Abstract

As a part of urban planning strategies, the Danish houses of culture (kulturhuse) are today defined with the purpose of creating a cross-disciplinary growth with political, cultural and social impacts. From this perspective, the Danish houses of culture can be seen as an urban 'acupuncture', whose effects will slowly be spread to the rest of the local community, akin to acupuncture, where needles create a relieving effect first in acupoints and later to the rest of the body. Through the prism of urban acupuncture strategy, the houses of culture enact as acupoints both as an architectural entity and as public spaces in line with the rest of the public spaces of the city. In this hybridity, the houses of culture must be in a constant development, which is initiated and carried through by the users. Also, as a part of their program, the houses must embrace this dynamic and constant variability.

The role as a dynamic indoor space is in stark contrast to the dominant character of the culture and sports facilities which were founded in the period of modernism. The beginning of the 1990's may be recognized as a turning point in the form as well as the concept behind the construction of the facilities. In today's houses of culture, the function is multiple, where different sort of activities are integrated in the same building. That per se generates a variety of different uses. In contemporary houses of culture, the individual is still in the center of the architectural composition, while the focus has now changed from the function to experiences. Instead of facilitating a function, the houses of culture are now facilitating a variety of multiple experiences. Instead of being a passive container wherein action can occur, the houses are now turned into active co-creators of individual experiences. By triggering unique and personal experiences, the houses can renew themselves in a constant and dynamic process.

In this thesis, the RFID technology is examined as a method to register the social activities that take place in the houses. To examine the usability of the RFID technology as a methodological tool to register social activities, this research is based upon the Actor-Network Theory (ANT), developed by Bruno Latour. Based on ANT, the houses of culture are defined by heterogeneous actors which together create an actor-network, wherein the technology itself is included as an actor. By defining the houses of culture, the social activities and the RFID technology as actors in the same network, the different properties of the actors will be revealed, and the advantages and disadvantages of using the RFID technology as a method will be emphasized.

Within this framework, and based on the RFID registrations, two maps are produced. The maps present two different movement patterns that show where the social activities are taking place. By presenting two different maps based on the same set of data, it illustrates how data is a

dynamic entity that can take shape in various forms. Moreover, the thesis unfolds the argument how RFID registration of activities in indoor public spaces can be seen as a part of a heterogeneous network, which has an impact on the way data can be constructed.

In the conclusion, the thesis discusses how the RFID technology can be useful as a method to examine the social activities in indoor public spaces. The discussion is framed according to the way the contemporary architecture seeks to create individual and ever-changing experiences for the users. However, a paradox is hereby unfolded between the function of the RFID technology and the purpose of the architecture. That is, while the architecture of the houses of culture has to be dynamic and changeable, the RFID technology as a method is expected to register a pattern, by which the changeable becomes unchangeable.

The thesis works within three different fields; architecture, sociology and technology. With a sociological framework for the analysis of the social activities in the houses of culture, the thesis is bridging sociology and architecture. The technological studies are included by employing a sociological theory in which the emphasis is on both technology and physical surroundings as actors in a network. Thus, the thesis has a two-folded contribution; as an architectural-sociological contribution, the thesis creates a lan-guage for how architecture can be studied in relation to its influence on the human activities inside buildings. As a technological-sociological contribution, the thesis casts light on a discussion about how technology-based data is created, rather than focus on what data shows. Furthermore, the thesis illustrates how the social activities, taking place in the buildings, are directly related to the two maps which show different movement patterns.

The sociology, architecture and technology studies are united with the Actor-Network Theory whose main purpose is to manifest how a network between heterogeneous actors emerges, and is constitutive for our everyday life and activities.