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Photo, front cover: Søren Rønholt

DILEMMAS IN INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH – EXPLORING THE COPENHAGEN BALCONY BOOM

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This article pursues a critical discussion on an industrial research approach based on the research project *The Social Life of Balconies*. The project emanated from heated public debates on Copenhagen's balcony boom, with some arguing that balconies are inherently antisocial and others claiming they contribute to the social life of the city. The research project ethnographically explored how balconies affect social life between neighbours and city dwellers. Drawing on experiences in this project, the article discusses the dilemmas of industrial research co-funded by key players in architecture, housing and urban design. Applied research involving commercial stakeholders has obvious advantages, and it seems fair that such stakeholders support research on the societal effects of the built environments they create. However, this kind of research requires a clear division of roles and, even with full academic freedom, suspicions of bias may influence the perception and impact of the research. As we initiated the project The Social Life of Balconies, we formulated the research problem and defined the conditions of academic freedom. However, foundations or grant givers may determine the research focus in advance, and non-commercial stakeholders may cause researchers to be less attentive to ensuring academic freedom. The article argues that the contribution and validity of industrial research depends on the continuous balancing and considerate navigation of the industrial researcher.

Introduction

"Oh, if that company is behind the project, I don't even want to talk to you". This was an interviewee's reaction upon learning that our research project on *The Social Life of Balconies* was partially funded by Altan.dk, the biggest balcony contractor in Denmark. Architecture is an applied art, and architectural research often requires collaboration with industry stakeholders, including architectural practices, city authorities and building companies. As public funding of architectural research is scarce, such stakeholders are also an important source of funding. They may be interested in both scientific knowledge about the built environments they work with as well as the branding potential in involving themselves in research. They can often contribute not only funding but important insights and networks that can increase the applicability and relevance of the research. There are many advantages in industrial research; however, it includes a range of dilemmas regarding involvement, academic freedom and contingencies of knowledge production.

Social sciences have long been preoccupied with such considerations. For instance, anthropologists have discussed the ethics and processes of knowledge production involved in working with development organizations or NGOs in the developing world (Erwin, 2000; Lashaw, 2013; Mosse, 2015). Architecture is also held to be an inherently ethical discipline, and whether involved in design or theoretical studies, it is seen as a collection of practices "directed to the well-being of humankind" (Wasserman et al., 2000, p. 8). The ethics of architectural research and knowledge production, however, remain relatively unexplored, and in relation to industrial research in particular, there is a need to consider how knowledge is situated, produced and received.

Based on the research project *The Social Life of Balconies*, this article therefore aims to shed light on the consequences of industrial research in architecture. It analyses the experiences that followed the reception of the grant from the balcony contractor Altan.dk and discusses the dilemmas in conducting industrial research co-funded by key players in the fields of architecture, housing and urban design. Rather than an in-depth discussion of the empirical fieldwork conducted among people on and around urban balconies (see Stender, 2022; Stender & Jepsen, 2022), this article instead scrutinises the 'backstage' of the research project, including the process of obtaining funding as well as the personal and professional concerns related to such a process. First, the article introduces the empirical background of the Copenhagen balcony boom and the conception of the research project. Next, I account for how the contents and preconditions of the research project were developed in order to analyse how and to what extent the project's findings were affected by the grant giver. Finally, I relate the experiences and considerations encountered in this project to the wider context of industrial and architectural research and discuss academic freedom and the role

of the industrial researcher. I conclude that knowledge is situated and produced in communities and that academic freedom is not a privilege we can take for granted, but one that we must fight for in every project as well as between them.

The balcony boom and the conception of the research project

There are no comprehensive statements on the number of balconies in Copenhagen, yet anyone who knows the city would likely agree that there has been a veritable balcony boom over the past decades. Nowadays in new urban neighbourhoods, almost every housing unit is built with at least one big balcony. In the older parts of the city, including the inner suburbs of Østerbro, Nørrebro and Vesterbro, new balconies sprout from old facades, facing both street and courtyard. The balconies provide city dwellers with new, recreational outdoor spaces that extend private space into public space, but how does this affect our way of living in the city and relating to our neighbours, local communities and the surrounding city? This was the initial question that led us to consider a potential research project on *The Social Life of Balconies*.

The heated debate in public and professional media around the balcony boom, however, made it clear that empirical research on the social aspect of balconies was needed in order to qualify current discussions and decisions. Existing building research on balconies has so far been dominated by technical perspectives analysing structural properties, the effect of balconies on indoor climate, inflow of light and energy consumption. Instructions have been formulated on the technical as well as the aesthetic and practical points one should consider before installing a balcony (Grundejernes Investeringsfond, 2011; 2013). The Danish Building Research Institute has contributed to this process by developing a daylight simulation tool used by the City of Copenhagen to ensure that balcony construction does not severely reduce daylight in the flats of downstairs neighbours (Statens Byggeforskningsinstitut, 2016). The implementation of this tool only fuelled the debate, as it caused a remarkable increase in rejected applications for the construction of balconies. However, this result was entirely contrary to the original political ambition of enabling the process and making it easier to obtain permission for establishing new balconies in the city (Dalgaard, 2016).

In addition to the issue of daylight, social and aesthetic aspects have also incited heated discussion among citizens, politicians, architects and other professionals. Positions have become polarised in this debate, and proponents have argued that balconies improve urban liveability and housing quality and that the presence of people on their balconies provides a sense of security and life in urban space (Gehl, 2010; Earon, 2015). Contrary to this perspective, sceptics have mourned the aesthe-

tic and social consequences of the increasing number of balconies in Copenhagen. They have viewed balconies as a mark of prosperity that contributes to skyrocketing housing prices in the central city and that widen the gap between rich, urban elites and less well-off residents who are increasingly excluded from the urban housing market (Jørgensen, 2016). Furthermore, balconies have been criticised for contributing to the privatisation of outdoor life in public space, where neighbours and strangers once met and interacted in the parks and squares of the city. Balconies have thus been accused of promoting an antisocial urban culture and increasingly exclusionary cities (Sonne & Weirup, 2018). Additionally, critical voices have addressed the consequences of balconies for urban architecture and heritage, arguing that the "steel boxes randomly smeared on historical facades" interrupt series of facades of high architectural quality (Lægring, 2017). In connection with this critical debate, studies on how much balconies are actually used have been called for, as has greater critical awareness among architects about the aesthetic consequences of balconies on urban facades. An architect and partner in the studio ONV, for instance, stresses this need in an interview in the Danish Architectural Journal: "Balconies are in my eyes a totally underrated topic of discussion. I have heard advisers say '…and then we used this stone behind'… but God damn! All I see is balconies!" (Keiding, 2018).

Clearly, opinions on balconies are fierce, and thus the Copenhagen balcony boom can be regarded as one of the urban controversies that according to Yaneva & Heaphy (2012) can, if we study them closely, teach us what design actually *does*:

> When dealing with them, we do not simply learn what design is; rather we learn about what design does: what kind of effects it can trigger, how it can affect the observer, divide communities and provoke disagreements. We delve into the many consequences of design practice and gain an awareness of its various implications (p. 33).

Furthermore, although the public and professional debate has been dominated by fervent beliefs, it lacks empirical, anthropological knowledge about this particular feature of the built environment and its effect on our everyday social life. It was apparent that this was a field to which The Danish Building Research Institute[1] could contribute by producing a study to both nuance academic discussions on how our cities and built environments are changing and, at the same time, be practically applicable for the building owners, housing organisations, municipalities, architects and other parties that will make decisions concerning balconies in the years to come.

We therefore applied for support from The Landowners' Investment Foundation for a research project focusing on the Social Life of Bal-

1   The Institute has in the meantime merged with another department at Aalborg University and is now known as part of BUILD.

conies. This foundation has previously funded a number of research projects at The Danish Building Research Institute, and the application was accepted. The foundation, however, only funds up to 50 % of project expenses, so we had to continue fundraising, although the University also agreed to contribute. We applied to various private foundations focusing on architecture but were unsuccessful. While searching for a statement of the total number of new balconies in Copenhagen for our applications, our research assistant visited websites of various balcony contractors. When she came across Altan.dk, she noticed that the company had a robust CSR strategy and was providing financial support to the establishment of soccer fields in Africa and other charitable projects. We therefore decided to send an application regarding our research project, and we soon received a positive reply and an invitation to meet with the company's owner.

Obtaining funding and having second thoughts

The process of obtaining funding from Altan.dk was rather different from the way we normally attain funding for research projects. First, the process was much quicker and more direct than the anonymous application portals and lengthy assessment processes with which we were familiar. We had sent our project description to the founder of the company who, according to the website, appeared to also be responsible for CSR initiatives. However, he invited us to meet with his two sons, who now led the business. At the meeting, we explained that our research focuses on the relationship between built environment and social life, and as the number of balconies has increased remarkably over the past decades, we were interested in studying shifting boundaries between public and private space: How do the many new balconies affect public space? How do they change social life between neighbours, in courtyards and on the streets?

The company representatives informed us that they had forwarded our project description to their board, some of whom had initially been sceptical about providing financial support to a researcher "who had previously written critical things". They had, however, reached the conclusion that this could be a mutually beneficial endeavour because helping us advance the project would give them the opportunity to demonstrate that they are a serious company that supports research in the social consequences of balconies. Our findings might even hold innovation potential for them, as a better understanding of end users' everyday usage of balconies might illuminate new market areas. We had never considered this possibility, and although we agreed that they – like anyone – were free to use the project's findings, we stressed that the research focus would remain formulated as it was in the original project description. We also agreed to sign a contract ensuring that we at the University had full academic freedom and were the owners of the research results.

As Altan.dk only funded a third of the total project expenses, we emphasised that the remainder of the funding from the University and the Landowner's Investment Fund was conditional upon the project remaining an independent research project. The agreement formulated by the university's in-house legal consultant thus stated:

A) The Danish Building Research Institute is the project Leader, and the research will only be conducted according to the researchers' ideas and chosen methods cf. the project description.

B) The proprietary right to the results of the research project belongs to The Danish Building Research Institute and will, regardless of the outcome, be published in relevant academic publications and journals.

C) If Altan.dk should wish to publish information about the project before the research is accomplished, this is conditional on prior approval from The Danish Building Research Institute.

D) Altan.dk has the right to use published results in marketing but cannot without prior written acceptance from The Danish Building Research Institute directly or indirectly refer to The Danish Building Research Institute or its employees in connection with marketing or in any other way exploit the name of The Danish Building Research Institute.

Altan.dk accepted these conditions but also expressed a desire to be more involved in the research project by participating in advisory group meetings and similar activities, if possible. We agreed to this arrangement and decided to hold advisory board meetings every six months, inviting representatives from both the Landowners' Investment Foundation and Altan.dk to participate in these meetings. We signed the contract and were excited to begin the project. As the fieldwork was highly dependent on good weather, we had to start organising this step immediately in order to be prepared to conduct interviews and observations over the summer of 2019. However, we soon had second thoughts about the funding. When telling colleagues and peers about the project, including how it was funded, we noticed that some immediately perceived the project as commissioned research. This soon caused doubts: Although we had initiated and formulated the project ourselves, could the funding alone undermine its legitimacy? Even if Altan.dk did not actively seek to influence the findings and conclusions of the project, would the mere fact of their involvement cause people to suspect bias? And what about publishing the results? Most journals require that the funding source of research be declared – would this invite reviewers' scepticism or even rejection of articles based on the project?

Our concerns deepened as a consequence of concurrent public debates. The heated discussion about the City's policy towards balconies continued, and a chairman of a local citizens' association promoting Beautifi-

cation of the Capital (Foreningen til Hovedstadens Forskønnelse) argued that politicians were under the influence of a lobby of balcony companies: "A few years ago, the politicians in Copenhagen town hall changed the rules for the installation of balconies. They were pressured by public demand (and the balcony company lobby) and more or less gave up all restrictions against sticking balconies up everywhere" (Lange, 2019). Furthermore, in the fall of 2019, the so-called 'beef scandal' elicited severe public critique of researchers who damaged the university's credibility due to the infiltration of lobbyists. The lobby organisation Farming and Food had funded a research project at Aarhus University that focused on the climatic effects of eating beef, and although the report was publicly declared as independent research, journalists later revealed that the lobby organisation had written entire paragraphs of the report and that the researchers had accepted the lobbyists' corrections of their critical wording without protest (Drivsholm et al., 2019). As a result, the head of the institute quit his position and publicly apologised for the fact that the contract with the lobby organisation had lacked proper clarity on the distribution of roles and failed to provide researchers with the necessary academic freedom (Baggersgaard, 2019).

In our case, the contract and initial project description left no doubt regarding the distribution of roles; nonetheless, the beef scandal and the critique of the so-called 'balcony company lobby' raised concerns that we may be associated with powerful lobbyists, potentially discrediting our findings and undermining our credibility as researchers. In order to determine whether and how the funding source influenced the project, the next section examines the research undertaken and the role of Altan.dk.

Figure 1
New balconies have sprouted from the older facades of Copenhagen in the past decades. This has caused heated debate about the aesthetic quality of facades, but balconies also affect social life and boundaries between city dwellers.
PHOTO: NANNA NIELSEN

Exploring the balcony boom – an urban controversy

The plan for the fieldwork was to focus on 3 to 5 buildings with different types of balconies, different spatial surroundings of the balconies (courtyard, quiet street, vibrant square, etc.) and different groups of residents (owner or tenant occupied and different age and income groups). Our aim was to recruit approximately 20 households, interview them once or twice over the summer and if possible, in one building conduct interviews both before and after the establishment of balconies. Alongside the interviews, we would observe and record life on the balconies and adjacent urban spaces, including interactions between the two social spheres. We would use a video camera to record both interviews and everyday life on the balconies, in order to use the film clips both in our analysis of the data and in later communication of the research findings. This method was partially inspired by our other grant giver, The Landowners' Investment Foundation, who had previously used short videos to distribute research results widely in the building industry. Engaged in developing new methods in the emerging cross-disciplinary field of architectural anthropology (Buchli, 2013; Ingold, 2013; Stender, 2016; Yaneva, 2012; Stender, Bech-Danielsen, & Hagen, 2022), we also thought that filmmaking may be an effective method to capture the dynamic relationship between built surroundings and social life (Pink, 2007).

The fieldwork commenced as planned in the summer of 2019, and after inspecting several options, we decided to focus on three buildings in Copenhagen: a new residential building and two older ones – one with balconies, the other about to install them. We discussed the cases in an advisory board meeting and considered whether we could use Altan. dk to gain access to informants, as the company possessed the contact information of many people who had installed balconies over the past years. However, they rejected this suggestion due to GDPR[2] reasons and instead proposed that we use their Facebook site to raise discussion among users and possibly even create a competition among followers. We considered this option, which would allow us to conduct a broad electronic survey among a larger population of balcony users. However, we decided to decline because we suspected that the followers would primarily be enthusiastic balcony aficionados, and we also felt that a competition may undermine the seriousness of the research project and make it appear to be a mere marketing stunt. Nonetheless, Altan. dk was able to help us with another essential aspect of selecting cases and finding informants. They provided us with a list of their pipeline projects, which enabled us to find a case that we could study both before and after the establishment of balconies. Furthermore, we visited the company's headquarters and conducted thorough interviews with key staff, who gave valuable insight into the development of the past decades' balcony boom and their experiences in establishing balconies in various parts of the city.

2 GDPR is an abbreviation for the EU law "General Data Protection Regulation".

In these interviews, we learned how the balcony boom had taken the building industry by surprise and how innovations in the built environment are not always the result of strategic calculations but as much about coincidences and unplanned developments. The small, family-owned building enterprise that later became Altan.dk had originally been involved in building refurbishments, which sometimes included the restoration or replacement of balconies. When the owners came back from a vacation in 2000, the order book was suddenly full of projects that included new balconies, and they soon specialised in this area, which grew dramatically over the next decade. Another interesting point discussed in these interviews was how the perspective in their marketing material had changed over the years. Originally, the photos in their brochures had depicted facades with new balconies seen from the outside, either from the street or courtyard. The accompanying text had focused on the structural properties of various parapets, fixation systems, etc. Based on the advice of advertisement companies, they later changed

Figure 2
Marketing brochure from Altan.dk illustrating the company's new approach promoting the balcony as a continuation of the home space. The text says: "For the good life in the city".

to highlighting the inside perspective, using photos and descriptions emphasising lifestyle, cosiness and the balcony as a continuation of the home space. Thereafter, the photos were populated with people relaxing and enjoying coffee or wine on sunny, nicely decorated balconies filled with flowers and tomato plants in pots.

A third topic that emerged in the interviews with staff at Altan.dk was how the process of establishing balconies developed differently in various parts of the city. This process was easiest in low-income neighbourhoods with a high degree of rented housing. Here, building and homeowners quickly agreed on the balconies to be established and tenants rarely protested. If they did, their concerns were mainly regarding daylight. On the contrary, residents in more affluent neighbourhoods with many cooperative and privately owned flats would forcefully engage in choosing the balcony type, size and location rather than follow the expertise of the balcony company. A typical struggle was the size of the balcony. Residents would often want the biggest balconies possible, whereas the company knew that these would hardly be approved by the city authorities. While the balconies in the beginning of the boom had been mostly standard models, the current trend required more customised solutions that better suited the facades.

Would we have gained these insights if the project had not been partially funded by Altan.dk? We could certainly still have interviewed the staff, and they would probably have given us the same information. However, they were inclined to spend a little more time with us and share more information due to the company's involvement. As for our perspective, the direct access we had to the company may have prompted us to include the construction process of balconies in our study rather than focusing solely on the balcony as a socio-spatial matter between building and users. This approach may in fact permit a more dynamic view of architecture in which the built environment is regarded not as a static entity but a moving project in which numerous human and non-human actors are continuously entangled. As Latour & Yaneva (2008) argue, this is precisely the quality we forget when studying architecture as completed masterpieces in static 3D CAD renderings: "Where do you place the angry clients and their sometimes conflicting demands? Where do you insert the legal and city planning constraints? Where do you locate the budgeting and the different budget options? Where do you put the logistics of the many successive trades?" (p. 81). Instead, Yaneva (2012) proposes that we focus on "controversies in architecture" or "urban controversies" (Yaneva & Heaphy, 2012) in order to "witness, analyse and map the variety of elements of which a building is constituted together with the vast range of factors that impinge on design" (Yaneva & Heaphy, 2012, p. 29).

In our fieldwork among balcony users, including residents, neighbours and other city dwellers, the focus was rarely on Altan.dk. When introducing the project to informants, we explained its conception and funding, but apart from that, the emphasis was mainly on people's everyday practices and experiences with balconies. If the informants themselves mentioned the process of installing their balconies and their contact with building contractors, we asked further questions about their experiences. A few informants immediately reacted when we mentioned the company's name – one woman even refused to participate in the project, as described in the beginning of this article, because she apparently had had unfortunate experiences with the company. Another informant agreed to participate but later regretted the decision and demanded that we delete the interview, as he feared that it may be abused for marketing purposes. A few others evaluated their perception of the company – or other balcony companies – and their role in the process of establishing the balconies. In general, however, people were far more concerned with their own particular balcony, their relationship with their neighbours or the urban surroundings near them.

Our observations showed that much of the daily use of balconies consisted of minor practical activities. People went out onto their balconies to shake a blanket, empty a handbag upside down, spray their shoes, smoke a cigarette or simply to air out the apartment while hoovering. Yet in their own descriptions, their use of balconies was mostly for the purpose of drinking coffee or wine, barbecuing or relaxing with a book. Just as the marketing material of Altan.dk promised, the balcony owners tended to think of their balconies as a continuation of their living room – a private outdoor space. Many, however, had at some point experienced the space as not quite so private. Neighbours nearby could follow their conversations, or young people partying in the street would disturb their quiet sunset drink. In a few cases, these instances evolved into open conflict, and one informant had decided to sell her apartment due to the lack of a quiet outdoor space. To her, the balcony held the promise of a private outdoor space that did not materialise due to the close neighbours and urban surroundings. Most of the time, however, people would adjust their balcony use and expect themselves and others to be tolerant city dwellers. New forms of boundary making emerged in creative and subtle ways involving plants, furniture, body postures and other modifications.

In Scandinavia, such subtle negotiations of domestic boundaries are embedded within social relations (Garvey, 2005; Gullestad, 1997; 2002). Yet by changing the boundaries between the home and the public sphere, the balconies also take part in the social life of these spaces and the relationships between them. Interviews and observations from our fieldwork indicated that differences between neighbours became increasingly manifest and bothersome as material boundaries became more blurred

and porous. Consequently, we may need to reconsider existing understandings of domestic boundaries that cast the home as a mere canvas for representing social relations (Garvey, 2005, p. 165) and also scrutinise the manner in which the materiality of such boundaries come to matter. These perspectives have been pursued elsewhere (Stender, 2022; Stender & Jepsen, 2022), and I shall consequently not elaborate further the findings from the fieldwork, but rather return to the consequences of industrial research for the researcher's role and freedom of research.

Discussion of dilemmas in industrial research

The research project has now been completed and, in the process of communicating its findings, new dilemmas have emerged. We would normally disclose our sources of funding on websites, reports and other venues that communicate the research results, but if we include the logo of Altan.dk in the project website or films, it may appear to be a commercial rather than a research project. Instead, we chose to include no logos, neither that of the university nor the Landowner's Investment Fund, and only in background text explain the project's funding and conception. The contact with Altan.dk has been primarily through the advisory board meetings, which have been unproblematic. Our funding partners have expressed genuine interest in our research, and the few times they have been sceptical of any critical findings have only helped us sharpen our arguments and explicate points that we as architectural researchers and social scientists may have taken for granted. The fact that we initiated the project ourselves and already had a developed and partly funded

Figure 3
On hot summer days, Copenhagen's Nordhavn neighbourhood is teeming with young people sunbathing and partying, which has led to conflict with residents. Often, they have exchanged their house in the suburbs for a flat with a big balcony and bring with them both full sets of garden furniture and expectations of enjoying peaceful views from their private outdoor space.
PHOTO: NANNA NIELSEN

project description helped to ensure an unambiguous distribution of roles and a clear agreement securing our freedom of research.

Nevertheless, as the above examples demonstrate, a good contract does not protect the research process from all dilemmas. As Cerwonka & Malkki (2007) argue, ethical dilemmas in social research cannot be overcome simply by meeting existing requirements in protocols, etc. Rather, they necessitate constant and close attention: "good social research demands a highly developed, ceaseless daily engagement with ethics as a process – an engagement that far exceeds the requirements of currently existing 'ethics committees' and 'human subject protocols' on university campuses" (p. 4). The same applies, I would argue, to the dilemmas encountered when industrial research is funded by key players in architecture, housing and urban design: they demand a highly developed, ceaseless daily engagement and balanced consideration.

For the Social Life of Balconies project, this means that we must consider how our relationship to Altan.dk may influence our approach and findings. For example, we have probably grown more acquainted with the perspective of industrial and construction-related actors than we would have under other circumstances. Furthermore, even if they do not actively seek to influence our findings, classic theory of reciprocity tells us that gifts, or in this case grants, are never truly free. The act of giving creates a social bond with an obligation to reciprocate (Mauss, 2002), and if we presume that the same reciprocity applies to research grants, the funding obliges the researcher to return the generosity in some form. In principle, that form should simply be original, valid research produced as described in the project description, but in this case, perhaps the implicit obligation also includes research that has applicability and even the potential to spark innovation for the grant giver.

On the other hand, grant givers are by no means the only, let alone the most important, recipients of the research. It is the academic peers who hold the power to qualify or disqualify a certain text as 'valid' research. As Hastrup (2004) argues, knowledge is a social achievement consisting of meanings that have 'made it': "Not only have they made it through the registration filter of the ethnographer in the field, but they have also made it through the institutional filters of the academic discipline. Knowledge, therefore, is no simple 'object', because it bears all the marks of its institution, including a particular 'style of reasoning' (p. 457). The filters Hastrup refers to are formalised in peer-review processes, but they are also informally at work in conversations with colleagues or, even more implicitly, in imagined conversations and the processes of formulating and reformulating one's academic argumentation. In the case of the balconies project, this dynamic may in fact increase our reluctance to highlight any positive social aspects of balconies simply because such findings might be perceived as – and possibly also used as – marketing
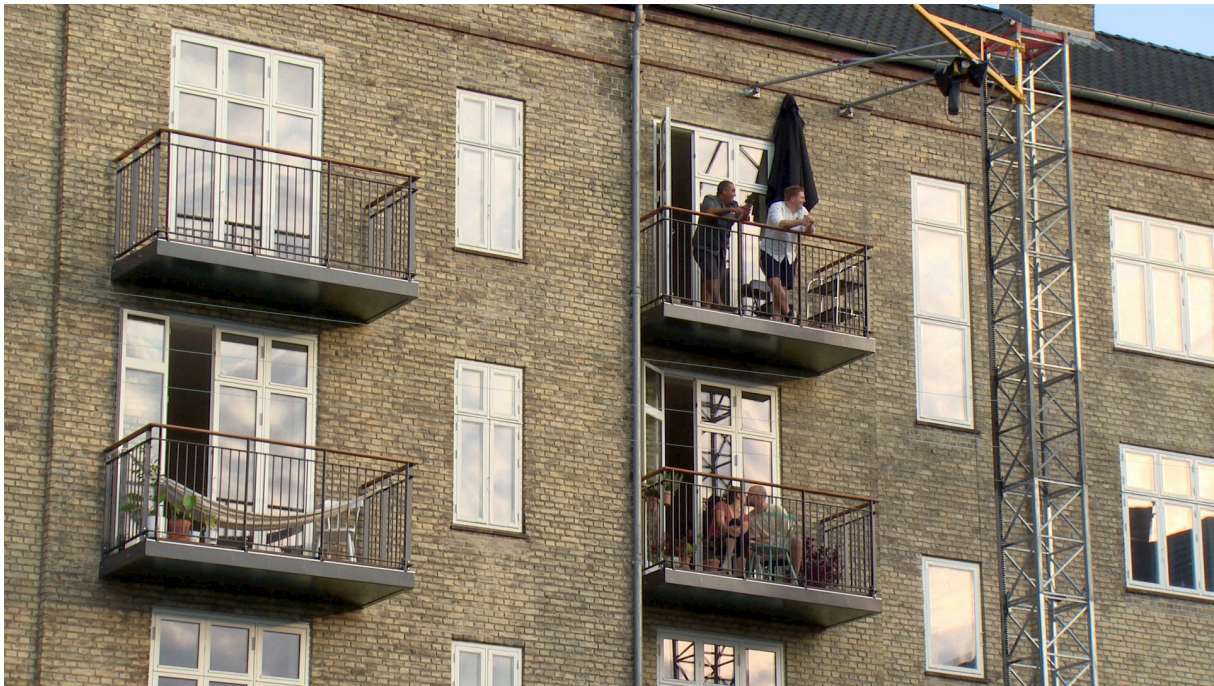
material for Altan.dk. In order to prove that we are not beholden to the industry, we may unknowingly tend towards a more critical approach to balconies than we would otherwise have employed.

Although such conflicting considerations and dilemmas may be especially apparent in a project like *The Social Life of Balconies,* they are possibly present in most research projects. In fact, perhaps we should regard not only architecture but also architectural research as a moving project, continuously entangling numerous human and non-human actors, rather than a static entity. Mirroring the questions posed by Latour & Yaneva (2008) regarding architecture, we could approach architecture research by asking: Where do you place the angry grant givers and their sometimes conflicting demands? Where do you insert the academic peer-review constraints? The point is, of course, that also for research we need to identify, analyse and map the many elements constituting research, along with the vast range of factors that impinge upon the production of knowledge. As Mosse (2015) stresses "what we claim to know, or want to say, is unavoidably and in complicated ways bound by the ethics of involvement, detachment, and institutional location" (p. 128).

Whereas anthropology has long since abandoned the model of the researcher as a neutral and detached witness to social life, this ideal remains prevalent in at least some architectural research (Stender, 2016). However, even anthropological discussions of research ethics and the researcher's position often focus on the relationship between the researcher and the field studied rather than on the institutional affiliation and funding of the research. Yet just as such actors impinge on the process of architecture, so they impinge on the process of research. Particularly in industrial and applied research, we cannot entirely avoid this, nor can we as social researchers avoid interfering with and influencing the field studied. However, we can reflect on this process and make its methods transparent. Knowledge is always situated, as Haraway states, and rather than attempt to avoid this fact, we should strive to ground knowledge by accounting for how it is locally and historically contingent (Haraway, 1988, p. 590). Haraway thus argues against claims to universal knowledge that are "ways of being nowhere while claiming to see comprehensively" (1988, p. 584). She also argues against relativistic knowledge claims that she sees as "a way of being nowhere while claiming to be everywhere equally" (p. 584). Instead, she proposes holding on to the particular, partial and embedded and thereby make apparent how knowledge becomes "views from somewhere" (p. 590). As Simonsen et al. (2021) argue, an implication of this process is that it diverts attention from individual knowledge creation to knowledge created by communities: "This process involves searching for connections and negotiating compromises, and it is thereby about the creation and re-creation of knowledges in communities, rather than about isolated individuals' 'knowledge creation'" (p. 4).

That knowledge is situated applies to research in general, but those of us involved in industrial research may have a particular responsibility in clarifying the situatedness at play in our knowledge production. First, when funded by key players in architecture, housing and urban design, the field studied may be partly convergent with our institutional and financial affiliation. Second, such industry players tend to demand the production of 'evidence', subscribing to a belief in universal knowledge claims. This may also be a consequence of the development of industrial research, which was once dominated by technical sciences founded in a positivistic tradition of science. The Danish Building Research Institute thus has a long tradition of industrial research, but it is mainly researchers with backgrounds in engineering and technical sciences who have collaborated with private companies, whereas architects and social science researchers have been more inclined to fund their research through philanthropic foundations and charitable organisations. Because of the unusual financial arrangement of The Social Life of Balconies project, it seemed crucial for us to ensure our academic freedom in the contract from the outset. In other projects, however, the focus of our research may be predetermined from foundations or grant givers, and when dealing with non-commercial stakeholders generally perceived as 'the good guys', we may be less alert to ensuring academic freedom, even when it is challenged.

A growing share of research funding is thus earmarked for particular agendas with beneficent purposes like social inclusion, sustainable development, prevention of climate change, etc. This implies the risk of research blindly reproducing prevalent understandings of urgent societal problems rather than fundamentally developing the conception of such problems. Paradoxically, an industrially funded project like The Social Life of Balconies, that we have ourselves initiated and defined, can thus provide greater academic freedom than those research projects that, although funded by seemingly more neutral sources of funding, are dedicated to solving predefined problems. Furthermore, full academic freedom may not be possible to be ensured for the industrial researcher in every single project. Still, this does not resign us to blindly following prevalent agendas and predefined conceptions. Rather, we can strive to challenge these and pragmatically build our academic freedom in between our various projects. With one project earmarked for studying balconies in the gentrified central city and another for studying processes of transformation in disadvantaged suburban housing areas, overlapping insights occur regarding place attachment, boundary making and power relations at play in contemporary architecture and built environments (Stender, 2022). Would basic research projects, detached from industry, better illuminate such questions? Possibly, but they may also lose close contact with the field studied and, consequently, stakeholders in the industry may take less notice of the research executed.

Figure 4
Building studied before and after Altan.
dk's establishment of balconies. Indus-
trial research can give easier access to
cases and insight in, for example, the
sphere of building contractors, yet such
collaborations are also full of dilemmas
and require a very clear distribution of
roles.

PHOTO: NANNA NIELSEN

Concluding remarks

As public funding of research is increasingly limited, researchers must
turn to alternate sources, and it seems appropriate that key players in
the building industry contribute to research on the social effects of the
built environments they create. As demonstrated by The Social Life of
Balconies Project, industrial research has obvious advantages, such as
the possibility of greater insight into industry perspectives as well as a
more direct impact for the research conducted. However, as this article
has discussed, industrial research funded by stakeholders in architec-
ture, housing and urban design also carries dilemmas. Is it possible to
conduct social research that is both academically sound and critical, yet
relevant and applicable to the industry? How can demands from grant
givers and stakeholders be balanced with those of colleagues, peers
and reviewers? Can the funding source alone create a suspicion of bias
that will undermine the legitimacy of the research? Will this cause the
researcher to be more critical than usual to demonstrate that they are
not in the pocket of the industry?

Using The Social Life of Balconies project, I have argued that a good
contract establishing academic freedom and a clear definition of roles
from the outset is of utmost importance when collaborating with the
industry. However, even the finest legal consultants and contracts can-
not do the job alone. The contribution and validity of industrial research
inevitably depends on the continuous balancing and careful navigation
of the industrial researcher. I have thus argued that, similar to a dy-
namic approach to architecture, architectural research can be regarded
as moving projects ever entangling numerous human and non-human

actors rather than as static entities. This implies that for both buildings and knowledge production we must witness, analyse and map the variety of elements constituting both buildings and research alongside the many factors that impinge upon them. This perspective also entails not simply providing 'evidence' as sometimes requested by industry's stakeholders but insisting on critically scrutinising the relationships between different stakeholders in industrial and architectural research and their effects on our knowledge production.

On the one hand, this means foregrounding the process by which knowledge, rather than being a mere object, is situated and produced in communities and, on the other hand, we must not relinquish academic freedom but pursue the fundamental research necessary to challenge and develop prevalent understandings of urgent societal problems. A growing share of research is funded by industry, and even public research is increasingly earmarked for predefined agendas with beneficent objectives. While we might mourn this development, a more pragmatic response, I suggest, is seeking to establish academic freedom ourselves, where possible. For the industrial researcher, academic freedom cannot be taken for granted but must be fought for in every project, as well as in between them and in our academic discussions.

Acknowledgements

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