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Illustration on the front cover: Rosenhøj, Aarhus, Denmark. Photo: Jens Lindhe, Denmark

BRIDGING SOCIAL GAPS: TRANSFORMING DISADVANTAGED AREAS BY LINKING THEM TO THE CITY

MARIE STENDER AND CLAUS BECH-DANIELSEN

Abstract

Several Danish disadvantaged housing areas are currently subject to more thorough physical transformations and refurbishments. The efforts take place at an urban-strategic level, aiming to overcome the isolated character of the housing estates and to link them to neighbouring housing areas. The overall objective of the transformations and refurbishments is thus to overcome the physical isolation in order to break down the social isolation which often characterize the areas. In this paper the social impact of such thorough physical transformations and refurbishments are analysed and discussed based on case studies in three Danish social housing areas: Gyldenrisparken, Finlandsparken and Mjølnerparken/Superkilen. The analysis shows that especially every-day-route strategies adding new public functions within the area can pave the way for integration with the surroundings. The applicability of such strategies is however highly dependent on context, location and existing image. Social distance may sustain though physical borders are removed, yet, the negative image of the areas can in itself call for attempts to open up and attract new users and residents.

Introduction

In an affluent residential suburb to Ålborg, a large provincial town in the Northern part of Denmark, the average life expectancy equals that of Sweden (Swedes live longer than Danes), whereas the inhabitants in its neighbouring, disadvantaged area 5 kilometres away, can expect to live no longer than people in Ghana. This appeared from a recent TV-series from the Danish Broadcasting Corporation focussing on social inequality related to where one lives. Despite its egalitarian welfare system, Denmark is today witnessing increasing segregation (Ministeriet for By, Bolig og Landdistrikter, 2014) and in the public discourse there is a rising awareness of the concentration of social problems in particular disadvantaged areas. In 2010 the Danish Government launched the so-called "ghetto-list", defining ghettos[1] as housing areas characterised by 1) a large share of immigrants from non-Western countries, 2) a high number of residents convicted for violation of the Penal Code and 3) a high level of unemployment among the residents. In 2013 another two criteria were added focussing on respectively 4) a low average income and 5) a low level of education among the residents. A majority of the listed areas are suburban social housing estates built in the 1960s–1980s consisting of relatively monotonous and monofunctional multi-storey residential blocks, and a separation of traffic, rendering the areas enclaves in the suburban fabric (Bech-Danielsen, 2013; Kvorning, 2013). Due to increasing functional, social and spatial segregation, the disadvantaged areas are also surrounded by other enclaves having a uniform social composition. In Hajer and Reijndorp's words "Society has become an archipelago of enclaves, and people from different backgrounds have developed ever more effective spatial strategies to meet the people they want to meet, and to avoid the people they want to avoid" (Hajer and Reijndorp, 2001). A key challenge for contemporary urban policy and design is thus to link and connect various enclaves and create spaces of exchange between different social groups.

This challenge is most urgent in disadvantaged areas, and recent studies suggest that the enclave-like, monotonous and monofunctional built environments here reinforce vicious spirals, where more and more of the socioeconomically advantaged inhabitants move away and social problems are concentrated in an increasingly deprived area with a gradually worse reputation (Andersen, 2002; Bjørn, 2008). A pivotal question is therefore, whether and how social transformation and social exchange can be initiated by way of refurbishing the built environment. Refurbishment projects in Denmark have long sought to upgrade buildings and outdoor space in combination with various social initiatives, but evaluations so far show limited social improvements (Christensen, 2013). Residents may be more satisfied with their surroundings, but the negative reputation and the concentration of social problems are not easily changed. The trend among Danish municipalities, housing associations, consultants and other stakeholders is moving towards more thorough

1 The notion "ghetto" originates from the 16th century Venice, where the Jews were forced to live on Ghetto Nouvo – an island only accessed by two bridges, which were locked at nighttime. The Christians needed the Jews but kept them under strict control. Later, the concept has been associated with the ethnic enclaves of American Cities: Chinatowns, Little Sicilies and the black ghettos (Wirth, 1928), but then returned to Europe where it has over the last couple of decades been increasingly used to describe European disadvantaged areas characterised by low income and various groups of immigrants. Several researchers have criticized this conceptual slide (see e.g. Wacquant). Even though it is imprecise as an analytical category in a Danish context, the ghetto has here transformed from a social scientific concept into common language in both politics and popular culture, and in this article, we therefore use it as an empirical rather than a theoretical concept.

physical transformations such as demolishing buildings, establishing new penthouse flats, or new infrastructure and public functions and activities within the areas. The aim is to integrate the areas better with the surroundings and possibly attract new users and residents in order to create a social mix.[2]

In this paper the social impact of such thorough physical transformations is analysed and discussed based on case-studies in three Danish areas that have recently been refurbished. The objective is to analyse how the areas are used and perceived today and thereby to contribute to a better understanding of how physical transformation influence disadvantaged residential areas and their integration with the surroundings. The research undertaken is part of a larger project "Processes of change in disadvantaged areas". Apart from 6 Danish areas, case-studies were also conducted in Gårdsten (Göteborg), La Duchère (Lyon), Ballymun (Dublin), Sant Roc (Barcelona), Park Hill (Sheffield), Kolenkit (Amsterdam), Leinefelde Südstadt (Leinefelde-Worbis) and East Plaza (San Francisco). In all cases relevant actors were interviewed, and documents, plans and evaluations were studied. The overall conclusions have been published in a book (Bech-Danielsen and Stender, 2017), whereas this paper confines itself to the three Danish cases, in which further empirical research was done.

The objective of the empirical research was to analyse:
1. The background and aim of the regeneration, what physical transformations were initiated and how they interplayed with social initiatives
2. The effect on the area's social life, its integration with the surroundings and its reputation seen both from the inside and the outside

In this paper we focus mainly on the question of integration with the surroundings and social exchange between different social groups. We will in the following present a theoretical framework for approaching the current efforts to develop social life through physical transformation, and we will briefly account for the methodological approach applied in the research. Subsequently we will describe the three case areas and their renewal and outline the most important empirical findings. This is followed by an analysis and a discussion of the impact of attempts to link areas with the surroundings and thereby build a better reputation. Eventually, the notion of disadvantaged areas as particularly isolated is questioned, and related to processes of gentrification and marginalization, before the concluding remarks.

2   In 2018 a new ghetto-plan was carried by the majority of the Danish Parliament, taking far-reaching steps to establish social mix in those areas that have been on the list for several years in a row. The total share of social housing units for families (almene familieboliger) in the concerned housing areas has to be reduced to 40% before 2030.

Historical background and theoretical framework

As in many other western countries, most disadvantaged housing areas in Denmark are located in suburbs to major cities, and usually they are large scale constructions built in the 1960s and 1970s (Programbestyrelsen, 2005; Programbestyrelsen, 2008). Back then, the housing blocks were seen as a sign of growing wealth and as a part of the realization of the Danish welfare society (Bech-Danielsen, 2004): Housing shortages were to be abolished, and with the industrialization of construction, it became possible to carry out a mass production of housing. 200.000 social housing units were built in Denmark in the period 1960–1979, and today these dwellings account for more than 1/3 of all social housing in Denmark (Bech-Danielsen and Christensen, 2017).

For the many families who moved from the dark and unhealthy back yards of the inner cities to the housing blocks in the suburbs, it was a significant improvement in their quality of life. However, the residential areas shortly after experienced a deroute, and the criticism soon rained down on the areas. In the early 1960s, the American writer and town critic Jane Jacobs (1961) had already criticized the modernist planning concept, which in her eyes resulted in a poor social life in urban areas. Soon after this, postmodernism pervaded architecture and urban planning, and the post-war housing areas in the suburbs became the subject of a similar criticism. The pioneering postmodernist Robert Venturi (1966), criticized post war housing architecture for its simplifying way of thinking. Rephrasing Mies van der Rohe's "less is more" to "less is a bore" (ibid.), he criticized the rational building designs of the post-war era, and he claimed that mass-produced architecture had become boring and monotonous. Also the Norwegian researcher and architect, Christian Norberg-Schulz, inspired by phenomenology, criticized the post-war housing areas. In particular, Norberg-Schulz criticized the "loss of place" which he accused post-war planning and architecture concept to be responsible for (Norberg-Schulz, 1965). He argued that all places ended up looking more or less the same; architecture was losing its "sense of place" which according to Norberg-Schulz is vital to the formation of human identity ((Norberg-Schulz, 1979).

Already at the end of the 1970s, extensive technical problems were experienced in most of the housing blocks of the period, and at the same time social problems appeared in many of the larger settlements of the period (Bech-Danielsen and Christensen, 2017). Therefore, several renewals and refurbishments were initiated in the residential areas. Almost all Danish social housing developments from 1960–1979 have been refurbished several times during the last 30 years and shifting strategies have been applied (Bech-Danielsen, Kirkeby and Ginnerup, 2014). During the first two decades, the focus was primarily on renewal of the facades and on the individual buildings. In the 1980s and the 1990s a strategy was developed aiming to conceal the grey concrete behind a colourful

facade covering, and in the 2000s more solid and more traditional build-ing materials were used in the refurbishments (Bech-Danielsen and Christensen, 2017). In both cases, the objective was to create improve-ments within the housing area. In the last decade, this strategy has been supplemented with efforts on a larger, urban scale (Bech-Danielsen and Stender, 2017). This means that urban strategic tools have been brought into play, and thus the focus is not solely on the housing area; the refur-bishments seek to link the housing area to the surrounding neighbour-hoods and to create a social mix in the area (ibid.). The overall goal is thus to reduce the spatial concentration of socially disadvantaged residents. However, there are varying opinions as to whether the spatial concen-tration of certain social groups in itself contributes to aggravating the residents' life situation. In relation to this question, researchers have focused on the concept of neighbourhood effect (Friedrichs, Galster & Musterd, 2006; Hedman, 2011). The American sociologist William Julius Wilson launched this concept, arguing that living in a very poor area affected the individual's opportunities in terms of education, income, crime and drug abuse (Wilson, 1987). Several researchers have subse-quently conducted quantitative studies of the effect of strategies aim-ing at establishing social mix, eg. through the establishment of mixed ownership, and many only find a limited effect (Ostendorf, Musterd & de Vos, 2001; Manley, van Ham & Doherty, 2011). In Holland and the UK the establishment of mixed ownership in disadvantaged housing areas has been an explicit strategy in urban renewal since the early 1990s. Accord-ing to Dutch housing researcher Reinout Kleinhans mixed ownership has, among other things, had as its aim to keep the resource-intensive residents in the areas and to have them acting as positive role models for the other residents – in order to influence norms and behaviour in the area. Nevertheless, several researchers question the effect of role mod-els, and point to the fact that there is not necessarily much interaction between residents in the different forms of ownership: "Spatial proxim-ity does not necessarily reduce social distance", the French sociologists Jean Claude Chamboredon and Madeleine Lemaire claims (Chambore-don and Lemaire, 1970). Their analysis of mixed ownership is that con-flicts and polarization tend to arise between the different owner groups. French research thus shows, that in disadvantaged areas where mixed ownership is established, there is a large variation in how new residents relate to the area (Lelévrier, 2013): Those who had no previous affiliation with the area distanced themselves to the residents in the social hous-ing blocks, sent their children to private schools and lived their social lives elsewhere. Those who had lived in the area previously, exchanged services like childcare with residents in the housing blocks and also helped to solve conflicts (ibid.).

Strategies on mixed ownership are often supplemented with infrastruc-tural renewal and implementation of new functions. Here the objective is to link the disadvantaged housing area to the surrounding city and to

invite the neighbouring (middleclass) residents in to the disadvantaged housing areas. The idea is to create social meetings between people with different social and cultural backgrounds. Yet, it is important to have realistic expectations on the outcome of these strategies. Researchers have studied the public spaces and their ability to create a frame for social meetings between residents from different enclaves (Hajer and Reijndorp, 2001; Melgaard, 2018). For this purpose Hajer and Reijndorp have defined the notions "public domain" and "exchange": "We define public domains as those places where an exchange between different social groups is possible and also actually occurs" (Hajer and Reijndorp, 2001). They argue that the purpose of these places for exchange is the confrontation between people with different backgrounds and lifestyles, in order to get an insight into the reality of "the others". The exchange thus offers a shift of perspective; through the experience of other people and other lifestyles, one's own view on reality may be influenced (ibid.). So, according to Hajer and Reijndorp, in the social exchange you acquire a possibility of developing personal ideas and social intelligence. Thus, exchange may help to counteract stigmatization (ibid.).

The criteria of the described Danish "ghetto-list" encourage planners and municipalities to pursue social mix in the disadvantaged housing areas. Researchers have criticized the use of the notion "ghetto" in the context of disadvantaged housing areas, as the notion may in itself be stigmatizing and may result in "territorial stigmatization" (Wacquant, 2007). In Goffmann's conception, stigma can be based on race, nationality or religious background as well as on bodily and mental blemishes and deviations (Goffman, 1963). Wacquant (2007) adds "blemish of place", as he argues that a residence in itself can be perceived as a stigma. He claims that the marginalized groups of the post-industrial metropolitan areas are concentrated in isolated and demarcated areas, perceived as places where only the bottom of society will accept to live (Wacquant, 2007). Several studies have shown that mass media reinforces negative stereotypes and give the places where the subclass or the poor live, a bad reputation (Hastings, 2004: Haynes, Devereux and Power, 2014).

Methods: Combining approaches from architecture and social science

In order to better explore the complex interrelation between social and spatial dynamics at play in the case areas, the methodological approach of the research project was multidisciplinary, involving competencies from architecture, anthropology, sociology and geography. For each of the three case-areas we conducted desk research on plans, written sources, webpages, demographic data and press coverage, an initial field visit and tour of the area, 4–6 interviews with key actors in the refurbishment and 6–8 qualitative interviews with selected tenants and users. They were selected in order to represent a variation of age,

gender and ethnic background. Furthermore, over 3 days in September 2015 we conducted a survey among 140–210 tenants as well as other users (people moving through the area) as well as 9 registrations of urban life plus ethnographic field reports documenting patterns of use and other observations.

We will not discuss further the methodological implications of this multidisciplinary approach in this paper, but only explain the method behind the visual representation of the survey, as especially this part will be included in the present analysis. The survey was conducted by way of three assistants, who stayed in the outdoor spaces for three days in each of the three areas. They divided the area between them and each covered approximately one third of the area, addressing all passers-by with a brief questionnaire. The geographical position of every respondent at the time of participating in the survey was registered. These geographical points together with the answers of the respondents have been processed through GIS-software implemented in the maps that are used to illustrate how tenants and other users respectively occupy the area. The aim has been to represent as diverse a group of respondents as possible. However, one must take into account that not everybody has wished to participate in the survey, that it was only conducted over three days and was also depending on the assistants' own routes through the area. The survey and the maps can thus give an indication of who uses the area for what, but do not offer a thorough and fully representative account of the general use of the area. Among respondents that are tenants in the area, we have checked that the distribution of ethnic backgrounds, genders and age groups corresponds approximately to that of the area's overall population. The qualitative interviews with both key actors in the refurbishment and with selected residents and users, have also informed the analysis of the survey data and the projects discussions. Further methodological descriptions and reflections can be found in the book *Fra ghetto til blandet by* (Bech-Danielsen and Stender, 2017).

Three places – three cases

The three areas were chosen due to the different challenges of the cases and due to the different strategies applied in each case. Thus, they represent different types and scales of physical renewal – one focussing primarily on infrastructural changes, another introducing new functions and public services and a third one implementing a greater variety of flats in order to establish a diverse group of residents.

In the following, we shall briefly describe the areas and their recent physical transformation.

Superkilen/Mjølnerparken: An urban world exhibition

Mjølnerparken is a social housing estate situated at outer Nørrebro in Copenhagen. It was built in 1984–1987 and consists of 559 flats in 4-storey blocks around 4 green courtyards with playgrounds and benches. It differs architecturally from the surrounding urban fabric, which consists mainly of 100 years old perimeter blocks. During the 1990s-influx of refugees, the City of Copenhagen directed many refugees to live in Mjølnerparken, and the area's inhabitants today count more than 40 different nationalities. 85% of the residents have a non-Western background and 60% are unemployed. Mjølnerparken has for years been characterised as a "ghetto" and is often depicted in the media in connection with crime and radicalised Islamic groups. However, there have also been many social programmes in the area and today a larger share of the young people get an education. In 2015 a majority of Mjølnerparken's tenants voted in favour of a plan for the physical renewal of the area, aiming to upgrade the flats, the safety and the coherence to the surrounding Nørrebro.

The ambition of improving this coherence was also the background for the establishment of Superkilen, a new urban space, neighbouring Mjølnerparken. Superkilen was the result of an architectural competition initiated by City of Copenhagen and the philanthropic organisation Realdania. BIG Architects won the competition in collaboration with the artist group Superflex, and the winning project aimed to attract a wider group of users and change the neighbourhood's bad reputation. The project being a highly spectacular concept of three consecutive spaces with separate identities: The red square, the black square and the green wedge. Inspired by the ethnic diversity of the area they furthermore filled the area with objects – benches, lamp-posts, fountains and equipment for play and sports – from all over the world. The idea was to make Superkilen a "World Exhibition", rendering the ethnic diversity a positive quality and also encouraging the residents' own sense of belonging, as the objects were chosen from the residents' own suggestions. Not long after the realisation of Superkilen, a green park – Mimersparken – was established on the other side of Mjølnerparken. The current plan for the physical renewal of Mjølnerparken seeks to connect the estate better with Superkilen and Mimersparken, by way of a new bicycle path and a public street-like space leading through Mjølnerparken, as well as ground floor flats being converted into small shops.

Gyldenrisparken: New functions to attract more life within the area

Gyldenrisparken was built in 1964 and is a social housing estate located five kilometres from central Copenhagen. The estate originally consisted of ten 4-storey blocks and one high-rise building containing all together 477 flats plus several one-storey buildings for commercial lease. Over the years the buildings had become worn down, and the temporary pavilions, housing various institutions were decrepit after 40 years. Windows and doors were leaking and there were cracks in facades and balconies. From the end of the 1990's the area was also characterised by social problems. Elevators were smeared with graffiti, and the green areas were increasingly perceived as unsafe. The City of Copenhagen assigned tenants for the blocks containing smaller flats, and especially this part of the estate was known to house criminals and drug-addicts. 44% of the residents had a non-Western background and 45% were unemployed, and in 2004 the City of Copenhagen together with the housing association decided to engage in a thorough refurbishment.

In 2006, a majority of the tenants accepted a refurbishment plan. The architectural company Vandkunsten won the competition and apart from upgrading the blocks with new facades and windows, its most remarkable concept was a new two-storey care home winding through the green area between the blocks. Also, a new day care institution called The Green Planet, implementing passive house standards, was built in the green area with an outdoor playground. The idea was to attract more users from the outside into the area between the blocks. The remaining smaller green areas were improved with new paths, lighting, play equipment and sports facilities. A high-rise building was sold, and the revenue was invested in the overall refurbishment. Furthermore, all one-room flats were merged to form larger flats and some of the two-room flats were converted to youth housing.

Figure 1
Superkilen's green wedge. Mjølner-parken is the red blocks on the left-hand side.
PHOTO: JENS LINDHE

Figure 2
Gyldenrisparken, the black building is
the new care home.
PHOTO: JENS LINDHE

Finlandsparken: Adding variety, new facilities and penthouses

Finlandsparken is a social housing estate consisting of 530 flats distributed on eleven 4-storey blocks located 3 kilometres North-East of Vejle, a provincial town in Jutland. It was built in 1967–1971 and in spite of a refurbishment of the façade in the 1990's, the buildings as well as the green areas appeared outdated and worn down only ten years later. Furthermore, the area's reputation was descending and tenants with jobs tended to leave the area, being replaced by unemployed tenants. Today 60% are unemployed and 70% have a non-Western background. This gives the housing area a remarkably different demographic profile than the surrounding suburb.

A key concern in the refurbishment was to add more variation and diversity to the area, that was described as monotonous. One strategy was the establishment of nine new penthouse flats, aiming to both diversify the blocks' appearance, but also to create a larger variety in the housing stock and thus be able to attract new and more socioeconomically advantaged tenants. Furthermore, the blocks have been grouped in five "clusters" – each with its own identity developed through a process involving the tenants. The distinct identities are expressed through different colours and new common indoor and outdoor facilities with different themes: The culinary cluster has kitchen gardens; the health cluster has facilities for exercising and so forth. In one block two ground floor

flats were merged in order to establish a gate, rendering it possible to create a pathway connecting Finlandsparken to the surrounding residential suburb. The pathway has however not yet been established as representatives from the neighbouring estates have been reluctant towards the connection.

Figure 3
Finlandsparken with new gardens in the front, and the opening of a block in the back.
PHOTO: JENS LINDHE

Mapping empirical observations: Patterns of use and various users

The maps (figures 4–9) showing how respondents replied to the questions "Where do you live?" and "Why are you in this area right now" give an indication of how the three areas are used after the renewal. Unfortunately, no similar registrations were made before the renewal, and as already accounted for, the method has its limitations. However, in combination with the survey and the qualitative interviews that are brought into play in the analysis, it can point to patterns of use in the three areas, as well as differences between them and their various groups of users.

Mjølnerparken (black) and Superkilen
Respondents registered over three days survey in September 2015

Bor i Mjølnerparken (34)
Udefrakommende (68)

Ikke målfast

Hvorfor er du her i området lige nu?
(Udefrakommende respondenter)
Passerer igennem (26)
Fritid (29)
Praktiske gøremål (5)
Arbejder i området(7)

Ikke målfast

Figure 4
Where do you live?
Yellow: tenants from Mjølnerparken
Red: other users

Figure 5
Why are you in this area now? (only other users)
Yellow: passing through, Red: Leisure time (visiting friends etc.)
Blue: Practical activities (groceries etc.)
Pink: Working here

Superkilen is today teeming with people from many different places passing along the area's bicycle lane, using the play equipment, meeting friends or just hanging out watching people. It appears (see figure 4) that a lot of people from the rest of the city blend rather equally with tenants from Mjølnerparken, but only very few of the outside users move into Mjølnerparken's estate. Those who do (see figure 5) are there either in connection with their job or leisure time, such as visiting friends, whereas only very few are in the area due to practical activities.

Gyldenrisparken (black)
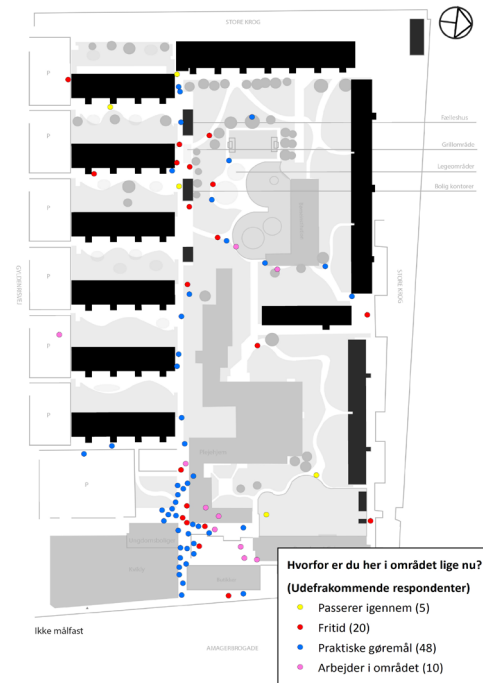*Respondents registered over three days survey in September 2015*

Bor i Gyldenrisparken (120)
Udefrakommende (84)

Hvorfor er du her i området lige nu?
(Udefrakommende respondenter)
Passerer igennem (5)
Fritid (20)
Praktiske gøremål (48)
Arbejder i området (10)

Figure 6
Where do you live?
Yellow: tenants from Gyldenrisparken
Red: other users

Figure 7
Why are you in this area now? (only other users)
Yellow: passing through, Red: Leisure time (visiting friends etc.)
Blue: Practic activities (groceries etc.)
Pink: Working here

In Gyldenrisparken tenants and other users are more mixed also within the estate (figure 6) and here the majority of the outside users are in the area due to practical activities (figure 7). They are primarily buying groceries in the supermarket and other shops located in the bottom left corner of the map, but also picking up kids in the day care institution located on the upper middle of the map. Further, there is a relatively large number of people using the area for leisure – e.g. taking the dog for a walk – and quite a few people working in the area, especially around the care home and day care institutions.

Finlandsparken (black)
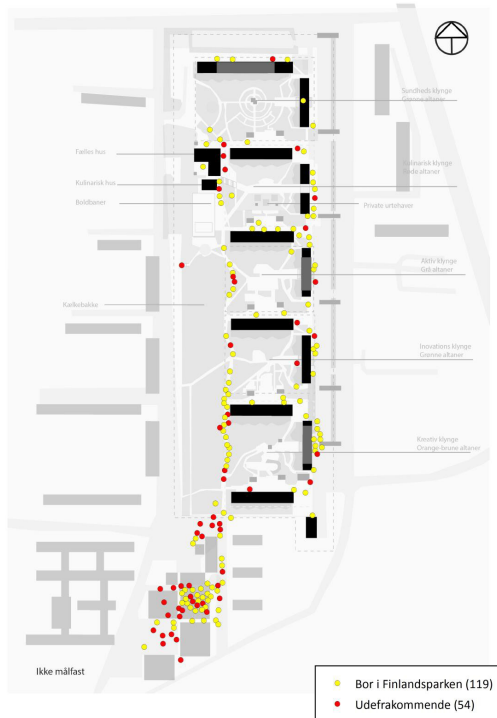*Respondents registered over three days survey in September 2015*

Bor i Finlandsparken (119)
Udefrakommende (54)

Ikke målfast

Hvorfor er du i området lige nu?

(Udefrakommende respondenter)

Passerer igennem (8)
Fritid (12)
Praktiske gøremål (24)
Arbejder i området (10)

Ikke målfast

Figure 8	Figure 9
Where do you live?	*Why are you in this area now?* (only other users)
Yellow: tenants from Finlandsparken	Yellow: passing through, Red: Leisure time (visiting friends etc.)
Red: other users	Blue: Practic activities (groceries etc.)
	Pink: Working here
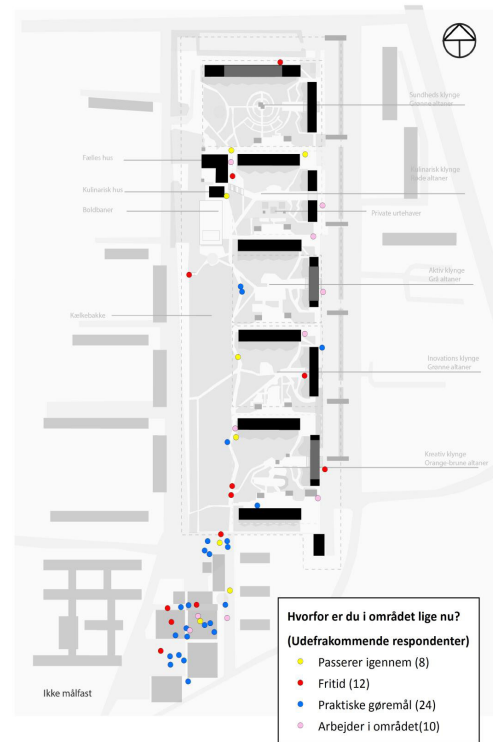
The situation in Finlandsparken is similar to Gyldenrisparken in that a couple of supermarkets and other shops are located in the fringe of the area in a centre called Nørremarkscentret (figure 8 – bottom of the map). This is also where most of the activity is concentrated and where tenants and other users blend. Most of the outside users in Finlandsparken are there for practical activities – buying groceries etc. (see figure 9). However, only very few of them move into the area between Finlandsparken's blocks. Those who do, are there either due to work, leisure or because they use Finlandsparken's paths as a short cut to pass through.

Analysis and discussion

Linking to the surrounding city
Gyldenrisparken seems to be the most successful case of renewal in terms of integrating the area better with the surroundings. There is a

relatively large number of people either working in the area or using the area for leisure. It thus seems that the renewal of Gyldenrisparken has been successful in creating a vivid and mixed life in between the blocks, partly due to the new functions in the area, but also due to its location between a main street and several residential neighbourhoods. Among them is Oxford Have, a new neighbourhood of owner-occupied single-family rowhouses that have been built next to Gyldenrisparken (to the West). The residents from here often walk through Gyldenrisparken, and several of them use the day care institution, The Green Planet, for their kids. One woman, who has lived in Oxford Have for 2.5 years explains that she was at first reluctant to buy a house next to Gyldenrisparken: "It seemed a bit ghetto-like. I don't know if there were many parabolic antennas, but there were many immigrants. I actually checked out the nameplates to see the distribution of Danish and non-Danish names, but my impression was, that many Danes also lived in the area". Today her child is in The Green Planet day care, and they often use the playground and enjoy spending time in Gyldenrisparken's green area. Her impression is that the various groups of users come along well, but it also seems to be of importance for her that she recognises several of her neighbours from Oxford Have within Gyldenrisparken – she stresses that they all go along that route, when buying groceries, and that several of her neighbours have recommended The Green Planet.

The strategy of densifying the area with new functions has proved to work well. The care home and day care institutions have added more life to the green areas between the blocks, and though the remaining green areas are smaller than before, most of the tenants perceive them as safer and more comfortable. So do neighbours and others who pass through the area, and the playground just outside the day care institution The Green Planet, signals that the area's facilities are not solely for tenants. Many families stop on the way home to try the ropeway, and though they have limited social interaction with Gyldenrisparken's tenants, they do become increasingly familiar with both the area and the people there. As a man from Oxford Have explains: "I think it is a very open and pleasurable area. It is not that I start chatting with people… Those groups of mothers wearing scarves, they don't exactly indicate that they want to chat with you. But still, we can come along well, and we can think that each other's kids are cute". More of the qualitative interviews thus confirm the theories of Hajer and Reijndorp (2001): In Gyldenrisparken the visitors from the neighbouring housing areas seem to experience "an exchange", and they get another view and a shift of perspective of "the others". Thus, refurbishment may help to counteract stigmatization of the disadvantaged housing area. It is nevertheless important to stress, that the success of the refurbishment in Gyldenrisparken is partly due to its urban location and to the fact that it was not as disadvantaged and had as burdened a reputation to start out with as the other two areas.

Whereas the strategy for integrating Gyldenrisparken with the surroundings can be seen as an everyday-route-strategy, the strategy employed in Superkilen is rather a destination-strategy. Here the spectacular urban design and new facilities have succeeded in attracting different people, who use the area in various ways. This has fuelled a development rendering this part of the city more attractive but also more expensive. Today hipster coffee shops pop up in the area and flats are sold with prospects stressing a location near "The red square". The urgent question is of course, whether the tenants in Mjølnerparken in any way benefit from this development? It is rather Mimersparken that they use as an everyday recreative space with playgrounds, soccer fields, barbeque facilities etc. If Mimersparken can be said to function as their backyard, Superkilen rather has the status of a front yard with its more public and representative character. There is still a very manifest border – physically and socially – between Mjølnerparken's estate and Superkilen's urban space, and even neighbours living very close to Mjølnerparken are hesitant to move inside the estate. As one man who lives next to Mjølnerparken explains:

> My use of Mjølnerparken is very limited, I have only gone inside a few times to try the playground with my kids. But it seems like a ghetto, and not particularly humane. Especially due to the architecture – the small windows and the concrete that gives no life – it seems oppressive (…) I also think that it is a problem, that it doesn't seem natural to walk through Mjølnerparken and see, that people in there are also just human beings.

It is too early to say if the planed refurbishment of Mjølnerparken will succeed in linking the area better to the surrounding city. Yet, there is no doubt that the establishment of Superkilen has been key in even putting such a link on the agenda. In refurbishment plans housing organisations are usually still mainly concerned with what goes on within the estate's cadastral plot, and funding from the Danish National Building Fund (Landsbyggefonden) is also tied solely to the estate.

These structural premises have likewise had impact in Finlandsparken. Here the overall plan actually aimed at opening up the estate and the municipality invested in a new path linking the area to its surroundings. However, very few from the neighbouring housing areas move into the area between Finlandsparken's blocks. This is partly due to the fact, that linking to the surroundings was not top priority for neither housing associations, nor the tenants involved. Thus, the refurbishment has been directed at the housing estate and not its borders or the commercial centre Nørremarkscentret. A hairdresser in Nørremarkscentret explains that the Centre is very worn down and that several of the shops have closed, and that he is also going to move his shop. Part of the centre is currently being refurbished, but the newer parts "turn its back" towards Finlands-

parken, and does not invite people into the estate, just like there are no public functions inside Finlandsparken. Also, the gate that has been established in one block to open the area, does not make a substantial difference as long as there is no path connecting to the surrounding residential areas. Most of the tenants are satisfied with their new facilities – play grounds, kitchen gardens etc. – but this is not enough to integrate Finlandsparken with the surroundings. Though leaflets about activities taking place in Finlandsparken have been distributed also to neighbouring areas, only very few have showed up. One tenant explains: "It is fine with the clusters and so on, but if we are to change the place... then there should also be activities across Finlandsparken and other places in town... If one could make other people come here, it would be better". Still, the neighbouring communities have been reluctant to get more connected to Finlandsparken. This has also been a problem in Superkilen. Here the architects originally suggested to demolish some of the walls that are today demarcating Superkilen, but the neighbouring estates – turning their back to Superkilen – did not agree as they feared being associated with Mjølnerparken. This points to the intricate relation between the area's image and its spatial layout: On the one hand, physical borders might reinforce the image of an isolated ghetto, but on the other hand, the social borders surrounding an area may resist, though the physical borders are demolished. This confirms French researchers' critique of social mix strategies, claiming that spatial proximity does not necessarily reduce social distance (Chamboredon and Lemaire, 1970).

Building a better reputation

The refurbishment of Finlandsparken was rewarded with the local municipality's annual architectural prize, yet the media was more concerned with the updated ghetto list that was released the very same day – and had Finlandsparken on it. Though the list is useful for monitoring and ensuring consistent demographic data on the development of disadvantaged areas, it doubtlessly also reinforce their status as deprived areas, thereby sustaining the "stigma" (Goffmann, 1963) of their tenants. Numerous studies have demonstrated how mass media and other social forces contribute to the creation of negative stereotypes, which damage the reputation of the places in which the underclass or poor reside (Hastings, 2004; Haynes, Devereux, and Power, 2014). Such processes have been coined in the concept of territorial stigmatization (Wacquant, 2007), stressing that place of residence can be "one of the 'disabilities' that can 'disqualify the individual' and deprive him or her from full acceptance by others" (ibid.). Similarly, a side effect of various initiatives to change disadvantaged areas can be a negative public attention, making it even more difficult to attract new tenants (Christensen, 2013). In Finlandsparken tenants regret that many people from other parts of the city do not even discover the refurbishment, as they just sustain "the old image" distributed through the media, rather than seeing the area with their own eyes. As one tenant explains: "The image of the place has not really

improved (...) People must see it, in order to get a more positive impression of this area. And as it is not in the central city, there are not so many who come here. Instead they just sustain the old image of the area".

With the renewal of Superkilen a lot of people pass by Mjølnerparken every day, but this does not necessarily give the area a better reputation – again mass media seems to play a more important role. Superkilen's extraordinary collection of benches, lamp-post etc. is perceived as a positive statement about multiculturalism by most of the users, yet some of them still feel unsafe when moving through the area at night if many young men from Mjølnerparken are gathered there. One could argue that Superkilen's image-boost of the area side-steps Mjølnerparken, though using its ethnic diversity and social roughness to provide an authentic background for the area's new hipness. As Sharon Zukin has argued, the romanticization of ethnic diverse working-class neighbourhoods as authentic, is key in the gentrification process that pushes the original residents out (Zukin, 2010). However, also quite a few of Mjølnerparken's tenants identify positively with Superkilen's multicultural urban design, and are proud to take selfies in front of the bus stop with Arabic characters. Superkilens image-boost of the area might also be in their favour in a more subtle way by improving the social status of their overall neighbourhood. For instance, a young woman explained how she used to be met by prejudices among fellow students when telling them that she lived in Mjølnerparken; today she just rather says that she lives at Nørrebro close to the red square!

Social mix, gentrification or marginalization

As appears from the above discussion, this paper's focus on thorough refurbishment touches on questions of gentrification and processes of social marginalization. There is no doubt that refurbishment of social housing estates is often also used strategically to change the composition of tenants and push out particularly marginalized tenants by merging one room flats etc. When discussing the supposedly positive effects of a physical transformation, we must therefore keep in mind that it – for instance in Gyldenrisparken – may be as much a result of the exclusion of the most disadvantaged tenants as of the physical refurbishment. Thorough physical renewal may thus just push social problems to other areas rather than solve them. Furthermore, there is inadequate evidence that a socially mixed neighbourhood in itself improves the general social condition of the area's residents. Research from other European countries, where housing diversification and social mix have long been an explicit goal in urban renewal policies, show that cross-tenant social interaction – and thereby positive neighbour-effects – are limited (Kleinhans, 2004; Lelévrier, 2013).

This is confirmed by findings from Finlandsparken. The new penthouses on three rooftops do not seem to have caused substantial change in

the area as they only represent nine out of 530 dwellings: Only a few respondents mention them when asked about the area before and now, but those who do – mainly tenants – are proud that the headmistress of the local school moved in. A young family also moved into one of the penthouses, while building their own house in another neighbourhood, but when interviewing them it became obvious that their involvement in Finlandsparken are limited, as they only live there temporarily: "Our kids don't really use the playgrounds, as we have plenty of space on the roof and it is easier for us to keep them up there (…) I don't really know much about the rest of the estate, as I mainly move between our flat and the car". Thus, the tenants in the new penthouses do not necessarily engage much in their local environment. Still, the diversification of both housing stock and tenants might have a beneficial effect on the area's overall reputation. Also, the new types of housing may allow tenants to climb up the ladder of the housing career without leaving the area – thus contributing to its stability and social cohesion. Lelévrier's study of regenerated neighbourhoods in France thus show that newcomers who already had a relation to the neighbourhood before moving in, had more social interaction with original tenants and exchanged services like child-care with them. Further, these newcomers served as mediators between groups and were more likely to intervene in conflicts (Lelévrier, 2013). The housing diversification in these French neighbourhoods was more substantial and also included new, owner-occupied housing, whereas in Finlandsparken it was only nine new penthouses and still part of the same social housing association. On the one hand, this is possibly why the diversification has caused less conflict in Finlandsparken than in the French renewal projects, but if the social impact is to be more than symbolic, it would on the other hand probably take more than nine new penthouses. Critical mass is also key in terms of getting neighbours and people living in other parts of the city to use or pass through the outdoor spaces of social housing estates. In Gyldenrisparken it has thus become the norm among many of its neighbours to take the shortcut through Gyldenrisparken, as well as use the playground there. Here the new public functions play a vital role both in terms of generating more life and thereby a feeling of safety, but also in terms of indicating that the area is not only for tenants. However, this touches on a delicate and more fundamental matter in the renewal of Danish social housing estates, as their facilities are in principle exclusively for tenants. Refurbishments funded through the Danish National Building Fund (Landsbyggefonden) are in fact financed by tenants' rent, and one could therefore ask, why they should be willing to pay for equipment and facilities for others to use? As argued in the introduction of this paper and elsewhere, it is certainly not only social housing estates that have an enclave-like spatial lay-out; also more affluent residential areas in Denmark do these years increasingly tend towards "invisibly gated communities", turning their back towards the surroundings and allowing only pseudo-public paths through the area (Raahauge, 2007; Stender, 2015a; 2015b). Attempts of opening up social

housing estates and attracting new users might be seen as representing what has been described as a "pathologizing discourse", further stigmatising disadvantaged neighbourhoods by regarding their residents as possessing deviant norms and values, which represent a threat to mainstream culture (Hastings, 2004). One can thus argue that it is inherently stigmatizing to define certain disadvantaged areas as isolated ghettos in need of "being opened up" and integrated with the surrounding city.

A more pragmatic response would be that if the area is already stigmatized in the public discourse, the residents do have an interest in inviting the city in, in order to improve the image of the place. Also, as argued in the introduction of this paper, linking enclaves and creating spaces of exchange in the increasingly segregated city is a key challenge for contemporary, urban policy in general – not only in disadvantaged areas. Here the social housing sector may lead the way contributing with insight in what spatial strategies for integration can actually also pave the way for social exchange. Following Hajer and Reijndorp, enclaves are here to stay, but urban policy must continuously aim to create space for exchange between different groups: "The question should not be how to hold back the transformation of the urban fabric into an archipelago, but rather, what possibilities this new spatial and social reality offers for the creation of new and interesting forms of public domain" (Hajer and Reijndorp, 2001).

Conclusion

Based on three Danish cases, we have analysed and discussed the social impact of thorough physical transformations that aim to integrate disadvantaged social housing areas better with their surroundings. The everyday-route strategy applied in Gyldenrisparken appears to be the most successful of the three in terms of attracting new users within the area. This is partly due to the character of the refurbishment that integrates new public functions within the area and links new neighbouring residential areas to a main street with shopping and other public facilities. But it is also due to the location, context and existing image of the area that was not at the outset as problematic in Gyldenrisparken as in the other two. This illustrates that there is no universal solution that can be applied to all disadvantaged areas, but that strategies of refurbishment must always take local context into account.

The destination-strategy employed in Superkilen has succeeded in creating an urban landmark that turns the area's ethnic diversity into a hip multicultural neighbourhood identity, but this development has so far only had little impact on Mjølnerparken. While it is still too early to say if the new refurbishment plan will succeed in linking the social housing estate better to the surroundings, there is no doubt that Superkilen has had an impact in even putting such a link on the agenda. Learning from

both Finlandsparken's new penthouse tenants and Gyldenrisparken's new users, critical mass seems to be key, as it takes more than a handful of new tenants or users to substantially change the area and not least its image. Again, context is highly important, as strategies that seek to integrate urban life, new users and tenants are only applicable in urban areas with high growth and population density.

Though tenants and outside respondents seem to blend more in the maps of urban areas this is no guarantee for actual social exchange between various groups. As has been stressed in the discussion, spatial proximity does not necessarily reduce social distance. New residents may not engage much in their new neighbourhood, and if flats are merged and rents are raised, they may even push out the original and more disadvantaged tenants. We have therefore also related the current refurbishment strategies to processes of gentrification and marginalization and pointed out that the idea of disadvantaged areas as particularly isolated and in need of being "opened up" can itself be stigmatizing. The tenants interviewed in this study do however worry more about their area's negative reputation and genuinely wish that more people would come by to see the area with their own eyes. This image-problem thus demonstrates that linking disadvantaged as well as other enclaves is a persisting challenge in urban policy and design.

Acknowledgements

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Biographical information

Marie Stender, Anthropologist, PhD, Researcher at the Danish Building Research Institute
Address: A.C. Meyers Vaenge 15, DK 2450 Copenhagen S, Denmark
Phone: +4520222126
E-mail: mas@sbi.aau.dk

Marie Stender is a researcher at the Danish Building Research Institute, Aalborg University, and specializes in architectural anthropology and the relationship between social life and built environments. Her PhD focused on placemaking in new urban neighbourhoods and her current research focuses on regeneration of deprived housing areas. Through various projects and publications, she has critically examined current notions of liveability and social sustainability in urban planning.
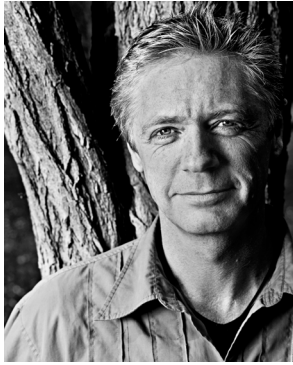
Biographical information

Claus Bech-Danielsen, Architect
MAA, PhD and professor at Danish
Building Research Institute,
Aalborg University
Address: A.C. Meyers Vaenge 15,
DK 2450 Copenhagen S, Denmark
Cell: +4523605573
E-mail: cbd@sbi.aau.dk

Claus Bech-Danielsen is Professor at Aalborg University, where he for years has been coordinator of the architectural research at Danish Building Research Institute and has served as research director at the Institute. Bech-Danielsen has focused on regeneration of deprived housing areas since 1996, and he has received awards for his work, among these The Danish Business Research Prize from The Danish Business Research Academy.