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Suburban Development - in Search of the Language of the Suburbs

Abstract

Several Danish suburbs are facing major challenges that endeavour to cope with (among other factors) counteracting the segregation of suburbs into socially sharply separated residential areas. Therefore, these years see the post-war era's suburban areas being revitalized and urban life, urban qualities and community are being discussed in relation to the suburbs.

In the process of re-imagining the suburb it is important to analyse which factors could counteract segregation. Therefore, different types of suburban public spaces are mapped, with the purpose of exploring the design and the everyday use of suburban public spaces through urban life studies, architectural analysis and anthropological fieldwork.

At play in the case studies of the PhD project are physical settings for community and as theoretical framework Hajer & Reijndorp's term "exchange" (compared to "the meeting") is used to open up the discussion and the cultural mind-set related to the development of the Danish suburb.

Keywords: Suburban development, Vejle, Denmark, Hajer & Reijndorp, Sieverts.

Introduction

In the Danish think tank "The city 2025" Professor Claus Bech-Danielsen states:

> "Cities and suburban design are crucial to how we meet and unfold our everyday life. At the same time the democratic processes around urban development help to create a common understanding of cities and their identity. Therefore urban development is of vital importance to community" (Bech-Danielsen et. al. 2014, p. 5).

Over the past decades, major Danish cities and suburbs have become increasingly segregated, and it counteracts social life to unfold across social, economic and cultural boundaries. It is natural to seek communities with people similar to oneself, but it is a problem, when residents do not meet across these communities, and when groups in the top and bottom of society isolate themselves from each other. It has impact on social cohesion and it creates insecurity in neighbourhoods. (Bech-Danielsen et. al. 2014).

Danish architects and urban planners are in these years interested in confronting the fragmented city, as there is a risk of life in the suburbs to take place in a parallel society where people live side by side without interacting (Bech-Danielsen 2013 a). In the suburbs this trend is seen is particularly evident due to the functionally separation and the large boundaries between the residential areas, for example between single-family houses and public housing schemes.

Therefore the potential for 'interconnections' of the suburban enclaves is sought in this PhD project through a combined architectural anthropology mapping of suburban public spaces. The project examines how suburban spaces are shaped, how they are used and how suburban residents unfold their everyday life. The PhD project's overall objective, based on the above matter of increasing segregation, is to contribute to a more varied understanding of public space in a suburban context, and in this paper a discussion about the nature of suburban spaces and their ability to provide a framework for meetings is unfolded. Hajer &

Reijndorp's term "exchange" (as an development of the term "meeting") is thus discussed in relation to public suburban spaces.

Generally we have a great knowledge about cities and how urban life is related to urban quality, through Jan Gehl's long-time urban life studies[1], both nationally and internationally, but the suburbs are a relatively unexplored field in terms of the public spaces. Therefore concrete suburban spaces and their use are analysed, to create insight into residents' movement patterns, routes and routines. How does the everyday life unfold and how does the physical environment shape it?

The purpose of this paper is to examine whether suburban public space creates a framework for meetings, namely "exchange" (a concept introduced by the Dutch researchers Hajer & Reijndorp, which is to be unfolded in this paper). It is examined whether such meetings or exchanges between residents bridge the gap between suburban enclaves - what links the life of the suburbs?

The thesis of the project is that it enriches both people and society as a whole when you meet across social classes, but does these meetings actually happen in a suburb where the original planning ideal were "keep your distance", and how does these public suburban spaces, which must create the framework for these meetings, look like?

The idea and design of the Danish suburb - and the link between suburb and city

The suburb has its offset from the city. A brief glance at the Danish historical development, back to industrialization, shows an intense urbanization, which soon resulted in housing shortage. The workers crammed together in apartments, that had great danger of fire and the buildings were leaking, cold and damp. The courtyards were unhygienic and the buildings in the back contained noisy and polluting industries. In the year1853, 5000 people died of cholera in Copenhagen (Bech-Danielsen, C. 2013 b).

This changed the view of the city; the city had become unhealthy.

People wanted to get out of the city, into the fresh air, out into the countryside. Light, air and landscape qualities became the aim and it is from here the suburban original qualities appear.

In 1898 we saw the outlines to "the Garden City" (Howard 1902) where the garden cities emerged from the central city, with direct transport corridors and appropriate distance.

The planning ideal for the suburb was "keep your distance" (Dirckinck-Holmfeld et al. 2013), which meant that industrial, residential, institutional and recreational areas were built in the outskirts of the classical city core, as enclaves with an infrastructure that made adequate spacing - a principle which at the time was the planners' best answer to the challenges of the city: sickness, pollution and overpopulation (ibid.).

The suburb is thus not planned with a vibrant city life and classic urban qualities in mind, as they had in their origin a strong link to the city centre (Bech-Danielsen 2013 b), where the cultural activities and urban life took place in squares, open spaces, shops, cafes etc. The suburb originated as an escape out of the city, but still gained it's meaning from the city centre and was thus dependent on it.

The before mentioned "distance principal" expressed it self physical in suburbs divided into zones, which at that time was the suburban way of solving the city's environmental problems.

With the energy crisis in 1973 and the suburban dependency of the car because of the long commuting distances, an identity crisis arises related to the suburbs. The extent of global environmental problems which resulted in the "Bundtland report" in 1983, added extra focus on environmental issues, and required international action, and even though the suburbs originally were the solution to urban environmental problems, now the suburbs were seen as a problem in them self because of growing energy consumption and massive commuting. The environmental problems, which the suburbs solved originally, were now no longer present, as they had been resolved. The suburb had lost its environment-improving identity and the story lost its meaning (Dirckinck-Holmfeld et al. 2013). A renewed interest in the city appeared.

On top of the identity crisis, we see a growing gap between the cities and suburbs, they are planned and build further and further outside the originally city centre. The identity is no longer gained from the city. Their

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[1] Gehl & Svarre 2013, Gehl 2010, Gehl & Gemzøe 2001.

existence as sub-urb lost its importance. The suburbs suddenly had to stand on their own feet.
But they do not have the same density as the city. If we look at the original planning ideal, it is not so strange. Each suburb is about to reinvent its own identity, while the suburbs as a whole faces many challenges, the most important being; consumption of landscape, segregated enclaves, homogeneity, energy consumption and commuting.
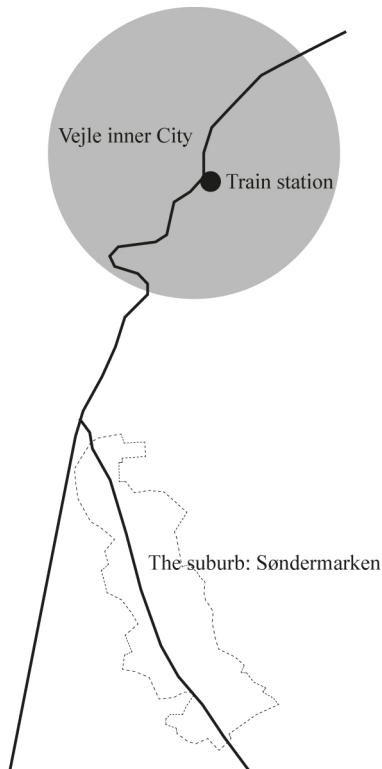The roles of city and suburb are therefore still in exchange.

Figure 1. The relation between suburb and inner city (Vejle case). In this case the distance between the inner city and the suburb is 4 kilometres.

Where We Live Now

In relation to this historic development, the German architect and planner Thomas Sieverts' term "Zwischenstadt" is used to reflect upon the current transformation and most important – our cultural notion and acceptance of the suburb. Sieverts talks about emancipation of the city and about creating an understanding of the suburbs; we need a cultural strategy that helps develop new attitudes, new relationships.

> "There is a lack of a common basic understanding about the nature of the contemporary city, as it all after all ... depends on" (Sieverts 2007 p. 9).

Sieverts gives a comprehensive introduction to the understanding of the relationship between urban and rural, as it is now.
"Zwischenstadt" (translated to "The in-between city") or his latest translation "Where we live now" is greater in extent, in range, and it contains the suburbs - it is what is developed after the suburb: "Where we live now".

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The in-between city – "Zwischenstadt" - is an artificial description, an expression of the lack of an appropriate term, because there is no general term for this type of urbanized landscape. In the United States researchers experiments with the concepts: Post-suburbia, Edge-city, Ex-urbs etc., but so far none of them are fully articulated (Sieverts 2005 p. 27). Nor "Zwischenstadt" can be said to be a clearly defined term, but can be used as a form of signal or as a kind of "optical instrument", which is used in the search of new and surprising phenomenon's.
The term sets focus on a form of urban structure, which is the result of in numerous public and private solitary decisions. "Zwischenstadt" represents a new image made of sections of different types of use, building types and topography.

Thus, the in-between city is also described as a transition in the suburban development: determined from the (nearby) city, not rural, but not yet city either. And even as city it cannot be like the usual well-known city. The in-between city is in a process to free itself from its origin in the city centre: over the last decade it has become clear that the former suburban space both become functionally enriched, structurally more diverse and more completely if it is unfolded as locality with their own attractions and observed as an independent space regard to both mobility as identity (Sieverts 2005 p. 29).
The suburban space is thereby influenced by activities, which nature, patterns and effects often much less can be explained as derived from the (nearby) city centre. Thus it can be stated that the suburban space is on its way to its own individual development, which only to a minor extent is a reflection of the city (Sieverts 2005 p. 29).
The development relation in context of the city centre remains nevertheless to be alive: without the larger city and its specific qualities (especially as centre for contact and service, as innovation environment, as anchor for culture and history, as well as anchoring in the job market) the special qualities and attractions we meet in the suburban space would not be explainable. The independent role which represents it self for the future suburban space, is something that must be considered in the context of the current existing urban region: here we have partners with a self-awareness that rely on skills rather than places that are in competition with each other (Sieverts 2005 p. 29).

The question this development raises in the current PhD project is whether the development from suburb to the in-between city can be recognized in a particular Danish suburb as "Søndermarken"? The German context is a rather different (an larger) scale than the Danish. And we're not quite there yet.
But Sieverts is talking about the detached suburb; emancipated from the city - with its own upcoming identity, attractions and its own culture. It is the suburb version 2.0 or 3.0. It is the updated suburb.
This image corresponds quite well with the mapping from "Søndermarken". Here we see relatively many activities, an independence among the residents, a struggle from the neighbourhood council to have "our own shops" etc. The suburb can manage by itself. It is on the way to independence. It would like to be seen.
And the development of the suburb newer stand still, the suburb is never really quiet (even if it is in a small scale, for example through new stores, expansion of the school, changes in the areas of playgrounds, etc.).
The suburb is on its way into puberty, it will emancipate. But it still has a history, the suburb is just something else than the city, it has other qualities and possibilities, and it has always been like that.

Sieverts inserts the suburb in a larger context, he describes the in-between city in a larger scale, in larger enclaves and call them fractal structures or component-worlds in a city-regional merging. The in-between city has a variety of spaces. Fractal structures of various forms of use, complex forms and topographies.

Figure 2. Reflection sketch over Sieverts' fractal structures or component-worlds. In Sieverts' optic it is important to look at the relationship between the individual fractures. Between the fractal structures occurs something new, it's a range of possibilities and the relationship between it can be constantly improved. He calls it "a possible disorder from an impossible order." The fractal structures are not homogeneous, but they are oriented inwards. A discussion about this and a question of scale will follow later in the project (to se if it is possible to compare the Danish suburb versus the German context).

Sieverts describes the in-between city as unpredictable, it has a dynamic complexity. We must dare to let go. This gives planners a certain insecurity. We tend to hold on to familiar patterns from urban development. But to develop a new culture regarding suburbs / the in-between the city, which he believes is essential, we must accept it, love it and find its own language. "The in-between city" is located between the planner's specialized discourses and the public; the notions of the residents. In the present PhD project we addresses the notion of the ideal (the planners' version of the suburb) and the everyday life understood as residents' perceptions of - and use of the suburb - what is actually "out there".

In Denmark, architect and researcher Jan Gehl and his urban life registration methods had great influence on the perception of the urban space and the urban life. In Gehl's books and projects "stay and activity" equals to good urban space quality. In this PhD project Gehl's registration methods is tested in suburban public spaces. Patterns of movement are mapped, pedestrians are counted and stays in the spaces are mapped in selected suburban public spaces. But precisely here the suburban public spaces are observed within "the city's optics" - the discourse of the good traditional urban space with "urban qualities" is at play.
Opposite to this, the testing of well-known urban life registration methods in a different context, the project insists on to taking it to another level, getting closer to the language of the suburb. In the use of the anthropologist's approach: qualitative interviews, situational interviews and a long-term fieldwork, which includes participant observation, informal interviews and a diary based on visual ethnographies, the PhD project sign into a interdisciplinary discourse.
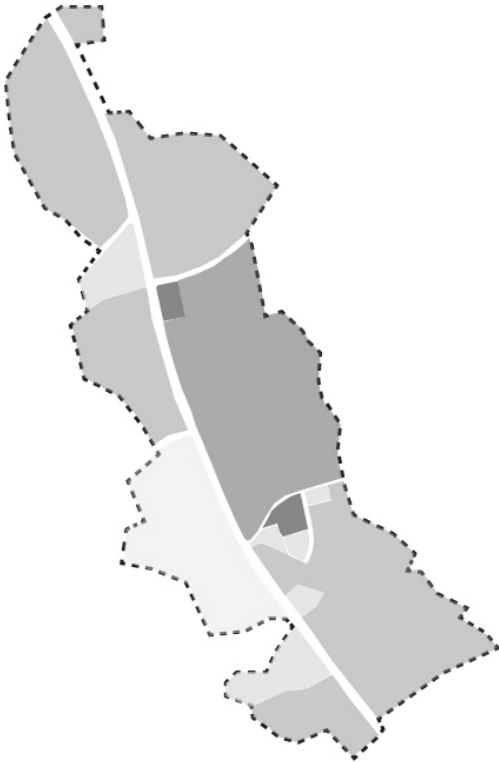
Figure 3. The functional zoning of the suburb (Vejle case).
Here the enclaves are seen (from light tone to dark): industrial areas, service areas (kindergarten and nursing homes), detached housing areas, social housing schemes and centre areas (shops), as the darkest sections. The voids are roads that intersect and divide the suburbs. The most significant barrier is "Grønlandsvej", the main traffic artery that goes north/south.

In Search of New Public Domain

In the discussion of which optic/discourse is examined through and what focus is, we meet the public space. One of the main theoretical influences of the PhD project in relation to this is Hajer & Reijndorp's "In search of New Public Domain". Hajer & Reijndorp's interpretation of what a public space is and the term 'exchange' (in relation to 'the meeting') is discussed to challenge the urban view of suburban public spaces, and further more Sieverts' request of an acceptance of the suburb as it is.

Hajer og Reijndorp makes it clear that, the distinction between "public space" and "public domain" is a central viewpoint of the book:

> *"Public space is in essence a space that is freely accessible for everyone: public is the opposite of private. That is not to say that every public space is a public domain. Public domain entails additional requirements. We are interested in the question of which spaces are positively valued as places of shared experience by people from different backgrounds or with dissimilar interests. In principle, such places can also be found beyond the traditional urban space of streets, parks and squares. They can even be spaces that are not public in the strict sense, for example privately managed collective spaces that still function as public domain"* (Hajer & Reijndorp 2001 p. 11).

So, the definition of a "public space" according Hajer & Reijndorp, is that it is freely accessible for everyone, it is the opposite of private. In contrast a "public domain" requires additional claims that are conditions for

the development of places into public domains: they must be positively valued as places of common experience of people with different backgrounds or with different interests. These are places where an exchange between different social groups is possible and also happens (Hajer & Reijndorp 2001 p. 11). The concept of exchange is one of the conditions that must be fore filled for a space to developed into a domain, and this is explored below.

In the search of the public domain Hajer & Reijndorp states:

> *"Successful public domain ... requires a relatively strong group, without the position of that group leading to exclusion and repression" (Hajer & Reijndorp 2001 p. 89).*

> *"Different groups become attached to a particular place and somehow or other they must reach a compromise" (Hajer & Reijndorp 2001, p. 41).*

> *"Public domain is, in our firm opinion, not so much a place as an experience. One experiences this space as public domain because one does not belong to that specific dominant group" (Hajer & Reijndorp 2001 p. 116).*

Here we meet the requirement of experience, ownership and attachment to a place, for it to develop into a domain, and this will be one of the focal points in the analyses of two concrete suburban spaces in the next section of the paper.

According to Reijndorp public domain is a space of cultural exchange[2] and if we relates this to the suburban functional zoning and Sieverts' term of fractural structures, where the different enclaves may have been different in content, but are isolated from one another and oriented inwards, how do we then create a cultural exchange between the fractural structures? The enclaves apparently operate fine with in themselves, but if we look at the whole picture, with the previously mentioned challenges of segregation in mind, then the suburban spaces have to invite to cultural exchange.

Hajer og Reijndorp expressly uses the term "exchange" rather than "meeting", as they believe that the term "meeting" is unclear (Hajer & Reijndorp 2001 p. 12), while they refer to the view of Immanuel Kant in their explanation of the exchange. Kant writes that making judgements is always based on an exchange with others. It is in this confrontation with other opinions that we develop our own ideas (Hajer & Reijndorp 2001 p. 12).
The purpose of having "places for exchange" is to dissolve people's narrow outlook and get a "sprinkle" of other people's reality:

> *The core of successful public space thus lies not so much in the shared use of space with others, let alone in the 'meeting', but rather in the opportunities that urban proximity offers for a 'shift' of perspective: through the experience of otherness one's own casual view of reality gets some competition from other views and lifestyles (Hajer & Reijndorp 2001 p. 89).*

The exchange therefore requires, according Hajer & Reijndorp that you are exposed to other people's reality, other social groups than your own, people with different backgrounds or interests and hereby gain new experiences, get the chance to see new angles, develop their own ideas, gain social intelligence and basically provide help to counteract stigmatisation.

Hajer & Reijndorp ask polemically: what constitutes the quality of public domains? – is it the location, the activities, the place in the collective consciousness or the role the spatial design plays? (Hajer & Reijndorp 2001 p. 11). In the next section two examples of suburban spaces are shown - the project has identified seven

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[2] Notes from Arnold Reijndorp's keynote on the Housing and Welfare conference in Copenhagen 7.5.2015.

different cases in a particular suburb, and in this paper the first two are compared through Hajer & Reijndorp's questions above.

The purpose is to examine the framework for exchange in the suburbs, and in light of the mapping to discuss suburban public space as potential public domains.

Casestudy: "Søndermarken" in Vejle, Denmark

The described difference between public space and public domain is interesting in a suburban context where a large part of the studied public spaces are public, that is freely accessible, but is widely used simply as spaces of transit. In the mapping of public spaces in the suburb "Søndermarken" in Vejle, there is in this paper selected two different typologies; a small centre area and an area enclosing a newly built community house ("Kvartershus"), and we see a high degree of transit through the spaces[3]. Hajer & Reijndorp requires ownership and attachment to a place, for it to develop into a domain.

In this section we explore which of the suburban spaces are "just" public spaces and which are public domains.

The seven case studies are selected based on a fieldwork conducted in Søndermarken in 2015 and based on qualitative interviews with 31 residents in Søndermarken's different residential areas[4]. In the interviews the suburban spaces below were mentioned as important places in the suburb, and they all have one thing in common: they are described as places in Søndermarken where people actually meet each other across the boundaries of the enclaves (single-family housing and the social housing scheme). These are places where different worlds meet, and spaces that have a place in the collective consciousness, whether they are used or not. For example, the residents mention the beautiful valleys as important public spaces, while the mapping show that these spaces are not used nearly as often as for example the area around the grocery store (which of course contains a very specific everyday activity; to buy grocery).

The seven chosen suburban public spaces are:
1. The small centre area; "Løget Center"
2. The area enclosing a newly built community house (in the social housing organisation AAB); "Kvartershuset"
3. The area around the grocery store; "Rema 1000"
4. The sports facilities; "Søndre Stadion"
5. A section of the valley with dense forest and hillsides; "Højen ådal"
6. A section of the valley with the large open landscape and paths; "Mølholm ådal"
7. Section of the main traffic artery; "Grønlandsvej"

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[3] Urban life registrations are conducted in Søndermarken in 2015 (pedestrian counts, mapping of stay and mapping of patterns of use).

[4] "Collection of qualitative interviews in the social housing scheme "Løget" and in single-family housing area in Søndermarken dated 2.04.14"
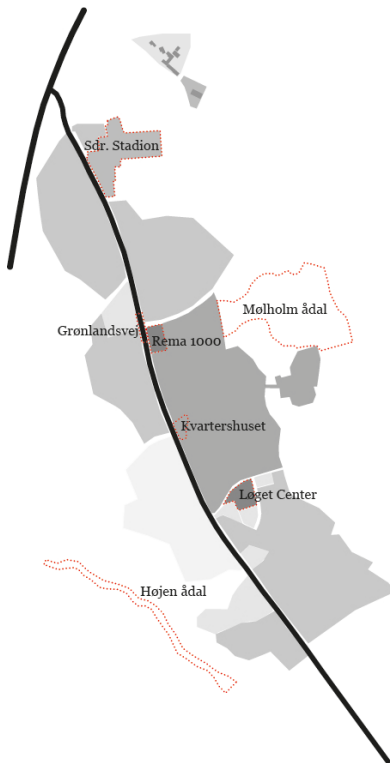
Figure 4. The seven chosen suburban public spaces in Søndermarken, Vejle.

Urban space- and urban life registrations is a key element in the project and for each of the seven cases an architectural analysis are made, which together with life registrations on site, form the basis for a discussion and reflection of the public suburban spaces.

The architectural analysis contains documents, photos and drawings describing the physical environment and conditions of the space as well as the main characteristics of the suburban space.

'Urban life' is examined through Jan Gehl´s tools for urban life registrations (Gehl & Svarre 2013). Pedestrian counts, stay and movement patterns are mapped in the seven selected suburban spaces.

Below two examples are presented; The small centre area; "Løget Center" and the area enclosing the community house; "Kvartershuset", and the examples are discussed through Hajer & Reijndorp's questions in search of what constitutes the quality of public domains.

- Does the space have a place in the collective consciousness?
- Where is the space located?
- Which activities/functions does it contain?
- Which role does the spatial design play?

The small centre area; "Løget Center"

"Løget Center" was selected as case study number one in Søndermarken due to the centre functions and because the informants in the initial qualitative interviews[5] mentioned "Løget Center" as an important meeting place in the suburb. The small centre area was named one of the places in Søndermarken where people actually meet each other across the boundaries of the enclaves (single-family housing areas and the social housing scheme).

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[5] "Collection of qualitative interviews in the social housing scheme "Løget" and in single-family housing area in Søndermarken dated 2.04.14".

"Løget Center" was selected as a pilot case study, as it was here, most of the informants believed that they "bumped into each other" and this statement came from both residents of single-family houses and residents from the social housing scheme. It was the urban space they considered most public. The space has a large place in the residents' collective consciousness, and there are many opinions and feelings related to the use, (or the lack of) maintenance and development of the Centre[6].
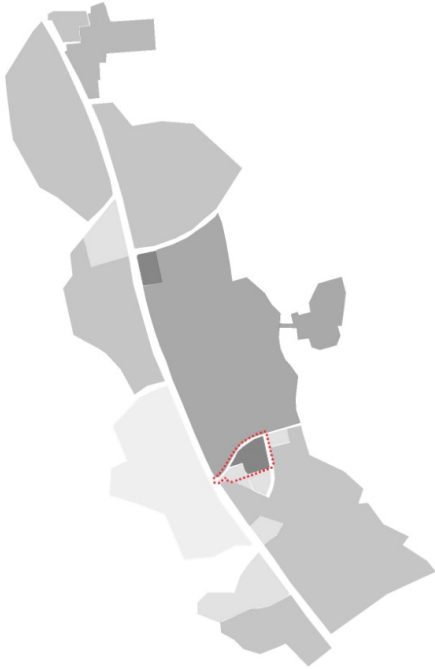

Figure 5. The location in the suburb; almost in the centre of the area.

The location of "Løget Center" in the suburb

"Løget Center" connects to Grønlandsvej, which is the main traffic artery of the area. Grønlandsvej connects the north of Søndermarken with Vejle C, which is 4 kilometres away, and at the southern end the road runs out in a recent connection to the E45 highway.

The Centre is connected to Grønlandsvej and the rest of the suburb trough a dead-ended road, which terminates in a single-family housing area and a private kindergarten further into the area. To the north it borders on AAB Vejle´s social housing scheme "Løget By". The Centre is not visible from Grønlandsvej as it is pulled back from the road and greenery, trees and sound-absorbing barriers (the hatching on the diagram below) shields the insight.

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[6] Data are collected through participation in meetings of the area's local councils "Grønlandsvejens Netværk" as well as participant observation in connection with the fieldwork in the area.
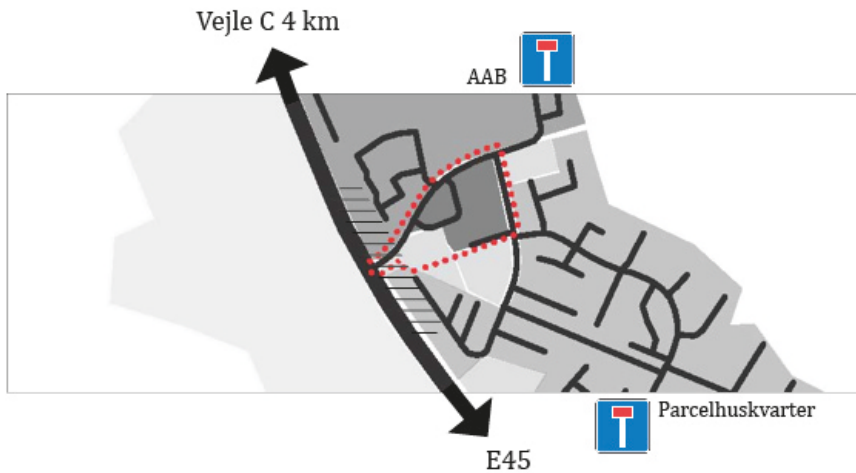
Figure 6. The location in the suburb; the Centre is not visible from Grønlandsvej as trees and sound-absorbing barriers shields the insight.

Figure 7. The location in the suburb; the access and the visibility to the Centre is hidden behind the greenery.

Activities and functions in "Løget Center"

"Løget Center" is built around a large parking lot, forming an arch around a small tree. The buildings to the south-east forms an L-shape and at the back of the Centre, further south, is a large residential institution. The church, which is the first building that you encounter when turning in towards the Centre from Grønlandsvej, is situated on a large grass surface, only interrupted by precisely curved beech hedges, which curve its way further into defining the parking space from "Løget Center" road. Turning right after the modern church, you are led into the parking lot, where there is room for many parked cars, the Centre's volume taken into account. From the church a sidewalk goes past the bakery and some school buildings (belonging to a private school at the time) and between the remaining buildings a small green area with a single tree, a birdhouse of rocks and then six colourful benches and a table, who Vejle municipality has set up in spring 2015, has been preserved.

Figure 8. Aerial photo of "Løget Center" (2015).

Which role does the spatial design play?

The small centre area is concentrated around a large parking area, and the space is designed to solve a specific task - to get the car into the Centre, parked and out again in a quiet way, without any friction. The buildings try to mark a framing of the surface to the southeast, but as the parking area does not have a clear spatial boundary to the northwest, it becomes very difficult to talk of an urban space. It's more like a discreet surface, with buildings located on.

As seen in the picture below, no actually care for the spatial design occurs – the Centre has unintentionally become a 'shared space', is is more surface than space, there is no stay, it is a space for transit and it has lack of visibility and volume.

Figure 9. Panoramic photo of "Løget Center" with the surface as the most significant feature.

Findings from the suburban public space "Løget Center"

"Løget Center" is one of the public spaces in Søndermarken where the residents meet each other across the boundaries of the enclaves, because the space has features that give the residents an errand here (everyday errands as shopping etc.). There is a peaceful flow of people (130 people in average per hour). The functional content of the buildings are important for the attractiveness and it gives the space a strong place in the residents' collective consciousness. But it is not a space with ownership, exchange or a space where the spatial design has a significant impact. These factors indicate that it is just a public space.

The area enclosing a newly built community house (in the social housing organisation AAB); "Kvartershuset"

Example number two is the public space enclosing "Kvartershuset", and this case is selected because of its location, where the building and the public space penetrate the sound-absorbing barriers that shield the social housing scheme against Grønlandsvej. The location and visibility from Grønlandsvej is central to the selection and like in the first example, the informants in the initial qualitative interviews also here mentioned "Kvarterhuset" as an important meeting place in the suburb.

Through the qualitative interviews is becomes clear that the area has a place in the collective consciousness - with the note, that it take up the greatest consciousness among those who are living in social housing organisation AAB. The residents of the single-family area are fully aware of its presence, and several informants mention that they will make more use of it when they get more space in their everyday life.

"Kvarterhuset" in Løget By is located on the corner of Løget Høj and Grønlandsvej and was built in 2012. One cannot help noticing the striking house when driving past. The community house was the first building, which was completed in connection with acceptance of the physical master plan, which started a big renewal process of Løget By (2010-2016).

Figure 10. The location in the suburb; in centre of the area.

The location of "Kvartershuset" in the suburb

The community house is placed alongside Grønlandsvej and the building is located at the central access road to the social housing area Løget By. On the opposite side, we have a single-family housing area in the direction of Vejle C and turning E45 one of the areas largest industrial areas is situated. Between these two areas the beautiful valley "Højen ådal" marks it self towards Grønlandsvej and the forest comes into sight.
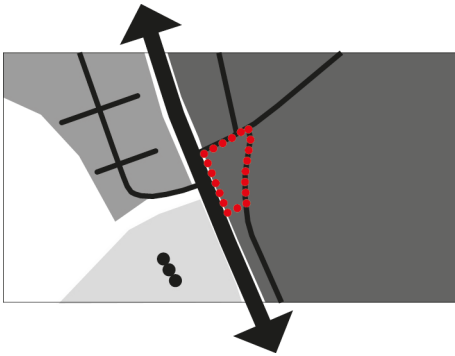
Figure 11. The location in the suburb: the building penetrates the greenery.

Figure 12. The location in the suburb: the visibility from Grønlandsvej is central.

Activities and functions in and around "Kvartershuset"

The informants tell me, that the many activities held in and around "Kvarterhuset" attracts residents not only from the housing organisation and the single-family housing areas, but also "all the way down from the city" (the inner city of Vejle). Examples of the use (in and around) the building is: Midsummer Day (Skt. Hans aften) bingo, zumba, yoga, Løget by day, carnival, flea market, IT-courses for seniors, running club for women, BMX event, photo club, Christmas party, free common-meals, a Lighting Festival, day care, bingo in a tent in the summer and summer football in the vacation.

The housing organisation AAB writes about the new community house on their website: "Kvarterhuset in Løget is a centre for the entire area and the centre of most of the activities taking place in Løget. In the café in Kvarterhuset you can meet other residents, you can use the computer, and you can read the daily newspaper. The café sells coffee, tea, cocoa, cake, warm dishes as well as sweets and chips. Fridays and Saturdays the café is selling warm homemade food (to go or to stay) on selected dates".
Opening hours at the café:
Monday, Tuesday and Thursday 15:00 to 20:00
Wednesday, (even weeks) 15:00 to 18:30
Wednesday (uneven weeks) 15:00 to 20:00
Friday (selected dates) 17:30 to 19:30
Saturday (selected dates) 17:30 to 19:30
Sunday in uneven weeks 14:00 to 17:00

"Kvartershuset" is extremely popular. It is almost already too small and there are not enough hours a day for all those who want to use it. For example, it is worth noting that residents of single-family housing areas in

Søndermarken also wanted to use the house for various celebrations, but right now only the residents of the social housing association can rent it for private use[7]. All residents in the area are invited to participate in the activities and are nicely invited trough a household distributed magazine called "Løget News" (distributed in Søndermarken south).
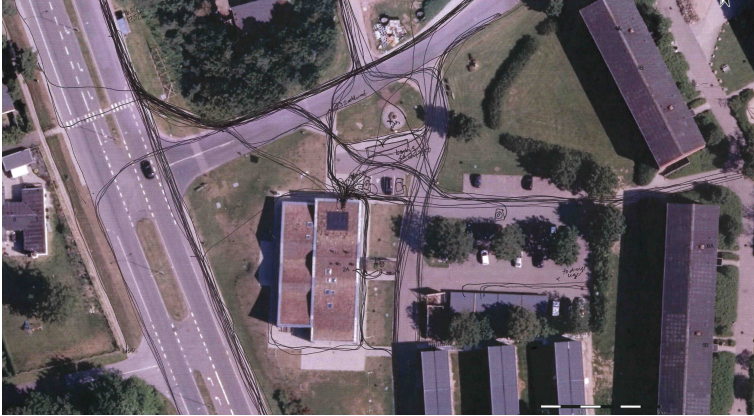

Figure 13. Aerial photo of the area enclosing the community house (2015).

Which role does the spatial design play?

The community house is the focus of this public space and the functions and activities in and partly around the building. The outside area along the community house has not yet reviewed a major design process, but it has the potential to become an attractive suburban public space. Regarding spatial design the space is interesting - a space, which is almost a square. From the front of the building, there is a good visibility and you can watch the life around the building. It lacks, however, processing to achieve its full potential.
In an fund application to a national infrastructure project, were suggested a large facility with BMX tracks, playground, seating areas, etc., so different groups would find it rather interesting and take ownership. The housing association has just received a large amount, so some of these ideas can actually be realized.

Findings from the suburban public domain "Kvartershuset"

There is some movement by and through the square. "Kvarterhuset" account for the largest part of the attraction and then the fact that the public bus stop is close by and many people come naturally by, as part of their daily routes (137 persons in average per hour).
It is the building itself, "Kvarterhuset", and the functions and activities that are in the building; which where the most important issue in the planning of the space. The outdoor area is largely perceived as a forecourt to "Kvarterhuset", a small square, but has a much greater potential, and as mentioned, this will be taken care of in the years to come.

The location of the community house is of vital importance to its success, as it is visible from Grønlandsvej and breaks the 'closed wall' of greenery.

In this public space it is also the activities and functions of the building, which is particularly important and the space has a strong place in the residents' collective consciousness, especially those living in social housing organisation. However this means that they have great ownership to the space and the building and many volunteers put in lots of hours into activities and the café.

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[7] Due to a tax issue, and the fact that the residents of AAB pay to the community house as a part of their rent.

These factors; a visible and central location, ownership and many functions and activities helps to develop "Kvarterhuset" into a public domain, and if the square in front of the house will be upgraded in terms of spatial design, in order to stand on the shoulders of what already is established and exploit the positive things that are in progress, this will also develop into a place for further exchange.

Discussion and conclusion

With Hajer & Reijndorp I have described the difference between a public space and a public domain:
Public space is freely accessible for everyone: public is the opposite of private.
Public domain requires more than that – it is space of cultural exchange:
- It requires *attachment* of a strong group,
- *Exchange* between different social groups,
- Positively valuation as *places of shared experience* by people from different social groups,
- *Experience of otherness* (which give one's own casual view of reality competition from other views and lifestyle = social intelligence).

In the study of a typical Danish suburb, Søndermarken, I have recovered the two types:
"Løget Center" as an example of a suburban public space, where the activities and functions in the buildings are important to attract people, and this gives the space a strong place in the residents' collective awareness. The functional content of the buildings in the Centre are important for the attractiveness and this gives the space a strong place in the residents' collective awareness. But it is not a space with ownership, exchange or a space where the spatial design has a significant impact. This indicates that we are dealing with a public space, not a public domain.

"Kvartershuset", on the other hand, is an example of a suburban public domain; it has the basis for cultural exchange. It has a visible and central location and the residents feel ownership and the space have the attachment of a strong group. The many features and activities makes "Kvartershuset" positively valued as a place of shared experience, because it is used by many different people.

In the further research I will look at the tools to develop spaces into public domains (in a suburban context), so the space for cultural exchange has the possibility to grow, and hereby develop social intelligence and form peoples judgement, as personal perception and direct confrontation can be an antidote to segregation.

On the basis of the remaining cases and the mapping thereof, it is discussed how suburban public space can gain potential as public domain and thus the objective of the project is pursued: to contribute to a more varied understanding of suburban public spaces and the development of an suburban language.

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