Differentiated decline in Danish outskirt areas
-Spatial restructuring and citizen-based development in the village of Klokkerholm

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Abstract

In the last 20 years, Danish rural areas have suffered from depopulation and economic decline, and this development seems to be accelerating. This means a negligence of buildings and infrastructure and hence a decay in architectonic and spatial qualities. A general schism observed in the discussion about Danish rural development seems to be that the main focus is kept on a national and regional level. The consequence is a lack of nuances in the overall debate and a missing ability to create positive developments, locally. Through studies of the village of Klokkerholm, this article investigates how potentials of a landscape urbanism based development (Waldheim 2006; Corner 1999) and the commitment from the local community in participative projects (Jones, Petrescu & Till 2005) can create differentiated development in an area of decline: A strategy using landscape and citizen driven 'dynamos' as triggers for a development, which aims to improve everyday life by creating new landscape, based spaces.

Introduction

The outskirt areas in Denmark are experiencing a continuous decline in population and economy due to an out-migration of people and capital and this development is accelerating. The same situation is evident in other parts of Europe and the rest of the world. This continuous decline is primarily due to an increased urbanization and centralization (both of which are consequences of the increased globalization); the result is an increased concentration of people and capital in highly developed urban agglomerations, leading people to move from the countryside towards the bigger cities. This gives an overall urban decline in the peripheries and urban growth in the central urban areas. In addition to this, it is important to bear in mind that growth and decline are two sides of the same coin, so if you zoom in, you will experience that overall declining areas have pockets of growth or potential growth hidden within them and vice versa (Laursen 2009).

Klokkerholm is placed in the center of Vendsyssel in the northern part of Denmark, an area often associated with the notion of 'Udkantsdanmark' where decline is more common than growth, and

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at first sight Klokkerholm might be considered as facing severe problems. But as the case will show us later on, Klokkerholm is a surprising case in which it perhaps is not that relevant to talk about decline, as the potentials seem bigger than the problems. However, there is room for improvement within the village and here the discovered potentials can be used as dynamos for development. The citizens in Klokkerholm have a strong wish for transformation, and they want to take responsibility, when it comes to the development of the village. In addition, Klokkerholm is situated in a beautiful moraine landscape with the region's biggest lake and scenic views. But the landscape represents unused potential. Furthermore, Klokkerholm has a small local foundation that donates between 400,000-800,000 DKK to local projects in and around Klokkerholm each year. We will argue that the combination of the local foundation, the landscape and the strong citizen commitment can be used as guidance for other cities placed in between growth and decline (Laursen & Andersson 2010).

National development tendencies in Denmark

At the national level, Denmark has for years developed at two different paces, dividing the Danish territory into two parts: The eastern part of Denmark, which has always been the most urban part of the country, and which is currently experiencing an increased urbanization, and the western part, which has always had a more rural character and which is now experiencing a decline in population (Laursen 2009). These two development directions are coined in the two urban scenarios of the H-City and the Rotten Banana, where the two metaphors tell the story in a simple way. The urban agglomeration along the Danish motorway system, which is called 'H-city' because of its shape, contains 2/3 of the Danish population. Furthermore, this urban system contains the five largest cities in Denmark. The continuously growing H-City creates an increasingly urbanized area in Denmark: an area where development, the housing prices and the business market have an upward tendency.

At the same time, shrinkage is taking place in the geographical outskirts of the national territory, from Lolland-Falster over South Funen and South Jutland to West Jutland and North Jutland. With reference to the famous European growth model of the 'Blue Banana', these declining areas have been dubbed 'the Rotten Banana', covering about one fifth of the Danish territory, but only 7% of the population (Tietjen & Laursen 2008; Hedegaard 2007). Thus, this is a very low-density area, mainly characterized by small towns and villages. According to the National Planning Report from 2006, an outskirt area is defined as the commuting catchment area for towns with fewer than 20,000 inhabitants, which are relatively far from any larger town (Miljøministeriet 2006: 21). However, the Rotten Banana covers a significantly larger area than the above definition, as it includes parts of West, South and North Jutland that are situated relatively far from the central Danish growth areas and which also are significantly declining, but which do not fall under the definition of the 2006 National Planning Report.

The authors of this article is of the opinion that the definition made by the National Planning Report is too narrow and in this article outskirts are to be considered as territories placed in the periphery of the national territory, far away from the national growth centres. This is supported by the fact that as many as one third of the Danish municipalities can expect a decline in population until 2030. The decline will be most pronounced in Ærø, Læsø, Lemvig, Albertslund and Tønder with a decline of more than 9% (Danmarks Statistik 2007).

In these declining Danish territories that suffer from a decline in population, a number of common negative characteristics are present, and long-range prognoses predict that the negative development in the Danish geographical outskirts has not peaked yet; some of these characteristics are:

· **Many elderly.** There is a higher share of elderly people in the outskirt areas. According to Statistics Denmark, the general tendency is that the municipalities placed in the periphery are expected to have a share of elderly that is considerably higher than the national average of 20%, indicating that the loss of people in these areas is going to increase in the coming years (Danmarks Statistik 2010).

· **Brain-drain.** It is often the young people that migrate from the outskirts to the bigger cities in order to take an education - and they do not all come back. As an example, only 4% of the young people from Langeland that get a higher education continue to live on Langeland as grown-ups. (Arbejderbevægelsens Erhvervsråd 2011).

· **Low housing prizes**. The house-prices per square meter are considerably lower in the shrinking areas than in the rest of the country. There is a difference of about 25.000 Danish kroner in the municipality where the house prices on average are the highest, which is in Gentofte (33,171 kr/m2) and the municipality where the house-prices per square meter on average are the lowest, which is Lolland (7,974 kr/m2) (Boliga 2011)

· **Vacant houses.** The number of vacant housing is considerably higher in the shrinking areas. Nationally, an average of about 5% of the housing stock is vacant, whereas it is about double in the Danish outskirt areas. (Ny Thisted & Realdania 2006).

But as the Klokkerholm-case later on will indicate, there are both positive and negative stories to tell about the 'Rotten Banana', and it is wrong to consider the whole territory as only negative. Expressions like the rotten banana give a sharper edge to a very negative image. In these stories, the positive aspects such as cheap housing opportunities, the qualities of a neighbourhood, the scenic nature etc. seem to disappear. We seem to forget that in the Danish outskirt areas there are villages and small communities that are very well-functioning and where there is a lot of potential for further development. In relation to this there is a need for telling new narratives, which do not depend on growth alone, but which bring new values to the forefront such as focusing on creating a good everyday life environment. So, instead of considering the Danish outskirt areas as one grey mass of decline, we have to address the Danish outskirt areas with a differentiated view.

Differentiated development with a focus on landscape and citizens
This differentiated view is also necessary when we plan and design for the Danish outskirts where a strategic profiling, based upon localized potentials, weaknesses and strengths, becomes an increasingly important planning tool (Tietjen & Laursen 2008). By differentiated development we refer both to development and out-phasing, meaning that we should develop the places that have a potential and out-phase places where the possibilities seem very small. This recognition pinpoints that not all areas in a declining territory can be transformed. When working with negative urban development, one has to take into consideration if the strategic conditions are present within a given urban territory, as it is essential to bear in mind that new developments cannot take place everywhere and that some territories are faced with unwinding (Laursen 2009).

On the other hand, we have to strategically pinpoint areas with a local potential which can be successfully further developed. Some areas in the declining territory can gain from further development, not with growth as an immediate goal, but with the prospect of creating dynamic and interesting places with a focus on improving conditions in the declining areas. This might be attained by focusing on factors like quality of life, quality of the public, quality of the built environment and in this way strengthen the existing identity of the territory, thus creating a good living environment. Hence, what matters is the quality of life rather than size and growth, where the quality of life could be goals for communities that cannot compete in size, global connectivity and economic growth in order to generate a well-functioning society (Laursen 2009).

The incorporation of both development and unwinding presupposes a nuanced view of the territory in order to recognize the multi-facetted picture of the territory. But we must also use the possibilities that actually are to be found in these declining territories to create distinction. In Klokkerholm, the analysis shows that the fiery souls of the community and the scenic nature are the potentials. With this as background, the present article investigates spatial restructuring through a landscape strategy and citizen- based development as ways of finding a strategy that can help the village of Klokkerholm to continue being a well-functioning village.

Methodological approach

From a methodological approach, the Klokkerholm - case can be described as a development project with the intention of establishing the grounds for a bigger research project focusing on a praxis related way of working with the problems of the Danish outskirt areas, and thus having an applied research approach (Stake 2000; Flyvbjerg 2004; Elfsborg 2006). The aim is to establish a methodological approach that is based on interaction with the context and its actors and agents. This means knowledge production based on both analysis in a strict academic perspective and hence knowledge production based on tacit as well as practical knowledge among actors and agents in the given context (Schön 1991). The intention of using this method is not to prevent decline but rather to start a differentiated development with the aim of understanding the dialectic between growth and decline and hence contribute to the improvement of everyday life in outskirt territories. In some cases it will prevent decline through creation of growth in an economic perspective, in others it will approach decline but from an aesthetic perspective, while in yet others the consequence is new knowledge about socio-economic conditions etc.

The method is not new; it is a combination of several strands in academic research from traditional qualitative and quantitative approaches (Stake 2000; Flyvbjerg 2004) to more radical action based approaches (Nielsen & Svensson 2006). This means applying classical methods such as stakeholder interviews, analysis of written documents, plans and articles, surveys etc. Hence it also calls for an interactive approach with citizen-based workshops, public meetings and development of actual proposals for design, so that one can start a discussion of *Research by Designs and Experiments* (Andersson 2009). In the Klokkerholm case the central tools have been stakeholder interviews, analysis of plans and context and most importantly workshops and public meetings with citizens and stakeholders in and around Klokkerholm. The workshop, meetings and debates form the starting points for a new discourse and ideas for new designs and experiments with a landscape urbanism approach in and around Klokkerholm. The next iteration in the Klokkerholm case will be new interviews and analysis of the on-going processes, its documents

and plans 1 year after the researchers left the project in November 2010. This will indicate whether the experiments and designs based on a landscape urbanism approach have an effect on Klokkerholm seen from social, cultural and economic perspectives. So far, the project has prevented the closure of the 7-9th grade in the local school, more than 200 citizens have participated in the process (20 percent of the village population), and 75 persons have signed up for a new association called 'Klokkerholm - the village in the Landscape'. The sole purpose of this association is to continue the landscape urbanism approach and build new projects in Klokkerholm. So indications of an effect are present, but new iterations are necessary to validate if the development and the landscape urbanism approach combined with a citizens based development will prove sustainable from both a social, cultural and economic viewpoint.

Theoretical aspects of landscape

Many Danish outskirt areas are situated in scenic landscapes, and it seems relevant to use the landscape as a characteristic structure in these areas, exploiting its potentials and resources in the development of declining territories (Laursen 2009). A devaluation of built structures is currently taking place, and it seems necessary to enter new layers and find new connections between existing structures in order to establish a development possibility in these small communities on the fringes of Denmark. The thesis is that the accessibility and/or attractiveness of the local landscape could be a decisive factor for the development potential of individual localities (Tietjen & Laursen 2008). The French architectural theorist Sébastien Marot points out that "the preservation of the legacy of these agrarian communities, the care of their resources, and the adaptation to new, changing economies demand true intervention in the form of innovative landscape projects;" (Marot 1999: 49) this indicates that an important task lies within developing the landscape on all scales from local public spaces to extensive multifunctional landscapes, where the landscape can be the element providing structure, identity and form to a given site.

This focus on landscape is related to an expansion of the notion of landscape. Here, landscape is more than just a traditional pastoral understanding of green areas, but can be understood as a ground plane (Wall 1999: 233). Thereby, it is not only the open green areas that are understood as landscape, but also the architecture and infrastructure enter into a holistic landscape approach. This is related to the fact that increased merging, dilution and blurredness are taking place between built-, open- and infra-structures, creating a hybrid condition (De Geyter 2002). This holistic scope of the concept of landscape is evident in the European Landscape Convention from 2000, in which it is stated that landscape forms a whole where natural and cultural components are perceived together (Thompson & Herlin 2004; Council of Europe 2000).

Landscape urbanism

> *'Landscape Urbanism is an emerging field that recombines the art of landscape architecture, urban planning, human health and ecosystems, with community involvement in the built environment process.'* (Cote 2008: 1)

This notion of landscape can be related to the approach of landscape urbanism. Landscape urbanism merges the two disciplines of architecture/urban design and landscape architecture[1]. Landscape urbanism is part of an emerging direction within urban design, architecture, planning

and landscape architecture, where the urban is considered a changeable process into which it is important to incorporate social, economic, historical and cultural aspects as well as ecological and natural processes, when designing and planning the urban fabric. This means that it is important to diagnose the urban and use the local conditions as a point of departure in future interventions. Here, a critical aspect could be that due to the focus on processes, the actual design of sites could be neglected.

In particular, landscape urbanism is found to be relevant as an analytical - and design tool in complex natural environments, post-industrial sites, public infrastructure, declining urban territories and as a tool to handle massive urban sprawls. The reason that the landscape urbanism approach seems applicable in declining areas is that it looks at the urban as a dynamic and changeable process and not a static, designated unit. Furthermore, landscape urbanism takes its point of departure in the landscape; this means that in areas where the built structures are devaluated, it seems important to focus on other elements besides buildings and here the landscape and the design of landscape could take over as an important planning object – creating interesting landscapes within the urban structures.

The role of landscape
Thus, landscape urbanism takes its point of departure in the landscape when designing the urban, indicating that the open spaces are planned before the buildings and infrastructure. This gives an opportunity to recognize the open spaces as an important element in the urban fabric, making room for public everyday life. In addition, a determined work with the landscapes can unite a fragmented urban area in a unifying strategy due to the landscape's ability to connect and structure the urban surface.

Thus, the landscape can become an active instrument that shapes a community, as part of a process that enriches and produces a culture that is related to a specific place and its specific culture (Corner 1999). By using the potentials of landscape, it becomes possible to step out from the crowd and brand an area as a unique locality, in that way creating a distinctive attractor. When focusing on the landscape, it is often regarded as de-culturalising a place, implying that nature takes over and culture disappears. However, by working purposefully with the landscape, this can also be considered as an element in shaping culture, creating an identity for a specific place by using the existing spatial possibilities or by adding new layers. Thus, the landscape becomes a planning instrument that can improve the living environment architecturally, socially and structurally due to its inherent ability to connect, structure, and bind.

The Cold Hawaii project in Klitmøller[2] could be considered a good example of a landscape strategy, even though the people behind the project might not have thought of it as a landscape urbanism project. Here the excellent surf conditions have led to a strategy using the landscape in an active way. The group behind the master plan considers surfing to be an excellent possibility for the area of Klitmøller to present itself as something unique and to become a place with a certain brand or identity that differs from its surroundings (Cold Hawaii 2008). The master plan is basically an explanation of the surf environment in Klitmøller, including a description of the different surf areas and also proposals for optimizing the existing surf places to create better conditions for surfers (and locals and tourists). By bettering the conditions, it becomes possible to attract more

surfers on a temporary as well as a permanent basis. The Cold Hawaii project tells a positive story in a region which is often connected with negative ones, using the resources of landscape to make a difference in a vague territory. Adding new layers to the existing narratives produces new ones that set the place apart and thus contribute to a population increase in Klitmøller as one of the only places in the Municipality of Thisted.

Theoretical aspects of citizen-based development

As stated above, landscape urbanism is a process-based approach to the built environment. If the outcomes of such processes are to be successful, then the participation of citizens as well as public and private actors and agents is important. The participatory approach to the built environment, architecture as well as landscape design and urban design, is even more needed when discussing outskirt areas of both growth and decline (Laursen & Andersson 2010). The task is to create starting points or small dynamos for urban landscape processes in outskirt villages, cities and countryside. These dynamos are to be fuelled by the energy of citizens and supported by public and private institutions and corporations.

In literature, participatory planning (Healey 1997) has been a core element in the development of many urban renewal projects in North European cities booming in the 1970s and 1980s. In architecture, user participation and user driven design have become more and more applied as an approach to creating architecture that actually accommodates the users' needs and desires for their buildings (Jones, Petrescu & Till 2005). Others go further and expand the role of architecture and urban design, claiming that design and architecture can be used in a socio cultural process – *Design as Activism* (Bell & Wakeford 2008), wherein architecture and design are seen as tools that can play a direct role in addressing critical social issues central to contemporary society (Bell & Wakeford 2008: 15). In the third world, the problem is the explosion of the urban population, whereas it is the decline in population in outskirt areas and cities of the Western World. The central point is that architecture, landscape urbanism and design all have a vital role when social, cultural and economic issues are to be solved in society today. Architects, planners and designers are therefore expanding their understanding of the built environment and what it means to design in the public realm.

> *'Designers materialize claims of citizenship in the public realm, bringing into form the confluence of social relations, practice and theory. The result is a breadth of material expressions rather than a singular hegemonic ideal. These artifacts embody the multicentric reality of civil society, and act as snapshots of dynamic democracy. The built environment recast as a collective resource: the 'creative commons'.'* (Aeschbacher & Rios in Bell & Wakeford 2008: 88)

The above quote states how architects, designers and urban designers have the ability to create new narratives through design. Designs as narratives, if they are created on the basis of a collective memory, can create a new shared sense of citizenship and enable new collective resources in place, new creative commons.

> *'What most agree is that any narrative of the city is a shared process. It demands a willingness to listen and learn, to focus on a 'shared authority' and to be at the core of the engagement with the community. It takes a great deal of research, community involvement and inventive mapping to find those narratives.'* (Chiles 2005: 191)

As described previously in this article, declining areas are defined in particular by decline in population and in economy; and this is important when setting up local projects. These projects need frameworks that encourage a big percentage of the citizens in the given village or countryside area to participate, when undertaking transformation projects. This mobilization is important if other actors, public as well as private institutions, are to enter into development projects in declining areas. These actors want to observe a strong and locally rooted commitment among the citizens claiming ownership of the development process. This means engaging in a combination of thorough analyses of the local resources, including the physical, the socio-cultural and the economic. These analyses are thus the basis of creating new common narratives that the citizens can engage with and develop further, before they again are turned into proposals for the transformation of the landscape and built environment - design.

In an article about architecture and planning as public disciplines, Giancarlo De Carlo writes that architecture is too important to be left to architects (De Carlo 2005: 13). Hereby De Carlo wants to underline that the process of transforming and building architecture and cities has to be considered a collective process where both architects and users are considered 'the architect'.

> *'In reality, architecture has become too important to be left to architects. A real metamorphosis is necessary to develop new characteristics in the practice of architecture and new behavior patterns in its authors: therefore all barriers between builders and users must be abolished, so that building and using become two different parts of the same process.'* (De Carlo 2005:13)

But what is the role of the 'real' planner or architect in this new collective notion of architecture as a shared process between the professional and the users? The role is, as it is also suggested in the Klokkerholm project, to expand the users' view of their own context and set up a range of hypotheses regarding a possible future – a new design based narrative. And very important, design based narratives that are formulated on the basis of user needs, thorough and critical analysis of the given local context and hence the professional view on the overall problem.

> *'The job of the planner is to expand the sequence of hypotheses, enlarging the image beyond the margins of the framework imposed by the client: to show what we could (should) achieve if, instead of obeying a condition of preordained subjection, we allowed an objective confrontation with real rights.'* (De Carlo 2005: 20)

As the Klokkerholm case will show, the research and development project is set up in an iteration of: *analysing-narrating-mobilizing-designing- mobilizing-effectuating.* This process mimics in many ways the collective architect/planner that Giancarlo Da Carlo talks about in his article, and it sets up a new collective narrative. As the case of Klokkerholm shows, more than 25% of the citizens of the village participated in the involvement process (Laursen & Andersson 2010).

Klokkerholm - an interactive research and development project

The Klokkerholm case is a project done in collaboration between Sparekassen Vendsyssels fund Klokkerholm and Aalborg University. The local foundation donates an amount of approximately 500,000 DKK annually, making room for funding of small projects and initiatives every year.

The project is carried out as a research and development project with contributions from both master students and researchers from the Department of Architecture and Media Technology at Aalborg University. The task was to develop critical analyses, participative process and hence future design scenarios for the village development in Klokkerholm. The project took place during 2010 with qualitative interviews, workshops, public meetings and project proposals. The result shall be seen as the starting point for a more interactive approach to research concerning outskirt areas, meaning a critical knowledge production and analysis – how are things done, combined with proposals for a future development – how could things also be done seen in a critical analytic approach? In this case, it is the combination of an urban landscape approach and the participative approach (Laursen & Andersson 2010; Nielsen & Svensson 2006). More than 20% of the adult population have participated in the development process, which is an extremely high level of participation in such projects. This clearly indicates the local potential and creates the basis for a social, cultural and economically sustainable process. At the same time, the participative processes have supported the analytical and conceptual considerations of the research project with strong indications of the importance of local involvement.

Figure 1: The local community is very engaged as here at a public community meeting, held May 29th 2010 as one of the participative processes of this development project (own photo).

Klokkerholm - the village in the landscape

Klokkerholm is a village of 933 inhabitants (DST 2010) situated in the municipality of Brønderslev. In relation to the discussion made in the first section the Municipality of Brønderslev is not an outskirt area by the 2006 National Planning Report definition, but if we look at the state of the municipality it has some challenges among others a small decline in the population on about 0.5% from 2010 to 2025 (befolkningsprognose Brønderslev Kommune).

Geographically, Klokkerholm is placed in the middle of the municipality very near the motorway system with only a 20-minute-drive to the capital of the region, Aalborg, and there are good connections to workplaces, shopping, leisure etc.
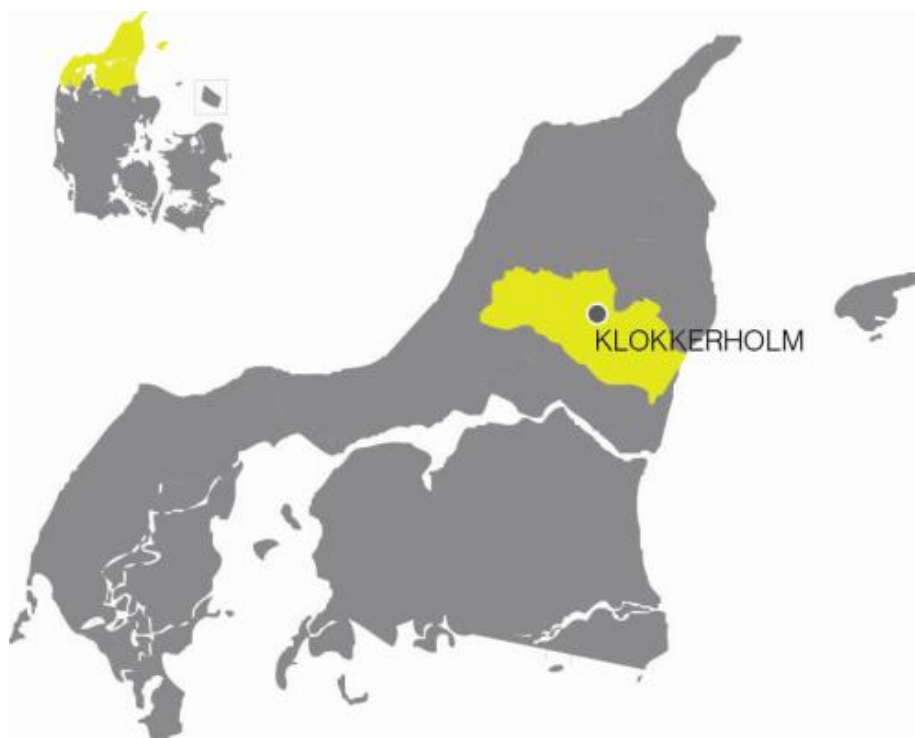

Figure 2: The geographical location of Klokkerholm (own illustration).

Figure 3 below shows that Klokkerholm is situated between developments and out-phasing in an area that is denoted as "falling behind". This development is reflected in the population prognosis for the Klokkerholm school district, where the school district will experience a decline of inhabitants of 11 % until 2020 (befolkningsprognose, BrønderslevKommune). This is also evident in the once so lively main-street where many businesses have closed down and the physical appearance of the main-street is worn-down.

However, the situation is not so bad that development seems impossible, it does, however, mean that the village has to make an effort in order to follow up and develop, especially in relation to settlement.
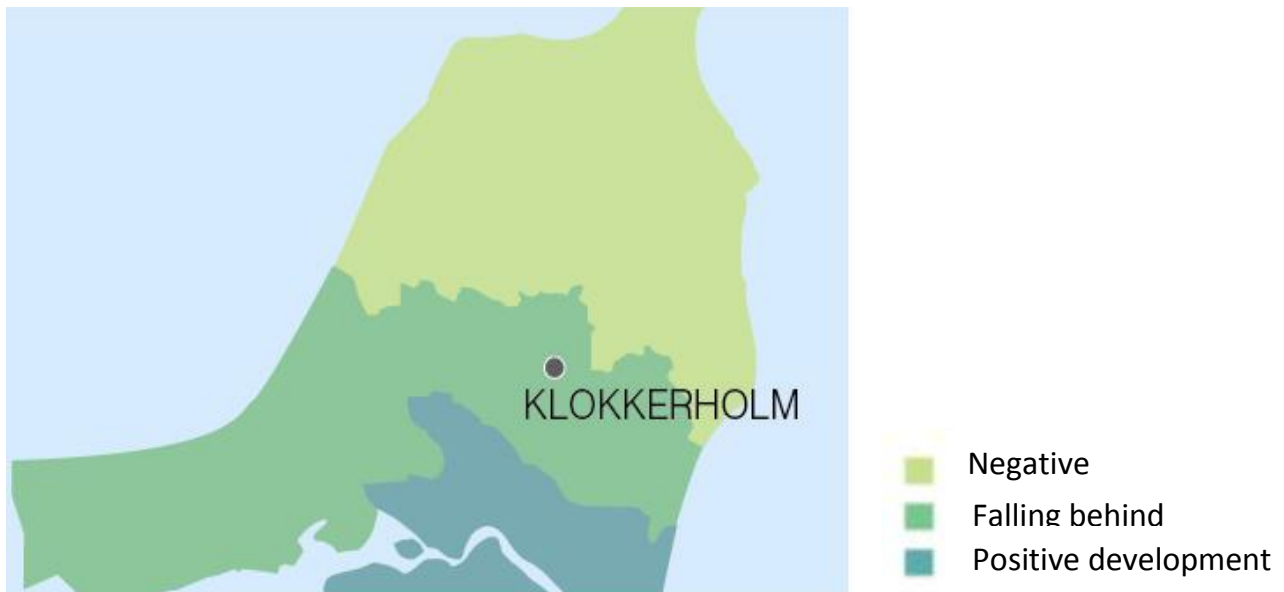
Figure 3: Klokkerholm is situated between growth and decline in an area, which in the future will experience problems. The map is inspired from a similar map found on: DRhttp://www.dr.dk/Nyheder/Indland/2010/04/27/161028.htm)

Even though Klokkerholm is placed in an area that is 'falling behind' and the village seems a bit worn-down, the village is in many ways well-functioning. Despite its size, the village has a number of functions that separates it from other villages of approximately the same population size. For example, there is a well- functioning supermarket with plans for expansion; a good school ranked number 56 in the country, according to certain statistics (Cepos). Besides, Klokkerholm has two large companies that together employ 179 employees; and finally, the bank Sparekassen Vendsyssel is an important element in the city, creating local funding.

Apart from that, Klokkerholm has a wide variety of citizen groups, focusing on everything from sports to local history. These citizen groups are situated around the village and are important meeting places within the village. Through a number of interviews with local citizens, it is apparent that the social networks in these clubs are very important for the city and that the social network in the village, in general, is one of the strengths of the village.

Finally Klokkerholm, as previously mentioned, is a village in the middle of a scenic landscape with a large lake in the middle of the village, a hilly area and agricultural fields. Thus, the village has a presence of landscape in different forms, and the landscape seems to be an enormous potential for the village and its future prospects. But looking at Klokkerholm, it becomes clear that the landscape is a potential that has not yet been fully used. The landscape is only situated outside the village and in order to change Klokkerholm's appearance as a boring town that looks the same as other villages, the landscape could be drawn into the city creating a village standing out from neighbouring villages, in that way exploiting its advantages to attract people to the village.

Figure 4: The scenic landscape of Klokkerholm could be used more proactively (own photo).

Thus, the analysis of Klokkerholm explains that Klokkerholm has potential, such as the proximity to Aalborg via the motorway, the active community life and the good school. Apart from this, it has been surprising to discover a village in the middle of a scenic landscape that at the same time has a well-functioning business life with two large industrial workplaces, several craftsmen businesses, the school, the nursing home, the bank and the grocer's, which alltogether presents a village with approximately 300 workplaces, where roughly one fourth of the employees at the local workplaces live in Klokkerholm. This leaves great potential for a landscape based housing strategy making more employees in Klokkerholm settle down in the village. The village has a lot of potentials but they do not seem to be fully exploited, and for a village like Klokkerholm situated in an area which in general is facing difficulties, it is important to work proactively in order to maintain the number of inhabitants.

Landscape development strategy

On the basis of the participation processes and the analysis, the research project proposed a development strategy focusing on Klokkerholm as a residential village in the landscape. This was done using the scenic landscape as point of departure and thus making Klokkerholm, the village in the landscape, visible to the surroundings, hopefully creating a future Klokkerholm that is an attractive place to live in.

Throughout the analysis, it was seen that the landscape has a prevailing role in the village today, as well as a resource for future development. However, today the landscape is too poorly used as a resource. Therefore it seems reasonable to take a point of departure in the landscape in an expanded way - as the theoretical sections indicate - and use the landscape as a tool for

development; beginning to design the open spaces of the village enhancing the urban environment. This landscape strategy will be carried out in three north-south going bands. The three bands cover some of the main movement corridors in the village, and they also contain the majority of public- and business activities. The scenic Møllesø Lake, which is a very central and important landscape element in the village, binds the three landscape bands together. By working purposefully with these three bands, the village can create a stronger identity as a landscape based village.

In order for the landscape strategy to succeed, it has to be accompanied by a series of social, economic and cultural processes, and here the village has a number of existing elements that seem important to incorporate. The most important task is to activate the citizens' commitment in the village, as it is from the villagers that the energy and the ideas for the future must come. The second element is to formalize the citizen involvement and incorporate it into the economic involvement from the local foundation – SparekassenVendsyssels fund Klokkerholm. The combination of local commitment and local funding makes it possible to approach local government and seek further funding from external foundations. The third and final element is to incorporate the well-functioning school and the local business life to create an approach that is linked to social, cultural and economic resources.
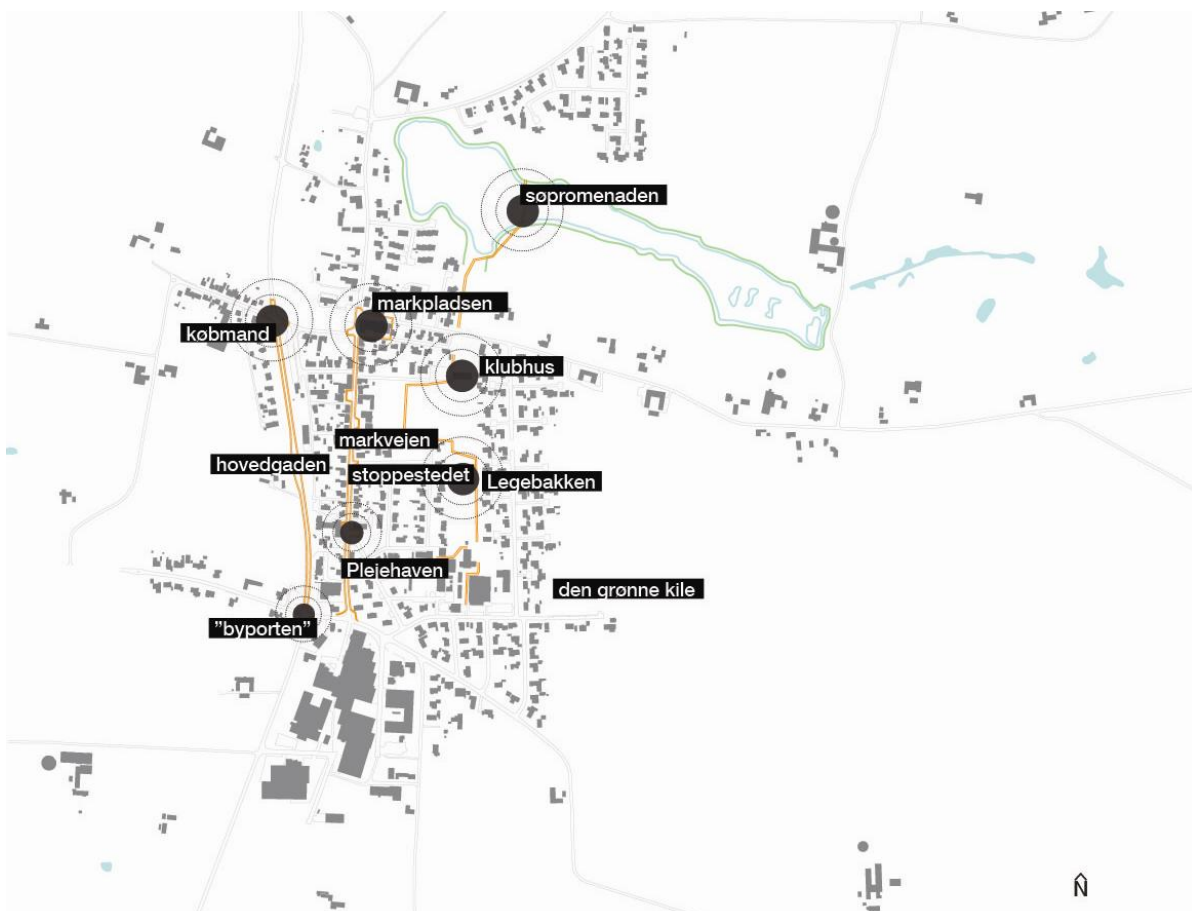

Figure 5: The three north-south going bands wherein the landscape development strategy will take place (own illustration created on a background map with copyright to Brønderslev Municipality and kortcenter.dk)

The three landscape bands are named The Green Corridor, The Landscape Track and The Main Street, and all are working with the concept of the village in the landscape. Within these three bands projects with a landscape character are created, setting up new meeting places and rallying points for the villagers. By using the landscape, the worn-down main street is transformed into a landscape track converting worn- down structures, closed businesses or vacant houses into landscape pockets using the character of the surrounding landscape in the transformation process. Furthermore, the landscape is used to strengthen the view of the city, when traveling to Klokkerholm on the new main street, which was formerly a bypass road. Here, traffic is slowed down, and the landscape is developed into structures that indicate an exciting city life. Finally, the landscape is used to intensify the recreational and sporting areas of the city in The Green Corridor with new landscape layers creating new functions and aesthetic qualities, connecting the Lake Site and the school in a North-South bound ribbon.

Figure 6: The yellow square placed at the new main-road (own illustration)

The purpose of the landscape strategy is to combine nature and landscape by adding new layers of activity and recreation, either creating new places and opportunities for play and sport, or making it possible to take a pause, a walk or just experiencing the village. Moreover, the strategy is to upgrade the physical appearance of the village working with landscape and architecture and the construction of new spatial installations.

All activities along the three new ribbons are based on ideas developed in the participative process with citizens and school classes. The main purpose of the strategy is to strengthen daily life in the village and thus attract new citizens, especially families.

Figure 7: The worn-down former main-street is transformed into a landscape structure (own illustration).

Conclusion

The Klokkerholm case shows us that there is a strong potential in using design and architecture as activism in order to create future positive narratives, which are realizable because of a participative process with local independent, financial support. This article has argued that the combination of a landscape urbanism approach with a participative model is a way to create village and rural development that focuses on the small interventions, which can improve everyday life. Both theoretical approaches focus on two local resources that are present in many rural areas like Klokkerholm, the first being the landscape potential and the second the local wish to create new narratives for a future village life, also on the outskirts of Denmark. And finally, both approaches are often low cost, when it comes to future operation costs. The landscape-based initiatives have almost no operation costs, and the involvement of the citizens secures an ownership of the projects, which again means that local citizens take an interest in the projects. But a basic funding is needed, like the one the local foundation puts forth; and the local funding creates a local belief in the possibility for change, and that is not attainable in all small Danish villages.

After the research and development project ended in November 2010, the citizens in Klokkerholm and the local foundation have continued their work. More than 70 citizens are part of a new NGO – 'Byen i Landskabet'. The purpose is to work with the realization and further landscape development in the village. The combination of financial support and citizen involvement also means that the municipality of Brønderslev has engaged in the development process.

Cases like Klokkerholm have the potential for survival, due to the landscape potentials, the local foundation, the private sector and, most importantly, because the citizens of Klokkerholm take responsibility for their own future.

In the on-going debate in Denmark, most discussions concerning the Danish outskirt areas are only about decline; these, in turn, escalate discussions about centralism, which in the end accelerates depopulation and economic decline. The Klokkerholm case indicates that, by setting up the right process and challenging this one-dimensional discussion, pockets of growth can be developed in declining areas. These small pockets of growth can, over time, become small dynamos of development in rural Denmark.

In the case of Klokkerholm, the combination of local money, local participation and local landscape potentials seem to be a good foundation for the future development of the village, where the combination of landscape urbanism and participatory approach appears to be a relevant method to explore. This method has no intention of being an approach that solves all the problems Klokkerholm is facing in the future; on the contrary, this method wants to contribute to improving the physical appearance of the village by working in a determined way with the open structures and trying to create an attractive village, fully exploiting its potentials. This approach of focusing on landscape instead of built structures and adding new layers to the already existing landscape in order to enhance the possibilities of having a good everyday life could be interesting in other Danish villages, because many Danish outskirt villages are situated in the middle of scenic nature.

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[1] The field of landscape urbanism was introduced in the landscape Urbanism symposium and exhibition in 1997, organized by Charles Waldheim (Waldheim 2006: 23)

[2] Local surfers in the Surf-club NASA have developed what they call: master plan for Cold Hawaii, http://coldhawaii.eu/masterplanen/, on September 24th 2008.