresh air, for the practicality of the vegetable plot, but also for the social meetings that came with owning such a space. Placing allotments just outside the city was a worker's opportunity for a summer getaway, much like the rich and the middle class.²⁶ During both world wars these allotments were a vitality to have, as producing one's own food was a lucrative way to survive the harsh times that often come with war.²⁷

When the vacation law was firstly put up in 1938, the focus was for the Swedish government to give access for new parts of the

²² "I Skärgårdens Famn."

²³ Rolfsdotter Eliasson, "Långtans & drömmarnas hus."

²⁴ Höglund, Thorén, and Kronblad, "1 July 2022."

²⁵ Koloniträdgårdsförbundet, "Kolonirörelsens historia."

²⁶ Västarvet, "Fritidshuset - kulturarv och välfärdssymbol."

²⁷ Koloniträdgårdsförbundet, "Kolonirörelsens historia."

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population to nature, recreational activities, and environments.²⁸ As it became more popular to focus on health and recreation, this was welcomed by many. Already in 1885, the Swedish Tourist Association, STF, was set up by a group of geology students who wanted to make Swedish nature more accessible for all.²⁹ It started with focusing on the Swedish mountain areas in the north, but slowly the association made its way around the country. The spread of initiatives was based off member requests in the 1930s, and the term 'Vandrarnhem' was created, pointing to a place to stay along the way, from the culture of mountain hiking. In 1935 STF already had 187 places where you could rent a bed for a night or more. These Vandrarnhem took form in many ways, from castles to farm homes, cottages to old schools.³⁰

During the early 1900s there was another typology that came into view; the sports cabins or 'Sportstuga'.³¹ The phenomenon gave other socio-economical layers of society a place to go during vacations. In 1914 the Association of physical upbringing, Förbundet för fysisk fostran: F.F.F, formed, and the theme of recreation and health pushed the typology to its existence together with the new law on the working week of 8 days. Cabins were built already from 1910s but the sports cabins' peak was in the 1930s.³² Governmental and industry-based involvement showed its presence too, where whole villages of cabins were built for internal use for workers in the corresponding companies.³³

The support system for creating an active and health-focused time off from work was strong, as industries saw the good by following the trend to keep their employees happy, and by keeping them strong and healthy for the working months ahead. The popularity of the typology was also because of the cheap building costs of the cabins, which in turn was in touch with the 'Egnahem-rörelsen' and the before-mentioned allotment movement.³⁴ Whole areas or villages were built in several places around the country, both

²⁸ Karlsson, "En sjätte semestervecka Motion 2017/18."

²⁹ Svenska Turistföreningen, "Om STF."

³⁰ Svenska Turistföreningen.

³¹ Stockholms Länsmuseum, "Fritidshus Och Sportstugor."

³² Höglund, Thorén, and Kronblad, "1 July 2022."

³³ "Semesterbyn."

³⁴ Pihl Atmer, "Fritidshusets historia."

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02/03 HISTORY & TYPOLOGY

near the sea and in deep forests. These buildings were meant to contrast the late 18th century version of a summer residence – now the primitive and uncomplicated way of living was modern.³⁵ The production of the sports cabins was much in synchronization with the industrial mass production, yet other types of simple second homes were also built in this time, often with the re-use of old pieces from cars, furniture and even things like a fridge for the foundation of an evolving structure.³⁶

These typologies which come into focus represent the different layers of society and the availability of any version of a second home. For example, the concept of Vandrarhem or Egnahemrörelsen are of relevance because of their malleability of the culture surrounding ownership and recreational accessibility.³⁷

[..] Still, the classic sommarstuga continues to hold a special place in Swedish hearts. Åsa Stanaway, a tourism developer and marketer for the Västmanland region, recalls summers at her grandparents' cottage with berry picking, lawn games, early-morning walks in dewy grass, and swims in a forest lake. "In the cottage there were rag rugs that smelled of soap. The beds were narrow and creaking; the duvet was comfortably heavy," she remembers. When it comes to sommarstugor, she says, "it's the thought of the uncomplicated life and togetherness that attracts." [..]

HIPPLE, ANNIKA. "A SWEDISH 'SOMMARSTUGA' IS THE ULTIMATE COTTAGE GETAWAY."

³⁵ Pihl Atmer.

³⁶ Västarvet, "Fritidshuset - kulturarv och välfärdssymbol."

³⁷ Rolfsdotter Eliasson, "Längtans & drömmarnas hus."

II THE SECOND HOME

03/03 STRANGER STRANGER

What Simmel mentions in his short essay '*Stranger*' has a big impact on how the perception of alienism and elitism has been used as a term in this text. He discusses how the stranger necessarily equals a tradesman, a person who is from the outside yet has come to stay in the local sphere. This creates a certain distance to the local, but at the same time it also makes possible a freedom and closeness, that would not be possible as the local person within the local place. Simmel mentions this simultaneous characteristic by saying that the stranger is an outsider counterpart, yet also an intimate part of the community.³⁸

Just like the tradesman, a stranger does not own vital resources in some of the social spheres, because they are not from there to begin with. This externality does, perhaps unexpectedly so, create a possibility for intimacy with the local through the way of their relationship. But as soon as there is an instability or threat, he argues that the intimate bond quickly disappears and the other is made into the fault of the situation. Therefore, it is also a very precarious character to be. Simmel also discusses how the stranger owns an objectivity that is not obtainable for a local, and it may often be read as lack of involvement. He stresses that it is almost the opposite, that it is a kind of engagement that can offer revelations much more distanced than otherwise would be. There is an attitude on objectivity, because of the stranger not being rooted in particularities and biases of the community. Again, the distance is indicated, and that because of it, it suggests "an active mind operating at its fullest capacity, according to its own laws".³⁹

J. Derrida in turn has an extensive discussion on hospitality and the stranger, or outsider. In his reply to Anne Dufourmantelle, his passage on the prospect of how hospitality can become a cage to the proprietorial host becomes applicable to other situations.⁴⁰

³⁸ Simmel, "The Stranger Translated by Ramona Mosse."

³⁹ Simmel.

⁴⁰ Derrida and Dufourmantelle, "Of Hospitality - Anne Dufourmantelle Invites Jacques Derrida to Respond."

26 “One can become virtually xenophobic in order to protect one’s own hospitality, the own home that makes possible one’s own hospitality. I want to be master at home, to be able to receive whomever I like there. Anyone who encroaches on my ‘at home’, on my power of hospitality, on my sovereignty as host, I start to regard as an undesirable foreigner, and virtually as an enemy. This other becomes a hostile subject, and I risk becoming his hostage”

DERRIDA AND DUFOURMANTELLE, “OF HOSPITALITY - ANNE DUFOURMANTELLE INVITES JACQUES DERRIDA TO RESPOND.”

Although the theme is not as dark and twisted, the definitions of stranger and alien do correlate in the context of alienation in second home culture. Fassin uses specifically the word alien in a sentence that is part of the description of the problem object of his chapter Ambivalent Hospitality. The text then continues to talk of the word hospitality, which Derrida has dissected before. Through linguistical comparatives, Émile Benveniste points to the ambiguity in how to use the term, how it has a reflection of ‘enemy’ in it, as well as ‘guest’.⁴¹ These words are continuously exploring the tension of proximity and distance, which create a double faceted way to relate to a situation where the stranger or the notion of hospitality take place.

The topics of otherness and alienation often recur in the discourse on refugees, immigrants and new arriving identities in a culture. To apply it to the situation of being another in the context of the Swedish second home, the perspective must be shifted quite drastically. It is just a tangent on the bigger questions beforementioned and is in 27 some sense a way in. To be able to get a grip on the fundamentals of acceptance and fear in our society, there is work to be done through an approach of less complexity.

⁴¹ Fassin, “Ambivalent Hospitality”; Derrida and Dufourmantelle, “Of Hospitality - Anne Dufourmantelle Invites Jacques Derrida to Respond.”



IMAGE N°8 – ANALOGUE PHOTO OF A SECOND HOME AT LÖVÖN, KODE, WEST COAST SWEDEN

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III NARRATIVES & NUMBERS

01/03 WHAT WAS SAID?

I will begin this chapter with saying that the interviews I have conducted on this theme have meant a great deal to me, and the extracts I will share may be chosen with some ipseity. Even though not quoted directly, there are sections of retelling about a childhood, of times when you are not aware of economic superiority or inferiority and how others close to you have struggled.⁴² My parents explain how they were affected by their move from Poland to Sweden and how the two governmental structures contrast each other.⁴³ To this is added the way Anna Gullstrand talks of her childhood memories on Öckerö in the Gothenburg archipelago, and about her awareness of class and differences in places she has lived. Lastly, we come across the reality of many children in Sweden today, who have been in contact with Majblomman, and this image is extended by Liv Landell Major, Senior Manager of Public Affairs in the organization.⁴⁴

III NARRATIVES & NUMBERS

02/03 STATISTICS

The statistics point to how different the access is for children, but there are also numbers on people 16 years and older. The total population of Sweden's access to second homes is declining over the years, moving from 54.6 % to 48.7% during the years 2008-2019. Then, there is the definition of people of other ethnical background, who have had a far bigger shift over the same period. From a contrastingly low level of 35.9%, it has gone down to only 22.6%.⁴⁵ First, access implies to either owning a second home yourself or having close family who own it (parents, parent's spouses or grandparents). Second, to be of different ethnic background is defined as somebody who themselves, or whose immediate parents, are not born in Sweden. The shifting percentages of who has access clearly differs, and most probably coincides with the big amount of immigration that peaked in the European refugee crisis of 2015.⁴⁶ There are also statistics from October 2022, on Sweden being one of the countries with the biggest differences between domestic and foreign inhabitants when it comes to materialistic and social poverty. Even though Sweden is in the very bottom of the European countries when counting the whole populations' percentage of poverty, the segregation becomes clear as you compare domestic- and foreign-born residents' numbers. The survey is done annually in Europe and some additional countries, and when taking a step back you can see the overall poverty has affected foreign-born Swedes more and more, while the domestic are at the same level, if not better off. The survey also mentions vacation time as one of three biggest issues when looking at affordances, be it a trip or time off within the country. 22% of foreign-born Swedes did not have enough money to take one week off for vacation, whilst with the domestic Swedes only 4% had this difficulty.⁴⁷

⁴² Zalecka and Zalecki, Interview with Maria + Jacek Zalecki; Gullstrand, Interview with Anna Gullstrand.

⁴³ Zalecka and Zalecki, Interview with Maria + Jacek Zalecki.

⁴⁴ Landell Major, Interview with Liv Landell Major.

⁴⁵ SCB, "Levnadsförhållanden i Sverige."

⁴⁶ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, "2015: The Year of Europe's Refugee Crisis"; Migrationsverket, "Beviljade uppehållstillstånd 2009-2020."

⁴⁷ SCB, "Sverige ett av de länder i EU med störst skillnader mellan inrikes och utrikes födda som lever i materiell och social fattigdom."

III NARRATIVES & NUMBERS

03/03 ALIENATION

During the second interview with Maria Zalecka, my mother, I tried to pin-point the feeling of alienation. She repeatedly states that it is not because of their Polish background, that they have faced difficulties or not. The difference between my parents and the statistics beforementioned are most likely their socioeconomic status having grown strong over the years that they have stayed here. They have not fled from a direct oppression, as many of the newcoming Swedes of the statistics have done. This does not remove the fact that they have been through a shift of culture, where the governments have varying methods of working with society. Here follows an excerpt from the interview held on the 13th of December 2022.⁴⁸

Ada: I have some follow-up questions regarding our last interview because of the subject I'm writing on. I guess I've had some feedback that: I need to cut to the chase more.

Ada: Second home culture in Sweden: How do identities feel alienated or not? So, is there a theme of alienation within this culture, when it comes to other backgrounds than the ethnically Swedish one?

Maria Z: [I don't know if it] is in the context of second homes, or in the context of cultural inclusiveness or not, generally.

Ada: Mhm. So, I guess the question is whether you have felt included or excluded

Ada: when going towards this

Ada: going towards being a second home owner in Sweden?

Maria Z: I guess I wanted a recreation place and thought not that much about being included or excluded while I was shopping for the house.

Maria Z: But of course, I don't feel that I am in the role that I know well - which means I am kind of alienated.

⁴⁸ Zalecka, Interview with Maria Zalecka.

III NARRATIVES & NUMBERS

03/03 ALIENATION

Maria Z: As I never had a second home, in Sweden, before. But I can't guarantee that this has to do with my being a foreigner in Sweden.

Maria Z: Because maybe, well, we had friends that bought a second house parallel to us.

Maria Z: and they had the same questions. On the other hand they became included in their community much faster than we have. They own a boat, they have friends, their children play together with other people's children.

Maria Z: But it might be our personality being a bit different.

Maria Z: We definitely looked for something different. They wanted to have a football field and children

Maria Z: They were looking for a place with people at the same time of life. But on the other hand, we looked for people from the same time of life as well. On our island, there are not so many families with small children. People are generally a bit older.

Maria Z: But it doesn't have to do with us being foreigners.

The talk of feeling excluded or not is a quite difficult topic to reach conclusions on, so the question of the feeling of alienation is repeated in a different manner.

Ada: Would you say that you ever felt alienated just as a person?

Ada: Except the fact that you said that you did, because of you not having had a second home before?

Maria Z: Eh, my feeling of alienation is mostly because, well, when it's like ... midsommar.

Maria Z: As we don't feel that strongly for midsommar rituals, we were not ... we felt a bit alienated when dancing around the pole.

III NARRATIVES & NUMBERS

03/03 ALIENATION

Maria Z: We felt included in dancing, but we definitely felt that we were not living the joy of it. But it has to do with those practices.

Maria Z: [to interviewer Ada] You maybe feel happier when you are seeing everyone singing Lucia songs.

Maria Z: I feel both that it's very sweet and cute for the small children singing.

Maria Z: And it's "come on!" not that deeply rooted in me, as we never had it before. That's being a stranger in another society. You come to understand the rituals. But understanding and feeling is not the same.

Maria Z: So it is alienation, but it's not a very deep alienation, as you through the years understand the rules, the rituals. And of course, everyone wanted us to join in the dance, so we danced with everyone else.

Ada: Is it more maybe, a choice, from your side?

Maria Z: Yeah.

The pandemic times in Sweden held a discussion in social media on whether it was a thoughtless action to move to your second home during quarantine or longer periods, no matter what season. Like the previously mentioned skewness of shifting municipalities and consequently burdening the system in an unfortunate way, it also sparked the conversation on who had the privilege of being able to do so.⁴⁹

Liv L M: And it was especially during the pandemic that you discussed these things - 'yes but, not everyone has access to a fritidshus' and especially not those who are the biggest target group of Majblomman.

Liv L M: Because the group that is most exposed to child poverty often has a single parent, in other words a mother.

⁴⁹ Kudo, "Stockholmare isolerar sig i skärgården: "Overkligt"."

III NARRATIVES & NUMBERS

03/03 ALIENATION

Liv L M: And of foreign background.

Liv L M: And then I find it very exciting to look at the history and see who built second homes, or had the possibility to purchase a second home

Liv L M: when Majblomman was still new. Because then it was a lot of people with quite the simple background who, when the welfare state grew, could get hold of a second home.

Liv L M: They are still owned by many families.

Liv L M: But nowadays, if you are secure economically, that you have

Liv L M: a cottage or other fritidshus or allotment or

Liv L M: something like that within your family.

Liv L M: The kids we help rarely have a summer house in their family - that's for sure.



IMAGE N°10 – ANALOGUE PHOTO OF FJÄLLBACKA HARBOUR, ONE OF MANY POPULAR SUMMER VILLAGES ON THE SWEDISH WEST COAST. 2022

IV

ANALYSIS

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CONCLUSION

The history of the second home shows a fluctuation of access, based on economical setting but also style and trend. I would argue that the way Simmel and Derrida talk of a guest, or the stranger, is connected to how my parent's thoughts on being an outsider sound. They talk about how they will never quite fit in, as they come with different references and customs. This doesn't mean that they do not feel included, nor does it imply that they do not earn their friend's acceptance. But it does indeed create some sort of distance.⁵⁰

Likewise, we have information from Liv talking about how it during the 20th century was common to learn to swim as a child. It was something "everyone" did, and it is further confirmed by Anna's retelling of her old childhood summers. The latter's perception of a lifestyle of higher socio-economic status compared to classmates from back when shines light on Liv's reflection of how more people had access to purchasing a second home, yet far from everyone had access to one, even then.⁵¹

The group that today is helped by the organization she works for, Majblomman, mainly consists of 'sole breadwinner mothers' whose children may or may not have access to a second home. She argues, and I want to agree, that the part of the group which has Swedish roots probably has access to a second home in bigger regard than the part of them that are not ethnically Swedish to start with.⁵²

I see this discrepancy in generations, and class, as one of many intangible relays of access and possibility. I think that even the allotment is verifiable as a second home to many, especially in the lower classes, and it represents something that is sometimes far from achievable otherwise.

⁵⁰ Simmel, "The Stranger Translated by Ramona Mosse"; Zalecka and Zalecki, Interview with Maria + Jacek Zalecki.

⁵¹ Landell Major, Interview with Liv Landell Major; Gullstrand, Interview with Anna Gullstrand.

⁵² Landell Major, Interview with Liv Landell Major.

Simmel's '*Stranger*' highlights that even though you are enlightened or invited into something, you may never fully be part of. He states you are in no way passive or dis-engaged, instead you may be closer to the situation than most expect.⁵³ I find that this perception very much works with how I see my parents adapt to a situation of owning a second home. They are aware and fully take on their role, they may even get hold of different information than many others on the island their second home is located on.

The statistical data that has been looked at, shows tendencies of a disturbance of accessibility to second homes in the Swedish context, mainly based on socioeconomic status but also partly based on ethnicity. However, the experience that has been told about in the interviews, show another dimension of this. There might be the correlation of economy and identity that removes some of the intensity of feeling alienated, and in the case where alienation may be experienced it is very limited to being within control of the alienated themselves. The choice to participate wholly or not is perhaps the control Derrida and Simmel are talking of.³⁹

⁵³ Simmel, "The Stranger Translated by Ramona Mosse."



IMAGE N°11 – ANALOGUE PHOTO OF VIGGO AT THEIR FAMILY'S ESTATE; AN OLD HOUSE IN NORTHERN BOHUSLÄN, SWEDISH WEST COAST 2022

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