



IN BETWEEN THE NEIGHBOURS

Negotiating a Fenno-Swedish identity through type-planned houses by Bostadsföreningen för svenska Finland 1938–1969

ABSTRAKT

Bostadsföreningen för Svenska Finland arbetade för bättre boendeförhållanden bland finlandssvenskarna under medlet av 1900-talet. Samhällsklimatet efter inbördeskriget och språkstrider bidrog till politiska försök att ena finlandssvenskarna. Föreningens typritningar till egnahemshus skulle bidra till att stärka den finlandssvenska identiteten, som upplevdes vara hotad. Syftet med artikeln är att undersöka hur boendeideal användes för att konstruera en kollektiv identitet för en minoritet. Frågeställningarna berör vilka hot man ansåg att riktades mot finlandssvenskarna och hur arkitektur kunde motverka dessa. Bostadsföreningens agerande förstås genom identitetsprocessteori och perspektiv på hur arkitektur används för att konstruera nationella identiteter.

Bostadsföreningen uppfattade bostäder utformade enligt ett modernistiskt ideal, som en lösning på ett politiskt och ideologiskt problem. Om finlandssvenskarna hade moderna och effektiva hem skulle de inte vara så benägna att sälja sina gårdar till finskspråkiga och sedan flytta till städer där de assimilerades in i den finska kulturen. Mobilitet uppfattades i det här sammanhanget som ett hot eftersom den ledde till förlust av väljare i politiskt viktiga områden. En modernistisk arkitektur kombinerad med lokal folklig byggnadstradition skulle bidra till att göra den finlandssvenska landsortsbefolkningen stolt över sina släktgårdar och få dem att stanna i hembygden, bevarandes den svenska jorden för kommande generationer.

Keywords: minority research, architecture, identity process theory, nationalism, housing

The ideological interest in ordinary people and their dwellings was an important part of the Finnish housing discussion during the first half of the 20th century. Various associations promoted better housing conditions for both the urban and the rural population. One of these was *Bostadsföreningen för Svenska Finland* (the housing association for the Swedish speaking parts of Finland), active between 1938 and 1969. The aim of the association was to strengthen the Fenno-Swedish minority in the coastal areas of Finland by teaching them how to increase their standard of living. The association pro-

duced five main publications, thousands of drawings and staged yearly exhibitions. The association was mainly active in the post-civil-war years when the political need for constructing a Fenno-Swedish identity had begun to subside. However, this article argues that it is still possible to understand the association as a late reaction to the societal development and historical events, which effected the Fenno-Swedes during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

When Finland became a Russian grand duchy after the war of 1808-1809, 600 years of Swedish rule ended. Before 1809 all leading positions in Finland were held by Swedish-speakers even though the majority of the population spoke Finnish. During the nineteenth century Finnish became accepted as a governmental language, and after the Finnish independence in 1917, the Finnish language had gained the position that Swedish used to have. At the same time, statistics showed that the Fenno-Swedish minority was dwindling. The change in status of the official languages led to conflicts between pro-Finnish and pro-Swedish divisions which continued well past the independence in 1917 and into the interwar decades.¹ Due to the decline and conflicts, consolidating the Fenno-Swedish identity was seen as a crucial project for the survival of the minority. The creation of Fenno-Swedishness began as a bourgeois endeavour in the late nineteenth century and spread to include all social groups in the early twentieth century. Conflicts between Bourgeois and socialist groups as well as Finnish- and Swedish speakers during the Finnish civil war in 1918 furthered the cause, and during the 1920s, most Fenno-Swedish associations had a pro-Swedish agenda.² Their aims ranged from establishing a standardised Swedish in text and speech to improving health care, education, knowledge of the cultural heritage and dwelling.

AIM AND METHODOLOGY

This article examines how Bostadsföreningen and their norms for dwelling contributed to the creation of a common identity for the Fenno-Swedish minority. The aim is to trace how the association used modernist architecture as a means to promote a Fenno-Swedish identity, and to understand the process by examining their drawings, pamphlets and articles on dwelling through the key concepts of Identity Process Theory (IPT). The main questions concern the perceived threats against the Fenno-Swedish identity. Which were the changes or events in the Finnish society that were seen as threatening? How did they affect the minority's sense of identity? How did Bostadsföreningen

try to counteract these threats by developing architectural norms for the Fenno-Swedes? The examination, through IPT, of the societal changes which affected the Fenno-Swedes contribute to an understanding of the mechanisms behind the association's actions. At the same time, IPT in combination with the theoretical framework on nationalism and architecture explains why this seemingly obscure housing project was a relevant part of the creation of Fenno-Swedishness.

The analysis of architecture can follow several methodological paths. In this case, where the studied material consists of the association's archives, drawings and publications, an approach combining architectural- and text analysis has been useful.³ Architectural analysis provides an understanding of a building based on its design and its social context. In this case, the way the division of space in a home accommodates daily life is of interest. Since space in a building can be understood as something that produces meaning, the norms as well as changes in architectural practice can describe contemporary values connected to dwelling.⁴ Here, the ways the rooms were to be used by the family and how this use related to ideologies of dwelling, hygiene and minority policies are examined. An insight into the association's ideology is provided through their five main publications on dwelling and through articles in Fenno-Swedish newspapers from 1900 to 1970. Through close reading of the material one may pinpoint discourses on dwelling within the association as well as within collaborating organizations. The ways the Fenno-Swedish movement writes about the relation to neighbouring groups presents information on how the Fenno-Swedish identity was perceived. Here, neighbours can be interpreted as neighbouring language groups or nationalities – Finnish and Swedish, or neighbouring political groups, such as the socialist movement or Fennoman activists.

IDENTITY PROCESS THEORY

When dealing with identity research, the possible methodological alternatives are vast. In this case, borrowing key concepts and methodology from psychological research and IPT contributed to understanding the association's actions. Identity Process Theory can with social psychologist Kay Deaux' words be described as "[...] a dynamic model, concerned with the ways in which individuals define, construct and modify their identity".⁵ IPT was originally developed in social psychology to examine how individuals cope with threats to their identity. *Identity Process Theory – Identity, Social Action and Social Change*, edited by Rusi Jaspal and Glynis M. Breakwell, researchers in

psychology who both have contributed to the development of IPT, describes how IPT has developed in several directions and can now be described as a methodology for exploring how identities are created both amongst individuals and in groups and is used in the social sciences as well.⁶ At the core of IPT lies the concepts of self-esteem, self-efficacy, distinctiveness, belonging and continuity and their function as motivational factors. When a perceived threat arises, IPT examines the ways it relates to these mechanisms and how the threat triggers coping strategies. The responses may either be thoughts or actions, either personal or acted out by groups.

John Dixon, Kevin Durrheim and Andrés Di Masso's research on relations between places, identities and geopolitical change in post-apartheid South Africa provided a theoretical frame for this article.⁷ The researchers have used the key concepts of IPT to examine the conflicts over space which arose during South Africa's transition towards democracy. Their research combines IPT with the notion of political ideology and how this is reflected on identities. According to their research, events leading to environmental change; such as changes in demography, sudden changes in the built environment or migration and people's reactions to the changes; can explain how places contribute to the sense of identity. They argue that changes in the local environment can make people recognize that their environment is part of their identity.⁸ The study was based on discourse analysis of older newspaper articles and letters to the editor, that is, sources which pose similar challenges as the Bostadsföreningen material. This article compares the perceived threats against the Fenno-Swedish identity with the ways the dwelling association tried to meet them. The use of IPT is to be seen as a complement when examining the creation of a common identity for a heterogenous minority and needs to be combined with other perspectives in order to build an understanding of the role of architecture in the process.

Research on the connection between architecture and ideology has been popular during the last decades. An often-cited work on the relations between architecture, power and national identity is Lawrence J Vale's (1992) publication by the same name.⁹ Vale is a professor in urban design and planning and his work examines how power may be exercised through architecture as means of stylistic denotation. He describes how division of space and ornament can be used in order to convey a nationalistic message. An anthology on nationalism and architecture was edited by architectural historians Raymond Quek and Darren Deane in 2012.¹⁰ The authors explore the relation between architecture and national causes especially focusing on how these were manifested in buildings. The importance of vernacular architecture in the nationalistic project in Sweden is extensively described in

I hemtrefnadens tid. Allmoges, nationalromantik och konstnärligt nyskapande i arkitektur, möler och inredningar 1890–1930 (2010) by art historian Johan Knutsson.¹¹ In a Finnish context, the connection between vernacular architecture, modernism and the national project is discussed in art historian Kirsi Saarikangas' article "Wood, Forest and Nature. Architecture and the Construction of Finnishness" (1999).¹² The article shows how the functionalist architecture was used as a means for influencing the population and how the vernacular architecture became a central part of the nationalistic discourse in the post-war years.

PREVIOUS RESEARCH AND OUTLINE

Bostadsföreningen has not been much examined. The board of Bostadsföreningen published a brief summarization of the association's history shortly after it was discontinued.¹³ In academic research, the association has mainly been mentioned as one of many working with type planned housing, for instance in Kirsi Saarikangas' *Model houses for model families – Gender, Ideology and the Modern Dwelling – The Type-Planned Houses of the 1940s in Finland* (1993) and in *Asunnon muodonmuutoksia – Puhtauden estetiikka ja sukupuoli modernissa arkkitehtuurissa* (2002).¹⁴ The Museum of Finnish Architecture summarises the history of the association in their web resources on the post-war era.¹⁵ The association's modernisation of kitchens is mentioned in the article "Från storstuga till trendkök – revolutionerande evolution" (2009) by ethnologist Yrsa Lindqvist.¹⁶

Fenno-Swedishness has been examined within several academic disciplines but not from the perspective of architecture. Researchers often refer to *Gränsfolkets barn* from 2001 by the ethnologists Yrsa Lindqvist, Bo Lönnqvist and Anna-Maria Åström.¹⁷ The authors examined processes involved in the creation of the Fenno-Swedish identity. The historical and political aspects of the language question have been described by the historian Max Engman in *Språkfrågan* (2016).¹⁸ Recently, linguists have taken an interest in the establishing of the Fenno-Swedish proper in the early 20th century. In the reworked dissertation *Särdrag, stavning, självbild. En idéhistorisk studie av svensk språkplanering i Finland 1860-1920* (2015) historian Jennica Thyllin-Klaus examines the discussions behind the creation of a proper written Fenno-Swedish.¹⁹ The connection between the Fenno-Swedish cause and the different ideologies and scientific theories during the early 20th century have been examined in the anthology *Uusi uljas ihminen – eli modernin pimeä puoli* (1998) edited by Italian philologist Marja Härmänmaa and historian

Markku Mattila and in Mattila's dissertation *Kansamme Parhaaksi, Rotuhygienia Suomessa vuoden 1935 sterilointilakiin asti* (1999).²⁰

In order to explain how Bostadsföreningen took part in the creation of the Fenno-Swedish identity in the post-war years, the article begins with a presentation of the association's history. The description is followed by a summary of the societal changes faced by the Fenno-Swedish minority in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The changes are then examined from the perspective of IPT, followed by a description of how the changes and perceived threats affected the development of Bostadsföreningen's architectural norms.

BOSTADSFÖRENINGEN FÖR SVENSKA FINLAND 1938-1969

In the late 1930s, surveys of the Finnish housing situation gave a depressing insight into the cramped and primitive living conditions all over the country. Representatives for national organisations and various interest groups were horrified and acted to improve the living conditions of the rural population. Bostadsföreningen för Svenska Finland was officially founded January 15th 1939, but the first meeting was held in the autumn of 1938. The aim was to "promote the development of a dwelling culture, encourage collaborations between different agencies in the field and inspire a more rational building tradition as well as hygienical furnishings in the Swedish speaking parts of Finland."²¹

In 1940, the association's architectural bureau opened. The mission was to produce type drawings for both furniture, kitchen cabinets and houses. The office was run on a volunteering basis mainly by the architects Marianne Granberg and Eva Kuhlefelt-Ekelund. Elli Ruuth contributed part time. Granberg and Kuhlefelt-Ekelund worked mostly on drawings for type planned houses and interiors, while Ruuth designed furniture. In 1946, the association had a huge success when participating in several exhibitions. The type-planned home "modellstugan" was built and completely furnished for the agricultural exhibition in Yttermark, see Figure 1. The house was made as a model home for a Swedish speaking farmer and his family consisting of his wife and seven children. To furnish it properly, 25 more drawings for furniture were commissioned by architects Ruuth, Lisa Johansson-Pape, Maija Heikinheimo and Olof Ottelin. During the exhibition, approximately 15 000 people visited the house and heard the presentations on proper dwelling. Participating in exhibitions became one of the foremost channels for spreading the associations' agenda. Hence yearly expositions of posters, type-planned

drawings, and sometimes full-scale models of furniture and houses were conducted.²²

In the 1920s and 1930s, collaborations between Fenno-Swedish associations had developed into a tight woven network which main cause was to strengthen the minority.²³ Bostadsföreningen merged easily into the existing web and soon found two partners who became important both practically and ideologically. The Martha association for housewives and Samfundet Folkhälsan with interest in the public health of the Fenno-Swedes stood ideologically close to Bostadsföreningen in questions on home and hygiene. In the inter-war years, Folkhälsan promoted an extensive hygienic programme based on research in eugenics. They collaborated with the Martha association who spread the message of health, hygiene and heredity to Fenno-Swedish women.²⁴ The associations continued the exchange of ideas, workforce and information throughout the post-war years. The writings of Bostadsföreningen reflect the ideals Folkhälsan promoted and refer to their scientific and ideological information on dwelling hygiene. The collaboration with the Martha association built on distribution of drawings and information through the vast network of members in the association. Especially Signe Bäckström, the head consultant of the Martha association, became an important resource.

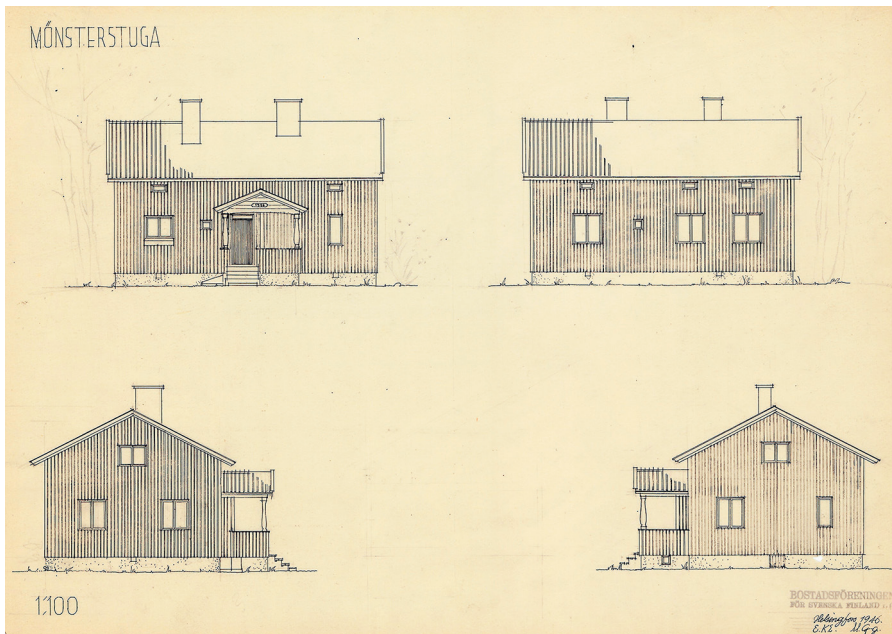


Figure 1. Of all the type-plans, Mönsterstugan had the strongest references to the ornamentation common in the local vernacular architecture. Picture: Museum of Finnish Architecture, the collection of Bostadsföreningen för Svenska Finland.

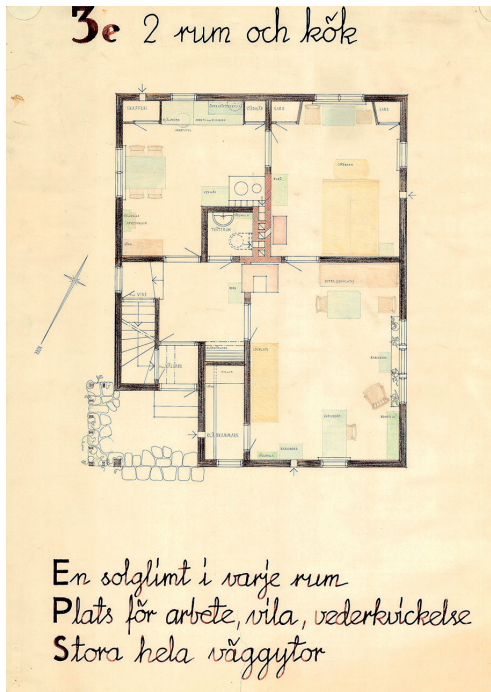


Figure 2. The exhibitions included posters which presented facades of popular type-plans, good and bad examples of furniture or as here, the description and layout of a rational small-sized home. The text says: "A ray of sun in every room, Places for work, rest and invigoration, Large, undivided walls". Picture: Museum of Finnish Architecture, the collection of Bostadsföreningen för Svenska Finland.

She volunteered to take all the posters, as pictured in figure 2, and miniature models of the buildings and kitchens with her when she lectured in the countryside.²⁵ Until she retired in 1964, she gave extensive yearly tours.²⁶

The production of drawings was the main mission of Bostadsföreningen during the 1950s. A clear interest in the latest housing trends was expressed in the annuals. In 1958 when the common opinion had begun to consider single storey houses more useful, the architects made a complete set of drawings according to the new standards. Still, they continued to provide the older drawings for 1 ½ storey houses as well as for houses with wooden heating despite the adaption of all drawings to central heating in the early 1950s. In 1947, a first set of drawings for saunas was completed and in 1965 a set of drawings for summer cabins were added to the collection. The statistics in the annual reports indicate that the interest in obtaining drawings decreased in the late 1950s. The annuals from 1959 is the last one in which the amount of sold drawings are presented, and then only 16 drawings for new buildings were sold. This can be compared to the years of 1946 and 1948 when the amounts were 170 and 172.²⁷

In 1965, the association decided to open an office of their own. Bäckström retired from the Martha-association in 1964 and became a full time representative of the association. This change in combination with an extensive campaign in the newspapers gave a momentary rise in public interest. However, just two years later, the decision to discontinue the association was taken, and Bostadsföreningen ended its work in 1969. There were several reasons for this stated in the annuals. Many of the long-time enthusiasts quit and

the housing market had changed profoundly because of the massive increase in popularity of prefabricated houses. The last task of the board was to write the association's history, which was published in 1970.

FENNO-SWEDISHNESS IN A CHANGING SOCIETY

The need for uniting all Swedish speakers in Finland under one group identity was a result of the political changes during the 19th century. The creation of a Finnish sense of nationality based on Hegelian perceptions of one language and a common culture began in the early nineteenth century. Finnish speakers gradually gained influence in all the areas of society which traditionally had been occupied by Swedish speakers. In the last decades of the century, the debate on language policies led to animosity between the language groups and it was commonly perceived amongst the Swedish speaking elite that the language and its speakers' future was threatened. In order to counteract the pro-Finnish movement, the creation of Fenno-Swedishness started in earnest in the 1860s.²⁸

The early definition of Fenno-Swedishness was made on a linguistic basis – a Fenno-Swede was identified by his native language. In the late 19th century the definition was expanded to include other traits which could be seen as typically Fenno-Swedish.²⁹ Here, dialects, vernacular culture and heredity became relevant. At first, the research focused on finding common denominators between Fenno-Swedes and a Scandinavian cultural past, but in the 1890s the focus turned towards what was perceived as the genuine cultural expression – the local vernacular culture.³⁰ A common trait in the European cultural discussion during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was the notion of degeneration. Industrialisation, changes in political power and modernity were seen as threats to the core values of the mainly bourgeois perception of culture.³¹ It was thought that a nation's true culture was found amongst the agricultural population, since they had been untouched by the perils of industrialization. The same process of re-evaluating the vernacular can be seen in the Fenno-Swedish movement as well.³²

In 1906, the Finnish political system changed when universal suffrage was introduced. The previous system had granted the Swedish speaking politicians a broad influence in the Diet of Finland. After the first general election, the number of seats occupied by Swedish speakers were drastically reduced. At the same time, the socialist party gained positions in the government. The workers' rights movement was regarded with suspicion and following the civil war in 1918 the mistrust increased because the bourgeois saw the

war as proof of the workers' instability and low morals.³³ From a bourgeois perspective, the working class lacked "home culture". Since the workforces were mobile and lived in tenement houses, they were thought to be especially susceptible to bad influences and agitation.³⁴ In the 1910s the idea of small detached houses for workers was introduced as a solution. As claimed in reports at the time – if the worker had a house of his own and a garden to tend to, he would not have neither time for nor interest in plotting revolution.³⁵ In the countryside a corresponding problem was the crofters' situation. After the Lex Kallio crofters' legislation in 1922, they could buy a lot and adjoining parcels, thus becoming independent farmers.³⁶

The bourgeois Fenno-Swedish politicians depended on the solid support of the voters in the Fenno-Swedish regions. Despite the efforts to tie the population to the countryside, migration towards the cities increased towards the middle of the 20th century. In the process, the homestead was sold, often to Finnish speaking buyers, which in time changed the language ratio in the regions.³⁷ Another political problem was that Fenno-Swedes who went to work in the cities often stopped behaving in a way that sustained the minority by starting to speak Finnish and vote for socialist parties. From the 1920s, especially women were inclined to move. Their reasons were often related to practical issues, such as primitive living conditions, overlong workdays, lack of entertainment and possibilities for education.³⁸ In combination with the idea of the vernacular culture as the home of the Fenno-Swedes, it became increasingly important to keep the farmers from moving. Since farmers often took little interest in the Swedish cause, another task for the Fenno-Swedish movement was to "awaken" the yeoman and make him take responsibility for his given position in the identity construction.³⁹

THREATS AND REACTIONS ACCORDING TO IPT

When using IPT concepts to examine opinions in texts contemporary with Bostadsföreningen, the expressed worries indicate that all aspects involved in creating and maintaining an identity were seen as threatened. The feelings of continuity and self-efficacy, the possibility to live one's life "in Swedish", were endangered if Swedish would no longer be a national language, especially since many Fenno-Swedes did not know how to speak Finnish.⁴⁰ This also affected the sense of belonging. In contemporary articles in journals and newspapers, the authors mention the sense of not being wanted as a part of the Finnish society. What were seen as constant attacks against the Fenno-Swedish language and tradition affected esteem and distinctiveness as well.

The possibility to feel pride in belonging to the language group was diminished and "the Fenno-Swedish way of living" was regarded with suspicion or even hostility by some of the pro-Finnish groups.⁴¹

The perceived threats came from groups that were geographically close to the Fenno-Swedes, since the Swedish speaking areas were located between areas with a Finnish speaking majority. The language ratio in the Swedish regions changed due to migration or industrialisation, which diminished the areas with a Fenno-Swedish majority.⁴² Research by Anna-Maria Åström on the reactions to Finnish migration towards three towns with Swedish speaking majority shows that migration usually lead to a change in both topography and hierarchy.⁴³ According to Dixon, Durrheim and Di Masso, these kind of changes in the local environment can be interpreted as a threat against the place identity.⁴⁴

The changes that affected the Fenno-Swedish areas spurred different kinds of resistance, as understood according to Dixon, Durrheim and Di Masso. They argue that the reactions towards change in a familiar environment could be interpreted as resistance instead of coping, which IPT-research usually would claim. Coping suggests that a person tries to accept a trauma that has already happened, while resistance is a way to resist trauma by affecting the outcome of the situation, for instance through political actions.⁴⁵ The creation of a Fenno-Swedish identity has traits which can be interpreted as resistance. It can be argued that the most visible strategies originated on a political level and were projected on the Fenno-Swedes in general, such as the founding of associations and cultural awareness. Another strategy was to create practical prerequisites for the Fenno-Swedes to feel renewed pride in their home, their region and their identity while resisting the effects of migration.

DEVELOPING AN IDEAL ARCHITECTURE

When the drawings and texts by Bostadsföreningen are analysed, it is possible to interpret their design and content as based on the earlier ideological conceptions on Fenno-Swedishness. The association implemented what was known of the Fenno-Swedish culture in their ideal housing solutions. In the late 1930s there had been several attempts by the government to produce affordable type planned drawings for small houses. The builders in the Swedish speaking areas could have used the same drawings if they understood the Finnish instructions, but according to the association, the Swedish speaking families also needed homes which were planned accordingly to the local dwelling traditions.⁴⁶

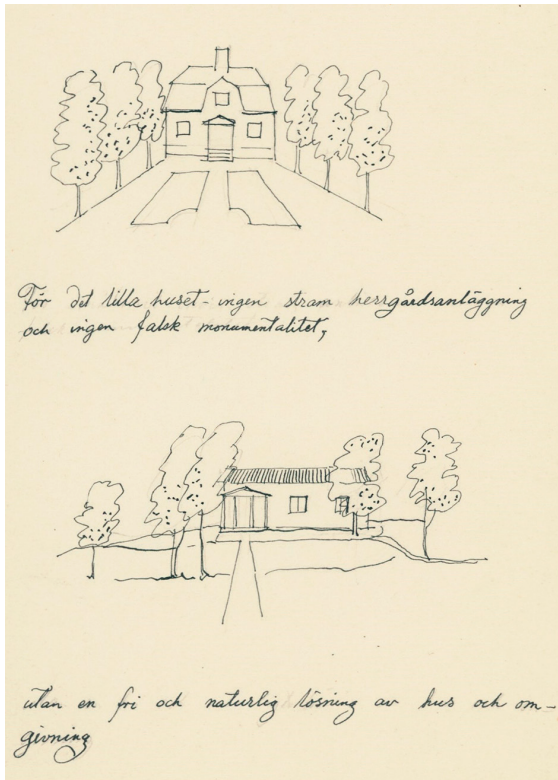


Figure 3. The contrasting examples were reproduced both during presentations and in publications. This one stresses the importance of giving a small house and its surroundings a modernistic style with no "false monumentality", as in the first example. Picture: Museum of Finnish Architecture, the collection of Bostadsföreningen för Svenska Finland.

The core of the Bostadsföreningen ideology can be found in their device "unity, work, rest".⁴⁷ These values were expressed in their architecture as well. The exterior should reflect the mod-

ern Fenno-Swedish farmer by combining modernist values and local vernacular tradition. Great importance was given to the right placing of a new house in its surroundings. In educational pictures, as showed in figure 3, good and bad examples were contrasted. The bad examples show that the association abhorred the Jugend villa-style architecture which had been popular in the early 20th century. Instead, low, preferably single-storey houses placed in harmony with its surroundings were the best solution. The architecture followed the modernist wooden house-trend developing in Finland at the time with horizontal panelling, lack of ornamentation and windows placed where they corresponded with a need in the interior.⁴⁸ However, the entrance to the home might have some ornamentation, often in the form of a portico which stylistically referred to the local vernacular tradition.⁴⁹ The exterior would thus blend in with the local traditional architecture, as well as relate to the modernist discourse on progression.

Unity was a central concept in the pro-Swedish ideology. "Svensk samling" or Swedish unity was an often-used devise when rallying the minority. Bostadsföreningen promoted unity by making a large family room the core of their buildings. The family room or "storstugan" had its roots in the ver-

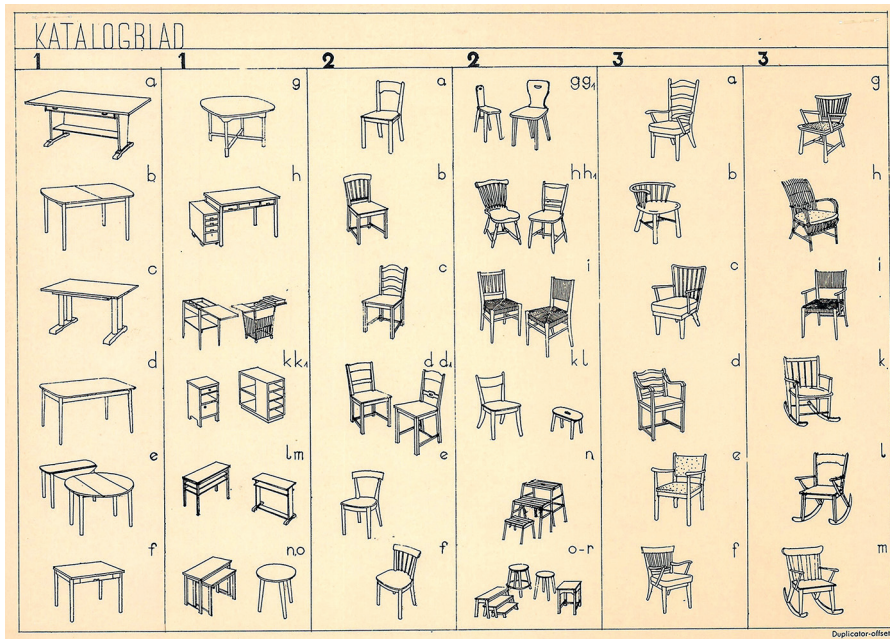


Figure 4. The references to the vernacular tradition were even more visible in the drawings for furniture by Bostadsföreningen. Picture: Museum of Finnish Architecture, the collection of Bostadsföreningen för Svenska Finland.

naular architecture in Sweden and Finland. Traditionally, this was the room for every-day tasks, as well as cooking and sleeping. In the late nineteenth century idealization of the vernacular culture, this room had become a symbol of positive family values, even though from a later modernist perspective, it was seen as unhygienic and irrational.⁵⁰ Despite being modernists, the Bostadsföreningen architects wanted to integrate the kitchen and thus the woman's work in daily life, not excluding her to a separate kitchen as commonly done.⁵¹ Since the mother was seen as the carrier of the Fenno-Swedish culture, it was logical to place her in the centre of the home. This view, based on the 19th century bourgeois family ideal, permeated the discussion on the Fenno-Swedish identity. As Bo Lönnqvist has shown, this relation had already been established at the turn of the century.⁵² The family should be able to talk while the mother was cooking, the father at the table after a day in the fields and the children playing in their corner.⁵³ By giving everyone a place of their own as a part of a greater unit, the love of the home region and thus identity would be fostered.

The concept of work was usually defined as the woman's chores in a home.⁵⁴ Since it was important to keep the Swedish speaking women from moving to the cities, the harsh working conditions in the small homesteads

had to be made bearable. Therefore, the association promoted running water, plumbing and rational surroundings.⁵⁵ Modern kitchens, light furniture as depicted in figure 4, proper fittings for cleaning and hygiene as well as storage were needed. The interest in rational kitchens awoke in Finland in the early 1920s. Female architects returned from abroad with ideas from the Frankfurter küche and from the Swedish work on standardized cabinetry. The Martha association soon took interest in the development and in 1929, Elli Ruuth designed model kitchens for local exhibitions based on international ideas.⁵⁶ These were brought to Bostadsföreningen when the collaboration with Signe Bäckström and Ruuth began. One of the important furnishings introduced in the drawings was a drying cupboard for dishes, based on the Frankfurter küche design and developed into an open drying rack fastened on the wall above the sink, see figure 5. The rack had slots for plates and pegs for placing cups and glasses.

From the early 1920's, Folkhälsan promoted improving the general health amongst the Fenno-Swedes as a strategy for maintaining the minority's position. The association conducted research in heredity and stressed positive eugenics. One of their messages based on the research was that "there could

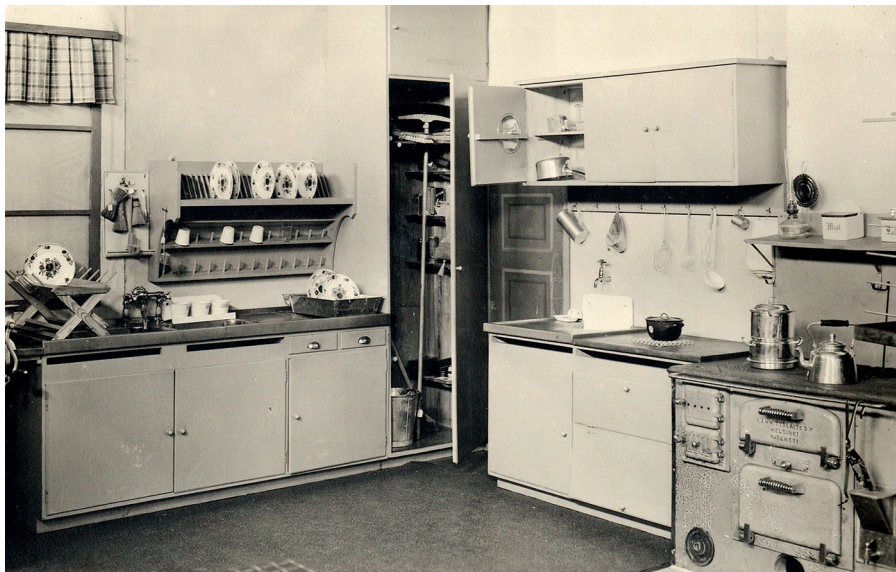


Figure 5. The model kitchen in "Åbolands Marthastuga" from 1929 was exhibited all around the Åboland archipelago by the Martha association. All furnishings including a 300 kg iron stove, porcelain and cleaning supplies were transported by boat from island to island. The picture shows the drying rack which was later promoted by Bostadsföreningen. Picture: Åbo Akademis bibliotek, Handskriftssamlingarna, Åbo Svenska Marthaförening archives.

be no inferior Fenno-Swedes” if the group was to survive.⁵⁷ This resulted in a focus on cleanliness and personal hygiene as well as in Folkhälsan encouraging Fenno-Swedes with ”good” genetics and behaviour to procreate. In order to make the Fenno-Swedish group expand, each ”good” woman should have at least four children.⁵⁸

These ideals were implemented by Bostadsföreningen as well. All of the association’s houses accommodate at least four children, often more. The layout makes it possible to separate the parents’ sleeping quarters from the older children’s and further to separate children of different sexes.⁵⁹ For personal hygiene, all homes have a small washroom. At the time, it was important that beds should not be placed along outer walls. In their writings, the association claimed that in the traditional Fenno-Swedish way of furnishing rural homes, the beds were always placed along the shorter inner walls in order to avoid draft and diseases following in its wake.⁶⁰ They also referred to contemporary research on the relation between the size of the home and the inhabitants’ mental health. Therefore, the house had to be large enough to properly accommodate all family members, and to make it possible to find a quiet place if someone wanted to be alone.⁶¹ It was widely thought that cramped workers’ housing led the workers out of their homes to search for peace of mind, thus encouraging them to vice. By making the home a safe haven, the as-

sociation aimed to make people thrive within their family unit instead.⁶²

However, there seems to have been a difference in the perceived urgency of the Fenno-Swedish cause. It occurs when one compares the efforts of Bostadsföreningen and the accounts of reception from the general public. Despite the promotion of houses designed with focus on the family’s own needs and the

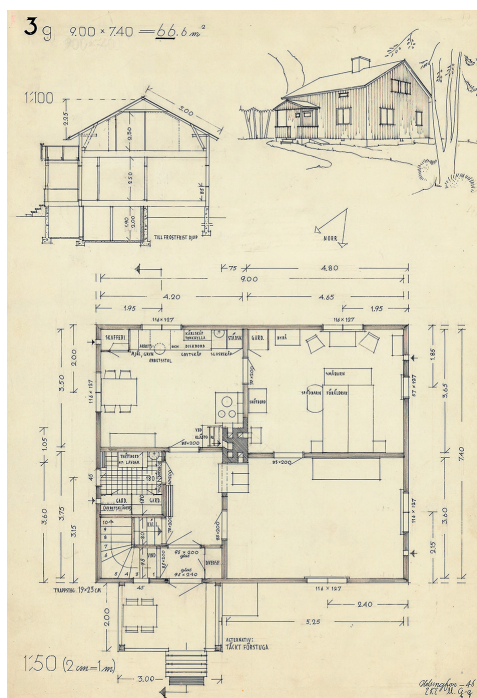


Figure 6. The most popular of the drawings, type 3 g, had a more traditional layout and the largest parlour of all. Picture: Museum of Finnish Architecture, the collection of Bostadsföreningen för Svenska Finland.

ideological importance of the everyday room, the buyers of drawings behaved differently. The single most popular model was the type 3g as shown in figure 6.⁶³ This type offered the largest parlour and a less prominent family room. The public was interested in having a spare room to be used only on special occasions, thus reproducing the wrong kind of bourgeois ambitions according to the modernist ideals.

CONCLUSIONS

The Bostadsföreningen case underlines the importance of the "Swedish soil" in the Fenno-Swedish identity construction. The "nation within the nation" was, in the late 1930s, an ideological construct with an established history of its own. During the first half of the twentieth century, changes in political power, language conflicts, migration and loss of geographical areas of importance to the Fenno-Swedes affected the minority's sense of identity. Many Fenno-Swedes reacted to what was perceived as a threat towards the place called home, the "Swedish soil" or home region. The reaction towards the change took the form of resistance, in IPT terms. A very concrete solution was, firstly, developing an efficient architecture which would make life in the countryside easier and, secondly, educating the rural Fenno-Swedes on how to improve their living conditions. Bostadsföreningen developed new living norms with the aim to give all Fenno-Swedes similar experiences of home, so that the heterogenous group would be able to find common ground. Still, the promoted common identity was more of a political ideology than a gradually developed sense of likeness amongst the Fenno-Swedes.

In the case of Bostadsföreningen, developing a Fenno-Swedish architecture was a part of a greater political goal – awakening a sense of nationality amongst the minority in order to safeguard the groups' positions in relation to the majority of Finnish speakers. Architecture was used as one of many means to convey what was seen as Fenno-Swedishness. This differs from the role of type-planned housing in both Sweden and the Finnish parts of Finland. In Sweden, type-planning had a clear connection to the political social democracy and the creation of the "folkhem" aimed at the middle classes as well as at workers. The Finnish type-planning, especially after the Second World War, was a way of providing housing quickly for the hundreds of thousands of people who had lost their homes in the war. The Fenno-Swedish type-planned houses were more of a bourgeois political endeavour.

Bostadsföreningen merged two main principles for giving architecture importance in a national project. On the one hand, the association promoted

modernist architecture, on the other hand they wanted to preserve and develop the local vernacular culture. After the independence and civil war, there was a need for handling the troublesome past by looking towards the future. Modernism therefore replaced national romanticism as the national architectural style in the early 1930s. This was a common solution when creating national architecture for new-born nations with troubled pasts. Cutting the ties to the past and fully embracing modernist architecture provided a clean slate in the form of an architecture without a past which became a symbol for looking towards the future. Bostadsföreningen promoted a Fenno-Swedish identity based on rationality, modernity and efficiency according to the teachings of Folkhälsan. At the same time, it was essential for the Fenno-Swedish movement to show that the Swedish speakers had existed in Finland for a long time and thus belonged there as much as the Finnish speakers. By using traits from the local vernacular architecture, as traditional colouring and ornamental details around the entry and a traditional division of space, the Bostadsföreningen houses were connected to the past.

By identifying the most common threats and counteracting them with practical solutions, Bostadsföreningen wanted to contribute to the Fenno-Swedish cause, resisting the changes in the local environment. The result was a moderated version of modernist architectural ideals: rational and efficient, but at the same time traditional in a sense that would create unity within the own group. In modern terms, they created a vernacular architecture version 2.0. in which the wellbeing and unity of the family was highlighted. In providing means for a better life in the countryside, Bostadsföreningen wanted to unite the families and make them cherish their role as bearers of the Swedish tradition, thriving in between their neighbours.

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NOTES

- ¹ The census in 1880 was the first time when Finnish- and Swedish speakers were separated in the statistics. The amount of Swedish speakers was 14 %. Page 16, Lönnqvist, Bo 2001, *Gränsfolkets barn – Finlandssvensk marginalitet och självhävdelse I kulturanalytiskt perspektiv*, Skrifter utgivna av svenska lit-

- teratursällskapet i Finland nr 633, Helsingfors. In the year 1900 the percentage was 12.9 %, in 1930 10 % and in 1950 8,6 %. Official Statistics of Finland (OSF): Population structure [e-publication]. ISSN=1797-5395. annual review 2016, Appendix figure 1. Swedish-speakers' and foreign-language speakers proportion of the population in 1900–2016 . Helsinki: Statistics Finland [referred: 14.8.2018]. Access method: http://www.stat.fi/til/vaerak/2016/01/vaerak_2016_01_2017-09-22_kuv_001_en.html
- 2 In the years after the civil war, many articles on housing and the language question in Fenno-Swedish newspapers expressed that there was a sense of being betrayed both by the Finnish speakers and by the socialist movement, since the socialist "reds" who often were from a working class and Finnish-speaking background collaborated with the Russian troops and thus counteracted the struggle for independence. See for instance page 505-506, Sommerschild, Finn E. (ed) 1940 *Den Svenska folkstammen I Finland*, Helsingfors.
 - 3 The type-planned drawings are stored at the Finnish museum of Architecture in the collections of Bostadsföreningen för Svenska Finland and of architect Eva Kuhlefeldt-Ekelund. The drawings consist of five main types, numbers 2, 3, V.3, V.4 and V.5 with up to twenty subtypes each. All the main types and their most common variations were examined, as well as the posters with drawings and instructional images produced for the exhibitions.
 - 4 Saarikangas Kirsi 1993. *Model houses for model families – Gender, Ideology and the Modern Dwelling. The Type-Planned Houses of the 1940s in Finland*. Societas Historica Fennica. Studia Historica 45. Helsinki and Saarikangas Kirsi 2002. *Asunnon muodonmuutoksia – Puhtauden estetiikka ja sukupuoli modernissa arkkitehtuurissa*. SKS. Helsinki. pp. 41–44.
 - 5 Deaux Kay 2014. Foreword. *Identity process theory. Identity, Social Action and Social Change*. ed. Rusi Jaspal and Glynis M. Breakwell. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge. pp. xviii.
 - 6 See Jaspal and Breakwell 2014. pp. xviii–37.
 - 7 Dixon John, Durrheim Kevin & Di Masso Andrés 2014. Places, identities and geopolitical change. Exploring the strengths and limits of Identity Process Theory. *Identity process theory. Identity, Social Action and Social Change*. ed. Rusi Jaspal & Glynis M. Breakwell. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge. pp. 270–294.
 - 8 Dixon, Durrheim & Di Masso 2014. pp. 286.
 - 9 Vale Lawrence J. 2008. *Architecture, Power and National Identity*. 2nd Edition. Routledge. New York. Here, the 2008 second edition has been used.
 - 10 Quek Raymond and Darren Deane (ed) 2016. *Nationalism and architecture*. Routledge. New York.
 - 11 Knutsson Johan 2010. *I hemtrefnadens tid. Allmoge, nationalromantik och konstnärligt nyskapande i arkitektur, möbler och inredningar 1890–1930*. Nordiska museets förlag. Stockholm.
 - 12 Saarikangas Kirsi 1999. Wood, Forest and Nature. Architecture and the Construction of Finnishness. *Europe's Northern Frontier. Perspectives on Finland's Western Identity*. Lehtonen Tuomas (ed). PS-Kustannus, Jyväskylä.

- 13 *Bättre bostäder på landsbygden. Landsbygdens bostadsdagar 1940.* Bostadsföreningen för Svenska Finland. Helsingfors.
- 14 Saarikangas Kirsi 1993. *Model houses for model families – Gender, Ideology and the Modern Dwelling. The Type-Planned Houses of the 1940s in Finland.* Societas Historica Fennica. Studia Historica 45. Helsinki and Saarikangas Kirsi 2002. *Asumnon muodonmuutoksia – Puhtauden estetiikka ja sukupuoli modernissa arkkitehtuurissa.* SKS. Helsinki.
- 15 Finnish Museum of Architecture, web resources, Jälleenrakennuskausi, <http://www.mfa.fi/bostadsforeningen>, retrieved 9.8.2016.
- 16 Lindqvist Yrsa 2009. Frånorststuga till trendkök – revolutionerande evolution. *Källan* 1/2009. SLS. Helsinki. pp. 33–37.
- 17 Åström Anna-Maria, Lönnqvist Bo, Lindqvist Yrsa 2001. *Gränsfolkets barn – Finlandssvensk marginalitet och självhävdelse i kulturanalytiskt perspektiv.* Skrifter utgivna av svenska litteratursällskapet i Finland nr 633. Helsingfors.
- 18 Engman Max 2016. *Språkfrågan - Finlandssvenskhetens uppkomst 1812–1922.* Finlands Svenska historia del 3. Svenska litteratursällskapet. Helsingfors.
- 19 Thylin-Klaus Jennica 2015. *Särdrag, stävning, självbild. En idéhistorisk studie av svensk språkplanering i Finland 1860-1920.* Skrifter utgivna av Svenska litteratursällskapet i Finland nr 793. Svenska litteratursällskapet. Helsingfors.
- 20 Härmänmaa Marja & Mattila Markku 1998. *Uusi uljas ihminen – eli modernin pimeä puoli.* Atena Kustannus oy. Jyväskylä.
- 21 Årsberättelse 1943. Bostadsföreningen för svenska finland r.f. Finlands Arkitekturmuseum, samling Eva Kuhlefelt-Ekelund.
- 22 Årsberättelse 1946. pp. 5-9, Bostadsföreningen för svenska finland r.f. Finlands Arkitekturmuseum, samling Eva Kuhlefelt-Ekelund.
- 23 See Engman 2016. pp. 209–219.
- 24 Mattila 1999. pp. 215–219. The role of eugenics and the fear of degeneration in the Fenno-Swedish movement was of great importance in the early twentieth century. However, since the topic would demand a lengthy description in order to fully explain the complicated web of ideas and collaborations, this article only mentions it briefly. For more information, see Mattila 1999.
- 25 Årsberättelse 1946. pp. 7. Bostadsföreningen för svenska finland r.f. Finlands Arkitekturmuseum, samling Eva Kuhlefelt-Ekelund.
- 26 To present the scope of her work, the year of 1946 is an example of how productive she could be. During the year, she gave 203 speeches, of which 101 were on home improvement and dwelling, for a total audience of approximately 7500 people. Årsberättelse för finlands svenska marthaförbund 1946. pp 7, Årsberättelse 1946. pp. 15. Bostadsföreningen för svenska finland r.f. Finlands Arkitekturmuseum, samling Eva Kuhlefelt-Ekelund.
- 27 The statistical information between 1946 and 1960 is not complete, the 1954 and 1957 annuals do not contain statistics on sold drawings.
- 28 Lönnqvist 2001. ”Retoriken i den etniska mobiliseringen”, Åström Anna-Maria, Lönnqvist Bo, Lindqvist Yrsa 2001. *Gränsfolkets barn – Finlandssvensk marginalitet och självhävdelse i kulturanalytiskt perspektiv.* Skrifter utgivna av svenska litteratursällskapet i Finland nr 633. Helsingfors. pp. 16–25.

- 29 Thylin-Klaus 2015. pp. 18–19.
- 30 Thylin-Klaus 2015. pp. 19–20 and Åström, A-M, Lönnqvist, B, Lindqvist, Y 2001. pp. 18.
- 31 Härmänmaa, M & Mattila, M 1998. pp. 6–7.
- 32 See Thylin-Klaus 2015. pp. 20, Åström, A-M, Lönnqvist, B, Lindqvist, Y 2001. pp. 18, Knutsson 2010. pp. 9–10.
- 33 Engman 2016. pp. 344.
- 34 Saarikangas 1993. pp. 67–69.
- 35 Saarikangas 1993. pp. 70–72. These thoughts were often expressed in the journal *Arkitekten* during the first half of the 1920's, for instance in nr 2. 1921. pp. 9 and in nr 6 1925. pp. 71.
- 36 <http://itsenaisyys100.fi/asutuslait-taydensivat-torpparivapautusta-ja-olivattarkea-osa-nuoren-tasavallan-maaseutuun-nojannutta-yhteiskuntapolitiikka/>, retrieved 4.8.2016.
- 37 See for instance Engman 2016. pp. 291 and Åström, A-M, Lönnqvist, B, Lindqvist, Y 2001, pp. 31–34.
- 38 See for instance *Åbo Underrättelser*. 4.1 1948
- 39 Åström, A-M, Lönnqvist, B, Lindqvist, Y 2001. pp. 31.
- 40 Engström 2016. pp. 212, 216–217.
- 41 Engström 2016, pp. 322–325, and as example of an article in which the perceived threats are clearly described, see "Vår rot är I jorden" in *Borgåbladet* 30.4 1938.
- 42 Engström 2016. pp. 216–217.
- 43 Åström 2001. pp. 106-107 and 137–141.
- 44 Dixon J, Durrheim, K, & Di Masso, A 2014. pp. 279–280.
- 45 Dixon J, Durrheim, K, & Di Masso, A 2014. pp. 281.
- 46 The importance of respecting local architectural- and dwelling traditions were stated in the greater part of the association's annuals and in many of the articles on proper dwelling published in Fenno-Swedish newspapers. For instance, see annuals 1944–1948.
- 47 The devise of Bostadsföreningen "Samling, arbete, vila" was often used as outline in their articles on dwelling, see for instance *Samarbete* 18.12 1941 and *Lantman och andelsfolk* augusti 1945.
- 48 Saarikangas, K 1999. pp. 194–196.
- 49 The drawing for the "Model house" from 1946 is the most prominent example of the usage of vernacular ornament, but they can be found in the drawings of the type 2 and 3 as well.
- 50 Saarikangas, K 1993. pp. 157–159.
- 51 See for instance Stigell, A-L, "Bostadsplan och boendevanor" *Samarbete* 13.7 1942.
- 52 Åström, A-M, Lönnqvist, B, Lindqvist, Y 2001. pp. 34.

- 53 "Vem vill bygga bra hus billigt?" *Vasabladet* 30.3. 1953 and "Vi är hemma" *Västra Nyland* 29.12 1951
- 54 When the association discussed what was considered work in a home, it is only the chores typically taken care of by women which are mentioned. One example is the article "Bygga och bo på landet" by Anna-Lisa Stigell, where cooking, cleaning, mending and textile crafts are considered the most common work in a home. *Lantman och andelsfolk* augusti 1945.
- 55 One of the earliest texts by Bostadsföreningen on the design of a proper dwelling is found in *Bättre bostäder på landsbygden*. Here, Hilding Ekelund, husband of Eva Kuhlefeldt-Ekelund summarises the associations housing ideology. *Bättre bostäder på landsbygden*, Landsbygdens bostadsdagar 1940, Bostadsföreningen för Svenska Finland, Helsingfors pp. 82–93.
- 56 Drawings for the Martha association's model kitchens were designed by Elli Ruuth, and spread through the association. During yearly exhibitions and tours in the Fenno-Swedish regions, the designs were made known to the local population. *Finlands Svenska marthaförbund, Årsberättelse 1929*. pp. 12.
- 57 The claim was for instance widely spread in the "Vår hustavla" poster, printed in the 1920s, which contained an explicitly eugenic message to the Fenno-Swedes. Copies of the poster can be found for instance in the archives of *Finlands Svenska marthaförbund*, the National archives of Finland.
- 58 In a Finnish context the same questions were debated, here the number of children each good Finnish woman should strive to have was six in order to make the Finnish population grow.
- 59 Ekelund, H, 1940, "Bostadens placering I terrängen och dess planläggning", *Bättre bostäder på landsbygden*, Landsbygdens bostadsdagar 1940. Bostadsföreningen för Svenska Finland, Helsingfors. pp. 89.
- 60 "Synpunkter på lanthemsplaneringen" by Marianne Granberg. *Husmodern* November 1948.
- 61 See for instance the article "Bostadens betydelse för den själsliga hälsan" by the psychologist Kristiina Wickström in *Bättre bostäder på landsbygden*. pp.43-48.
- 62 Wickström, K 1940. "Bostadens betydelse för den själsliga hälsan". *Bättre bostäder på landsbygden*, Landsbygdens bostadsdagar 1940. Bostadsföreningen för Svenska Finland, Helsingfors. pp. 43–47.
- 63 Bostadsföreningen för Svenska Finland, *Annuals 1948*. pp 6.

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