

# Neighbourhood Governance

## Capacity for Social Integration

The Danish Mid-term Report

Gunvor Christensen  
Hedvig Vestergaard  
Revised version, June 2003

Title Neighbourhood Governance  
Subtitle Capacity for Social Integration  
Serial title  
Edition 1 edition  
Year 2002  
Authors Gunvor Christensen, Hedvig Vestergaard  
Editor  
Language English  
Pages  
References  
Danish summary  
Key words

ISBN  
ISSN

Price  
Word processing  
Drawings Gunvor Christensen  
Photos Gunvor Christensen  
Cover  
Printer

Publisher By og Byg, Statens Byggeforskningsinstitut  
dbur, Danish Building and Urban Research  
P.O. Box 119, DK-2970 Hørsholm  
E-mail [by-og-byg@by-og-byg.dk](mailto:by-og-byg@by-og-byg.dk)  
[www.by-og-byg.dk](http://www.by-og-byg.dk)

Extracts may be reproduced but only with reference to source: Gunvor Christensen and Hedvig Vestergaard (2002) *Neighbourhood Governance. Capacity for Social Integration*. By og Byg. Hørsholm.

# Contents

Introduction.....	4
The Neighbourhood.....	5
Description of the Neighbourhood.....	5
Impact of Structural Changes in Society.....	7
Current Rehabilitation Programmes.....	10
Actors in Place.....	12
General view of the Neighbourhood.....	16
Perception of Main Problems.....	17
Perception of “Outsiders” View of the Neighbourhood.....	19
Informants’ Description of the Neighbourhood.....	21
Living in the Neighbourhood.....	23
3.1 Perception of Issues about Safety and Security.....	23
3.2 Perception of Issues about Public Space.....	28
3.3 Perception of Issues about Schools and Education.....	31
3.4 Perception of Issues about Employment.....	34
3.5 Perception of Other Issues Important for Everyday Life.....	38
Analysing Neighbourhood Governance.....	44
Developing New Governance Arrangements.....	52
Rethinking the role and structure of professional agencies.....	52
The role of spider people and informal networks.....	53
The linking of formal and informal networks.....	53
Transferable lessons.....	54
Literature.....	56
Appendix A: Map of Networks.....	57

# Introduction

This report is a mid-term report in a European research project "Neighbourhood Governance – Capacity for Social Integration". The report presents partly a description of residents' perception of living in the neighbourhood, Vapnagård, Nøjsomhed and Borupgård, partly an analysis of current neighbourhood governance arrangement and ideas to develop new governance arrangements.

The aim of the project is to identify and assess possible new governance structures to combat social exclusion in contemporary Europe. Recognising the interdependencies and the interaction between local residents, social groups, public agencies and local businesses, the project will develop new methods and tools for the effective use of available resources for socio-economic development.

The central hypothesis is that the dominant structures of neighbourhood governance are not very well adapted to combat social exclusion, resources allocated to disadvantaged neighbourhoods are often used ineffectively and not necessarily in response to the residents' needs. Structural change has created a major disjunction between the needs of residents and the formal structures, which deliver services to them. This disjunction calls for an evaluation of present governance structures and processes. Ultimately, the challenge lies in developing governance mechanisms and structures which recognise the specific nature of all stakeholders with interests in a neighbourhood and, thus, to reform and/or create adequate forums for communication, negotiation, decision making and implementation. Thus an important challenge is to develop concepts or models of 'neighbourhood democracy' and how they could contribute to combating social exclusion.

For this mid-term report twenty-one residents living on each of the three housing estates are interviewed. Furthermore, seventeen professionals, four spider persons, and one representative from the local business community have been interviewed about their perception of problems, challenges and potentials to promote and maintain a vigorous development and to promote social integration in the neighbourhood.

Two students, stud.scient.soc Sille B. Pedersen and stud.scient.pol Anna Schou Johansen have assisted transcribing interviews.

The next phase of the project is to develop provisional ideas about neighbourhood democracy and neighbourhood governance and how they can be used as tools to promote institutional capacity and social integration. In this phase professionals in key roles will be presented with the results from the mid-term report. The objective is to deepen the understanding of how governance arrangements can be developed to meet the needs and ambitions expressed by residents and professionals and to discuss how informal networking among residents can be interlinked to formal networking among professionals and agencies.

Hørsholm, June 2002

Gunvor Christensen and Hedvig Vestergaard  
Danish Building and Urban Research

# The Neighbourhood

## Description of the Neighbourhood

The neighbourhood consists of three social housing estates, which are *Vapnagård*, *Borupgård*, and *Nøjsomhed*. The neighbourhood is situated on the outskirts of an old provincial city, Helsingør, in the greater metropolitan area of Copenhagen. Helsingør is one of the 275 municipalities in Denmark and is the largest city in the county with 60,131 inhabitants (Helsingør Kommune, Udviklingsafdelingen, 2001, p. 3). The county, Frederiksborg Amt, has a population of 368,166 (ibid.).

The three housing estates are part of a *city wall* of social housing mainly built after 1950 when the Danish welfare state was in growth. This *city wall* is separating the historical inner city of Helsingør from its immediate surroundings of smaller scale developments of housing and industrial and commercial buildings.

Nøjsomhed was built in the beginning of the 1960s, Vapnagård was built in the period 1968-73 while Borupgård's two sections were built in 1973 and 1976. The three housing associations are *Andelsboligforeningen Kingo* administering Nøjsomhed, *Helsingør Boligselskab* administering Vapnagård, and *Boligselskabet Teglværksgården* administering Borupgård. In total, there are twelve local social housing associations in the municipality. Counted by the numbers of dwellings each housing estate is the largest one in the estate portfolio of each of the three housing associations.

The three estates comprise 9.4 per cent of the total housing stock in the municipality and 32.7 per cent of the local social housing stock. In total, the number of dwellings in the municipality according to ownership is shown in the following figure.

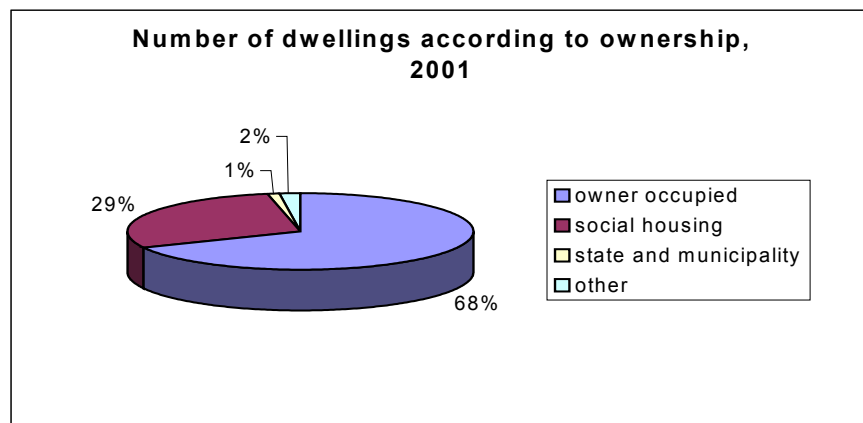


Figure 1. Number of dwellings according to ownership.

68 per cent of the total housing stock are owner occupied, while 29 per cent are social housing and the state and the municipality owns one per cent of the total stock.

Nøjsomhed constitutes 456 dwellings and was ready for occupation in 1964. It is a modern park development with four and six storey as well as high-rise blocks with a view to the city and the Sound. In the beginning

Nøjsomhed was inhabited by mainly Danish families with small children. However, these families have moved out of the estate, extensively. Especially, in mid 1990s residents moved out like an *exodus* due to renovation and steep rent increase as the housing estate did not have any accumulated reserves for renovation and restoration. This exodus resulted in many vacant dwellings, which meant that one could be offered an apartment from one day to the next. At this time being, refugees and immigrants were in demand of a dwelling. Hence, newcomers to Nøjsomhed became ethnic minority groups such as Gypsies and refugees from Yugoslavia and Palestine. Additionally, Danes in acute housing need often due to major changes in their life situation moved into Nøjsomhed.

Nøjsomhed is considered to be in a socially critical situation characterised by social unrest, insufficient integration of ethnic groups and lack of abilities to deal with the current situation. Nøjsomhed bears some of the characteristics that a ghetto has and it is a troublesome housing estate facing tremendous problems anchored in fundamental social processes such as segregation, class division and current housing shortage<sup>1</sup>.

The second housing estate is Borupgård with 415 dwellings divided in two independent sections. Borupgård I have 178 dwellings and was inhabited in 1973 and Borupgård II with 237 dwellings were inhabited in 1976. The two sections have own section boards and local caretakers. It is by outsiders perceived as one single estate but the residents are very clear about Borupgård consisting of two estates.

Primarily, the dwellings are terraced houses suitable for families with children. There are also smaller apartments often placed at the end of the 50 long blocks. From the beginning the rent level at Borupgård was relatively high. This meant that especially families with children and individuals eligible for rent subsidies moved in and that the turnover of residents has been quiet high in some time periods. Due to the high rent level the municipality has not used the estate for households in acute housing need.

Borupgård has not accumulated reserves to maintain a sufficient housing standard. Therefore, technical problems and related indoor climate problems have emerged. Several plans to renovate the housing estate have been made, but none so far has been carried out. To a large extent this must be related to insufficient management accompanied by ongoing conflicts among the two elected section boards, the local caretakers and the main board of the housing association. In order to solve these problems the housing association made an agreement a few years ago with a larger and more experienced housing management company to co-operate on the administration of Borupgård.

Finally, Vapnagård, as the third housing estate, has 1719 dwellings and was first occupied in the end of the 1960s and the beginning of 1970s. The master plan for building Vapnagård was to build a new modern city inhabiting 5000 individuals and providing different kinds of services and business facilities. However, this master plan was abandoned, and in 1968 it was decided to build a more modest housing estate with multi-storey type buildings.<sup>2</sup> The first three stages of the building project were to build housing blocks, while the final and fourth stage was to construct a high-rise service house for old-aged people, child-care facilities, leisure-time facilities and shops etc. But this last facility stage was not carried out.

When the building project was finished, a housing estate stood tall offering well-planned apartments suitable for families with children. However, the housing estate soon became reduced to an isolated dormitory. The first residents to move in were primarily locals with Danish and Turkish backgrounds

---

<sup>1</sup> The problem of housing shortage is elaborated in "*Impact of Structural Changes in Society*"

<sup>2</sup> Vapnagård was built according to Syddjyllandsplanen that has been built in many places in Denmark in the 1960s.

often moving out from urban renewal areas. Furthermore, individuals living in the wider area and working in the metropolitan area of Copenhagen were among the first residents. An enthusiastic sentiment among the first residents was identifiable but soon the social hardship accompanied by an increase of unemployment rate in mid 1970s, and lack of social infrastructure took over and became a tremendous burden for the residents. A negative image, which was aggravated by technical problems and influenced by administrative and managerial problems in the housing association, saw daylight. The residents met these difficult challenges, and through the tenants' democracy they initiated a long process of doing initiatives and realising them. They succeeded in building up a local and decentralised management organisation, developed improvement plans including social measures and started negotiating conditions for implementation with local and national housing authorities.

During the last 15 years the negative image of the estate has been changed. The perception of Vapnagård as a large housing estate with a lot of problems has been replaced by a perception of Vapnagård as a nice place to live compared to other large housing estates. It has got an image of being a place that has changed and improved social conditions while it has got worse in the two comparable neighbouring estates. Vapnagård is valued for its many cultural and social activities. However, lately a sense of lack of community and an impression of insufficient integration of ethnic groups have occurred as problematic issues.

## Impact of Structural Changes in Society

Segregation, class division and housing shortage are fundamental structural conditions that influence the everyday life of the residents living in Vapnagård, Nøjsomhed and Borupgård. The neighbourhood is up against strong mechanisms, that contribute to produce and to sustain socially deprived neighbourhoods.

The contemporary Danish society is characterised by liberal-capitalist social formation, and the societal organisational principle is founded in wage labour and capital, and the subsequent steering media, money and power. Since the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War political ambitions have been to secure and to improve a well-functioning welfare state characterised by a high level of welfare services based on institutional rights linked to citizenship (Rhodes, 1999, p. 34). Likewise, policies have carried a high priority to improve the welfare state especially through promotion of education and employment. These two areas are regarded as the keys to possess a full membership of society. Thus, the founding idea is to qualify individuals to obtain a meaningful position in society, a position enriching to society and themselves.

The public sector plays an important role in the government's measures to prepare individuals' educational and working skills. However, in November 2001 a national election was held and a Liberal-Conservative government replaced the former Social Democratic-Social Liberal government. The Liberal-Conservative government has changed priorities as regards to the public sector's role in participating to sustain and improve the welfare state. Municipalities and counties are still to anchor means of effort to maintain a social responsibility, but private and voluntary organisations are to be incorporated much further in the solution of social tasks than they have been previously. As such, private-public partnerships are seen as a pivotal point, and the sitting government encourages these partnerships for instance in relation to urban and housing programmes.

During the 1990s Denmark experienced an economic growth, at the same time as the unemployment rate decreased. Also, in contrast to the previous

low growth period the economic growth now became relatively higher in the eastern part of the country than in the western part. The unemployment rate has decreased in Helsingør like the general trend in the greater metropolitan area of Copenhagen. But the unemployment rate is still higher in Helsingør compared to the average rate for the county of Frederiksborg and to the rate in Hillerød, which is the second largest city in the county. This is illustrated in the following figure.

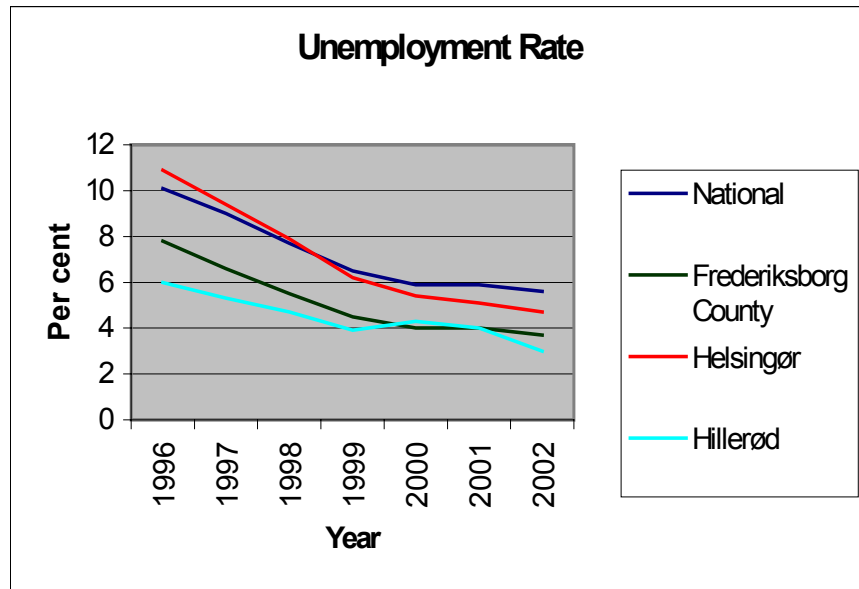


Figure 2. The development in the unemployment rate.

Closing down of major local manufacturing industries during the last 20 years influences this difference in unemployment rate. Until ten years ago Helsingør was still heavily dependent on these industries. In the early 1980s the large shipyard was closed down. This shipyard was an industrial base in the municipality, and with the shipyard's shutdown this base started to erode. For the time being more specialised productions like valves and medical products for export have taken over, but some of these productions are moving overseas, to Southern Europe or the Baltic countries or elsewhere in the greater metropolitan area. Hence, this closing down or move of industries resulted in an extensive unemployment, which to some extent is reduced partly because people left the labour market through various early retirement and pension arrangement, partly because they have been put into various temporary activation schemes, special job offers, adult education etc. As regards to residents in the three housing estates, they experienced in particular the erosion of the job market, as a large share of the residents was working in primary and secondary production sectors. On the positive side, employment opportunities have increased in the tertiary sector.

Also on the unfortunate side, structural changes at the county level have not been in favour to Helsingør. Facilities and services in relation to transport, education, healthcare and private services such as telephone and distribution have been transferred to Hillerød, at the expense of Helsingør, even though Helsingør is the largest city in the county. As regards to education, besides elementary schools there are only two upper secondary schools. Thus, any kind of further educational achievement has to be proceeded in either Hillerød or Copenhagen, as such learning facilities serving, especially, the less mobile part of the young and adult population are gone.

Meanwhile, Copenhagen as well as the greater metropolitan area has experienced an increase in employment opportunities. The positive outcome of this is that more and new job opportunities are available for the mobile and flexible part of the population also living in Helsingør.

## Housing Market

In the last five years the housing market has been difficult to enter. Prices on apartments for owner occupation have increased dramatically, and this has caused a high pressure on the housing market in the greater metropolitan area of Copenhagen. It is very difficult to rent private rented dwellings, and waiting lists to get a social housing apartment are long. Thus, the mobility at the housing market is very low, and at present the three housing estates have a very low turnover of residents compared to earlier times.

The general high demand pressure at the housing market in the metropolitan area has increased the house and apartment prices for new homeowners also in Helsingør. This has meant an increased level of reinvestment in maintenance and modernisation in the owner occupied sector. In addition, in the last couple of years new construction for homeownership have been taken up. On the rented market the demand pressure has not been met with an increase in supply to the social housing sector nor to the private rented sector. There has been an increase in internal mobility in social housing associations.

The municipalities have been very reluctant to approve new social housing projects with family dwellings due to fear of attracting households that could become a future economic burden. Most new buildings in the social housing sector have been for special purpose housing such as housing for groups of elderly and disabled persons. In order to give the municipalities an incentive to allow new social housing projects the government has reduced the required municipal loan guarantee from 14 to 7 percent of the building sum. This measure has so far not had a visible impact on the municipalities willingness to approve new housing constructions.

The rent regulated private sector has been diminishing for a very long period. Hardly, there has been any new building constructions, existing property has been turned into owner-occupied apartments and especially after 1980 into private housing societies (andelsboliger). Since 1980 there has also been built quite a number of new dwellings in private housing societies.

In Helsingør there has been no new building of social housing since the beginning of the 1990s. At that time a conservative led council took over after 75 years of social democratic led councils. However, a number of large family dwellings have been divided into smaller apartments and in relation to the building renovation of Vapnagård taking place in the middle of the 1990s 226 roof apartments were established on this estate. At present the housing situation in Helsingør and elsewhere in the metropolitan area is very tight, as it may take more than 10 years to get a rented apartment. Also due to rent regulations there is no open supply of private rented dwellings for households in middle and low income brackets. This has resulted in legal as well as illegal subletting, lettings on short term contracts and black market situations as well as hoarding of relatively inexpensive rented dwellings (only formal occupation) with a permanent contract of an unknown dimension. The victims of this very tight housing market situation are housing and job mobility in general and especially young people and households that cannot afford to buy a dwelling for owner occupation. This has e.g. made it more difficult to recruit young teachers, nurses etc. in the pressure areas.

People in acute housing need, and without possibilities to solve their own housing problem can turn to the municipality for help with a temporary dwelling. Many municipalities including Helsingør have sold out their own housing properties, and, subsequently, municipalities have increasingly difficulties to find housing solutions for those individuals in acute need of a dwelling. Hence, criteria for getting municipal assistance are tightened up, and now municipalities are dependent on their legally disposal of every fourth dwelling that becomes available on social housing estates and on making temporary arrangement such as hotels and campgrounds.

Likewise, pressure has been put on the housing market because a number of large housing estates with a concentration of feeble residents have been allowed to disregard the normal external and internal waiting lists and allow specific resident groups such as locally employed people and elderly people above 50 years old and without children to be offered an apartment prior to people on the waiting list.

Finally, actors on the social housing scene have changed and been replaced by other actors since the current government took office. First of all, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs was abolished, and housing and urban matters became a subdivision under a new established ministry, *The Danish Ministry of Economic and Business Affairs*. Secondly, in reality housing politics has been a subject non grata (a looser subject) in Danish politics, and any proposal to change conditions on the housing market is at risk for any political coalition to win a national election. Thus, the present Prime Minister did promise not to increase the rents if he got to form government. This has meant that the most logical way to loosen up the stock rented housing market; a rent setting closer to market prices has been ruled out. This new situation has created quite a lot of insecurity about future conditions for social housing as well as for other housing sectors. Furthermore, The National Federation of Housing Association<sup>3</sup> has been very powerful as regards to influence the general housing politics, as the organisation has had long term strong and direct ties to the Social Democratic Party and to the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs. But now the ministry is closed down and a new government is in charge and the organisation's influence on housing politics has diminished.

Finally, major structural changes on the housing market may be experienced in the not too distant future as the latest political suggestions are to sell social housing dwellings as owner-occupied housing or as private housing societies. At present, an internal inter-ministerial committee is developing a plan for how to carry such a suggestion out in practice and to estimate the possible impact. The results of the work in the committee are to be presented in the beginning of 2003.

## Current Rehabilitation Programmes

During the 1990s housing politics has been formulated to ensure the co-ordination of divergent and plural urban and housing interests and to establish a framework for a sustainable development economically, commercially, socially, and environmentally. In particular, interests are to be co-ordinated between national, regional, and municipal level (Sørensen, 1999, p. 3), and co-operation and partnerships between public and private agencies are encouraged.

Especially, two instruments have been implemented in 1990s to improve life quality and conditions in urban and suburban areas. These two instruments are the Urban Committee and the Urban Area Improvement Programme. These two programmes have different objectives, as the former has the purpose to improve social housing conditions in exposed housing areas and its activities are aimed at the individuals living in those areas (Ministry of Social Affairs, 2001, p. 20). The latter goes more in depth with the entire neighbourhood in order to upgrade the neighbourhood socially, physically, and culturally. Also this programme has a bottom-up holistic approach and is based on participation and strength of local actors (Vestergaard, 1998, p.12).

---

<sup>3</sup> Boligselskabernes Landsforening.

All three housing estates in the neighbourhood belong to the target group of the Urban Committee programme that was initiated in 1994 for a period of four years and was much more economic generous than the second one that was continued in 1998 for another four years.

However, in the first period only Vapnagård and one of the Borupgård estates (Borupgård I) applied to be incorporated in the programme even though the other Borupgård estate (Borupgård II) and Nøjsomhed were obvious candidates. This has to be seen in the context that in order to be accepted by the programme joint applications from the municipality and the housing association had to be submitted. In Helsingør the municipality did not take action on the program, which meant that only if the estate or housing association wanted to take the initiative an application would be directed to the Urban Committee. At that time being only Vapnagård and Borupgård I had a tenants' democracy including some spider persons who were a striving force to commit both the housing association and the municipality to enter into a co-operation and contract to improve these two housing estates.

Hence, especially Vapnagård got ahead with improved physical infrastructure and services, rent reduction and social measures specific for the estate. Borupgård I only got measures to social activities and for that reason the physical setting was not improved, and the rent stayed at the same high level. As a consequence, the two Borupgård estates and Nøjsomhed fell behind Vapnagård in terms of dealing with unsuitable processes. They experienced a higher turnover of residents, and in 1998 the municipal Social Department Services took action in regards to Nøjsomhed and appointed a social worker to initiate activities on the housing estate. However, that soon stopped due to conflicts between the residents, the tenants' democracy, and the social worker.

When the second round of the Urban Committee Programme was offered in 1997/98 all three estates prepared plans and applications for the period 1998-2002. This time the municipality played a much more active role, as the *Municipal Planning Department* assisted to forming the application. Especially, this effort made sure that Nøjsomhed was enrolled in the programme, as there was no immediate driving force on the housing estate to take action to submit an application although willingness was present. Thus, on Nøjsomhed plans including a housing estate social worker were developed on the initiative of the municipality. On Vapnagård the programme was extended along the lines from the first period with emphasis on the social dimension. Finally, on Borupgård a plan for social initiatives including a housing estate social worker was also developed and simultaneously the design and planning of a physical renovation project initiated. This time the application covered both housing sections at the Borupgård estate.

Subsequently, all three estates in the neighbourhood were granted resources in the second round of the Urban Committee for social measures. The state, the municipality and The National Fund for Social Housing jointly finance these resources. Vapnagård has spend the grant according to the anticipated plan and is now working on how to finance a continuation of the housing estate social worker as well as other social measures in 2003 and onwards. Both Nøjsomhed and Borupgård have not been able to realise the anticipated plan, as in the summer of 2002 they were still in the process of employing a housing estate social worker and planning how to spend the grant.

The Urban Committee programme was an initiative made by the former Social Democratic-Social Liberal government, and the current government has decided not to prolonged the programme. Therefore, it has become important to spend the grants before the end of 2002. Otherwise, the funds will have to be returned.

## Actors in Place

On different structural levels actors are in place. The inner core of power is based at the municipal council level, and traditionally, the municipal council in Helsingør has been organised as a centralised representative democracy anchored in corporatism. The municipal council has had close relations to leaders of interest organisations within industry, labour and trade. Thus, the municipal council together with interest organisations has formed the base of power, politically and economically, in Helsingør, and either part is crucial to have as a co-player if actors in the municipality strive to get the council's approval to any project or suggestion. In that respect, it is important to keep in close contact with actions in the municipal council and maintain an ongoing influence on the processes in the municipal council. Likewise, the interest organisations have to be kept informed and engaged during the entire process in order to maintain their support (Sehested, 2002, pp. 10-2).

In Helsingør well-functioning centralised and elitist governance processes shape the political milieu. The governance processes are grounded in coalition between a stable policy network, the council and the interest groups. Over the years, this coalition has produced consensus about the democratic legitimacy of the political actions taking place as the coalition has claimed to represent the common interest of the people in Helsingør. However, within the past years the claim of representing the common interest of the inhabitants in Helsingør has lost some of its legitimacy because there have been incidents where the coalition has been more preoccupied with its own opinion than with the opinion of the people (ibid.). Hence, conflicting coalitions are established, and the power basis is not anchored immediately in the former coalition anymore.

An important political figure in the municipality is the mayor, who is member of the Conservative Party. The municipal council, professionals and individuals in general seem to show a wide support and back up to the mayor. One of the informants describes the mayor this way:

*"We have a mayor who is very out in the public and he shows great and sincere interest in local matters and his political background is unimportant. It is his interest in people that matters."*

The mayor has a public face, and he shows up to open social events such as lightening the Christmas Tree on an estate. Also he has created a political culture in which space is made for progressive thinking, and advises from professionals are taken into serious considerations when political actions are taken. An example of this is the establishment of an Emergency Team<sup>4</sup>, which is a team of two professionals who assist and help mental ill individuals who suddenly face a breakdown. The team offers assistance within 24 hours after an emergency call, and they go to see the person with a breakdown and find out a way to deal with the situation<sup>5</sup>.

The progressive thinking is identifiable in the *Social Services Department* as well. Social Services Department is an actor with a major stake in the neighbourhood. The department's main objective is to exercise social responsibility to vulnerable individuals in the municipality. Vulnerable groups are defined as individuals who are unemployed, having family-related problems, and who are socially uneasy. Furthermore, the department's objectives are to find solutions to give economic support, to activation, and to job training of unemployed people. Likewise, tasks for the department are to cope with ill people and people on early retirement, to advice offers and

---

<sup>4</sup> Akutteamet.

<sup>5</sup> The Emergency Team is discussed in more details in 3.5 *Perception of Other Issues Important for Everyday Life*

support to old age pensioners, to come up with social measures to children and youngsters, and to create offers to mental ill and solicitude to people with disabilities.

In addition, the committee chairman of Social Services Department in lead took an initiative to establish a Municipal Social Housing Committee<sup>6</sup> to deal with and handle socio-cultural and socio-economic processes in the neighbourhood, Nøjsomhed, Vapnagård and Borupgård. The terms of reference are to co-ordinate social housing initiatives and perceive the three housing estates not as isolated items but as a coherent neighbourhood. This Municipal Social Housing Committee was launched in the beginning of 2001, the same year as elections for the municipal and county councils and the national parliament were going to be held. In the committees are representatives from the municipal administration, elected council members, and the three chairmen of the boards of the local housing associations managing Nøjsomhed, Vapnagård and Borupgård. This Municipal Social Housing Committee has had only one meeting in 2001, and since the election, no meetings have been called. At the moment there are no clear directions for this committee, and there is no agenda to discuss future rehabilitation of the neighbourhood as a whole. The three chairmen for the housing associations all express that they consider the committee to be a good initiative but they are dissatisfied with the fact that the committee is put on stand-by since the election.

Social Services Department has a close co-operation with *Children and Youngster Department*, which mainly deals with schools, education, counselling of young peoples. The department monitors youth problems, criminal activities, misuse of drugs and alcohol, and socially uneasy and unwell-integrated young people. Hence, schools are in focus in this department, and there are several schools in the neighbourhood. The main schools that the neighbourhood's children are enrolled in are *Borupgårdskolen*, which covers Borupgård and the southern part of Vapnagård, *Skolen ved Gurrevej* which covers Nøjsomhed, and finally *Rønnebær Alle Skolen* which covers the northern part of Vapnagård. In addition, a private Arabic school offers teaching in Arabic, and Arabic speaking parents from the neighbourhood and from elsewhere have the option to enrol their children at this school.

Furthermore, the *Department of Culture and Recreation* has a stake in the neighbourhood. Some of its main objectives are adult teaching to bilingual foreigners, and cultural and recreational activities for young people. At the institutional level in the neighbourhood, *Vapnagårdparken*, is an important asset. Vapnagårdparken consists of five institutions that cover children and youngster between the age of 6 and 25. The five institutions are drop-in centres, recreation centres and clubs. Furthermore, day-care centres and after-school centres are located in the neighbourhood and providing a variety of activities for youngsters. In particular, in Nøjsomhed there is an after-school centre, Arabic-Danish Club, which is run by four Arabic fathers who are under activation. It is primarily Arabic children who make use of the club.

At neighbourhood level *the housing associations* have strong interests in the neighbourhood in terms of maintaining socially, physically and economically well functioning estates and of improving the less well-functioning housing estates. Additionally, the housing associations play a role as regards to applying for state funds to improve physical standard and social situation in housing estates in collaboration with the municipality as described in *Current Rehabilitation Programmes*. Likewise, the housing association administering Vapnagård has hired a housing estate social worker, who has a co-ordinating function serving the interests of the residents, and

---

<sup>6</sup> Det Boligsociale Udvalg.

who's objective is to improve the social well-being on the estate. Additionally, there is a social adviser that is situated in Vapnagård.

Another actor working on a neighbourhood level is the *community police*. The three housing estates are divided between two community police districts as Vapnagård and Borupgård are in the same district, while another district covers Nøjsomhed. The community police's main function is to monitor and be seen and known on the housing estate. Additionally, the community police is expected to take part of solutions to social problems that are related or at some point may be related to police matters. In Nøjsomhed and Vapnagård there are two policemen where as there is a lack of community policing in Borupgård. From the community police quarter this lack is explained as problems of co-operation between the housing estate and the community police.

Finally, the Sthens Church has a stake in the neighbourhood as the church does volunteer work and offers activities for children in the neighbourhood and surrounding area. The church is situated close to Vapnagård, hence the church is more integrated in that housing estate compared to the two others.

### **Formal and informal network**

In the report a distinction between formal and informal network is employed. Formal network consists of actors, who collaborate for a longer period of time, every actor has the necessary resources to participate, and among the participants there is equal influence. The formal network aims at reaching consensus. The informal network is unstable compared to the formal network and generally open to new actors. The band of actors is often changing, and they often participate for a shorter period of time seeking to solve a particular problem. The trust and consensus are often limited, and the actors possess different resources and possibilities to influence the network.

### **Formal Network among Actors**

Between the *Social Service Department*, the *Children and Youngster Department*, the *Department of Culture and Recreation*, and *community police* there is an established and formally co-operation called the SSPK-co-operation. This co-operation is interdisciplinary and inter-departmental. Many recreational clubs and organisations – working with young people – participate in this co-operation. The main objective is social and criminal prevention, to monitor the youngster in the municipality, to co-ordinate identifications of problems and difficulties, and, finally, to come up with adequate solutions to deal with the identified problems.

The target group of this SSPK-co-operation is youngster in the age of 0 to 25, and the co-operation work continuously to ensure that all youngsters have a good child- and youth life; a life without any major social difficulties and crime. This work is exercised through education and implementation of general preventive projects and activities ([www.sspk-helsingor.dk/pages/sspkorg/org.htm](http://www.sspk-helsingor.dk/pages/sspkorg/org.htm)). The leader of the SSPK-cooperation is an SSPK-consultant who is situated in the Social Service Department. The other members of the cooperation are so-called SSP-teachers who work at the council and private schools or recreation centres.

Another broad and formal network with many actors who specifically monitor young people is called the Mini-midi-maxi-forum.<sup>7</sup> It is an interdisciplinary innovation in the municipality and aims at considering young people with need for special support and at starting the support on early stage. Furthermore, there is a close contact between medical, social, pedagogical, psychological and other necessary expert knowledge.

---

<sup>7</sup> in daily speech this forum is called The Sloggi-model.

The forum is organised around the public schools in the municipality. The mini-forum is a local, co-ordinating group that is compounded of municipal departments and sectors. There are 14 mini-forums, one for each public school, and each forum has to provide guidance and counselling, co-ordinate casework, refer to smaller organisations and recommend to larger organisations in specific and actual cases about vulnerable children and families. Each mini-forum is composed of school principal, health visitor, institution principal, psychologist, and family counsellor. Together they represent that professionalism that is needed to support a child with problems.

Any person who is related to a child and who suspect that the child needs special attention and support can recommend to the mini-forum that it take a closer look on the child and decides what to do if it is necessary to take actions.

The midi-forum is a local, inter-disciplinary prevention counsel that collects knowledge, experiences, and tendencies from the local area and takes initiative to preventive projects.

Third, the maxi-forum is joint exchange of experiences and lessons to be learned for skilled and trained persons in the area.

## General view of the Neighbourhood

Vapnagård is promoted by the housing association and also by the municipality as the ugly duckling that has turned into a swan. Also in a national context Vapnagård is used as a success story; a former depressed housing estate can be turned into good functioning estate. Two ugly ducklings that not yet have turned into swans are Nøjsomhed and Borupgård, and this is a challenge for the three estates as well as the municipality. Hence, a discourse concerning Vapnagård as a success and the two other housing estates as almost failures can be identified. This discourse is anchored in the municipality and extends to the neighbourhood. However, Nøjsomhed and Borupgård do not deserve to be labeled as failures, as there are potentials and capacities in these two housing estates to develop in a more positive direction. But the discourse works somewhat counterproductive to encourage these potentials and capacities and to work holistic with the neighbourhood as the objective in the Municipal Social Housing Committee is.

It is reasonable to appoint the social housing work that has been done on Vapnagård as successful, as nearly all problems have been solved while Nøjsomhed and Borupgård are only at the beginning at dealing with their problems. Borupgård and Nøjsomhed have not been able to avoid the unsuitable processes that have been going on in terms of economic difficulties and social and cultural segregation, and the success of Vapnagård has to be related to the two other housing estates' misfortunes. The municipality has devoted its attention to Vapnagård, and there has been no real attempt to view the neighbourhood holistically. To some extent the solution of social problems on Vapnagård has had the impact that problems have been transferred from Vapnagård to Nøjsomhed and Borupgård.

Another characteristic of the neighbourhood is that there is a high demand pressure on the local housing market, which means a low turnover of residents in the neighbourhood.

The resident composition has become stable on Vapnagård due to the low turnover, and a beginning demand to move to the estate from other housing estates in *Helsingør Boligselskab*.

Nøjsomhed has for the more socio-economic mobile individuals become a station that is used while they are on the internal waiting list to move on to other smaller and more attractive housing sections in *Andelsboligforeningen Kingo*. The residents who plan to stay on in Nøjsomhed prefer the estate because it is their home and they have friends and relatives here. In addition, they see the possibility for turning Nøjsomhed into a better situation and things already have improved compared to the situation in the middle of the 1990s.

Borupgård having the highest rent level appeals especially to households that can get individual housing subsidies or households that are not in a position – often due to outstanding debt from former misfortunes – to buy their own house or apartment. Because of the high rent level in Borupgård the municipality until the last couple of years did not use the family apartments here for solving acute housing problems. In general, the decreased turnover of residents in the neighbourhood should be ascribed to lack of other living possibilities rather than to increased attractiveness.

Furthermore as regards to resident composition, a segregation of individuals according to ethnicity can be identified although it is to some extent latent and subtle. What can be identified is that the Turkish population

mainly live on Vapnagård, the Palestinian and Gypsy population on Nøjsomhed, and East-Europeans on Borupgård. The residents experience this segregation as well, and in daily speech the main road, Kongevejen, which divides Nøjsomhed and Vapnagård is named the Suez Canal.

Finally, a characteristic of the neighbourhood is that all three housing estates strive to stay independent of the municipality's interference, and to maintain a status of being common housing estate having its own rights to make decisions. Frequent remarks from housing section boards are:

*"We do not want to be turned into a municipal institution."*

*"Civil servants shall not come here and tell us what to do."*

## Perception of Main Problems

Main problems in the neighbourhood vary according to the particular housing estate but even though this variation is present almost every interviewed professional emphasises the need to view the neighbourhood holistic. In addition, some professionals emphasise that they in their work with the housing estates face similar problems and therefore could make use of a committee to exchange experience and information instead of each and everyone has to do their own experiences.

A few informants mention problems in the council school. Unfair treatment of children, children banned from attending school, concern about the academic level are themes being mentioned. One of the three schools are experienced as very co-operative and partaking in neighbourhood life. But the schools are blamed for not giving priority to involvement in neighbourhood improvement.

### Vapnagård

As mentioned above, Vapnagård has managed to break a vicious circle, and the problems that this housing estate face are partly remaining problems, partly new occurred problems. On the account of remaining problems is the societal integration of the Turkish population. This problem is not only a local problem, but rather a societal problem. The Turks seem well-integrated in their own community on Vapnagård, but poorly integrated in communities with Danes and in society, in general. It is apparent that stigma is put on the Turkish population, however many Turks have lived in Denmark since the 1960s, and the society has changed view of Turks and has become more willing to let Turks into society.

Likewise, different problematic issues are occurring in relation to the residents on Vapnagård. From a professional's perspective it is emphasised that problems among the Turkish population tend to be related to identity and sense of belonging, whereas problems among the Danish tend to be related to having few human resources and weak ties to society. In addition, professionals mention that loneliness and isolated living are serious problems among the Danish population.

Furthermore, a main problem mentioned by the chairman of the section board in Vapnagård is a lack of a sense of community, which there used to be in former days. Fewer residents aspire to involve and commit them selves to the communal life on the estate. Residents have become more centred on individual life and interests which is similar to the general trend in society. As regard to the Turks and Danes both groups find that the members of the other group do not want to share community life or adjust their norms or behaviour as neighbours need. Especially, the different management of time

day and night and different norms for upbringing children are seen as a source of continuous potential irritation and conflicts.

Finally, a challenge more than a problem for Vapnagård is to sustain and maintain well-functioning processes. To many problems Vapnagård has found solutions but these solutions will not last for ever. There is a need to renew and keep addressing current situations.

### **Borupgård**

The main problems mentioned by the residents in Borupgård are conflicts between the two section boards, between present and former members of the section boards, between section boards members and caretakers, and between section boards and the board of the housing association, *Boligselskabet Teglværksgården*. These conflicts have been exposed at resident meetings, in newsletters, in flyers etc. One of the residents describes the situation like this:

*“In the end you do not know what is all about or who is right or wrong. You lose interest in involving yourself in anything here or participate in meetings. I do not want to become involved in this fight.”*

In Borupgård a perceived incompetence of the board of the housing association and its administration as well as the municipal administration is mentioned as troublesome and blocking for good and rational actions for bringing things further. There seem to be two conflicting discourses present on Borupgård. One discourse that can be interpreted as a renewal discourse is represented especially by residents in Borupgård I. They suggest a new way of thinking, while the other discourse, the traditional, defined by the housing association strives to maintain status quo and a do-as-usual-practice.

Furthermore, lack of institutions, lack of activities for young people and lack of communal places for residents to gather are problematic issues. Also the shabby state of the outdoor areas, the removal of the playground, the cutting down of trees without any prior information or involvement, and the insecurity about the renovation project is mentioned. Finally, some residents find the maintenance of the apartment as well as the service from the caretakers unsatisfactory seen in relation to the high rent level.

### **Nøjsomhed**

Nøjsomhed is a housing estate with a variety of problematic issues. One of the main problems is related to lack of provision of adequate means to avoid youth problems. And along those lines are the lack of anchoring of the Arabic-Danish Club as the club exists under quite unsure conditions and uses some rooms in the basement of one of the housing blocks. It is a worry as regards to the children on the estates as the four fathers in an Arabic-Danish Club take care of a large group of about 70 Arabic children. However, the activation of the four men in charge expires at the end of this year (2002), and this may become very problematic, and nearly all interviewed persons' worry is how to keep these children off the streets. The fathers wish to continue to work with the children and youngsters instead of being enrolled in another activation scheme. However, this does not seem possible in the formal Danish welfare system, as they do not have a formal education for possessing a job related to children and youngsters.

As regards to the resident composition there are major conflicts between Palestinians, Gypsies, and Danes. Each group fears the other groups and accuses the other group of obstructing Nøjsomhed to be a well-functioning housing estate.

Nøjsomhed bears characteristics of being a ghetto, and in many individuals' mind, residents and professional, Nøjsomhed is considered to be a ghetto. A resident describes Nøjsomhed this way:

*“It is really a ghetto. We call the housing estate Helsingør’s tax free zone. It is a duty-free area; it’s an international territory and it has its own kind of logic. It is quite amusing sometimes. In the evenings, the Gypsies are playing music at the parking lot and that’s very social. Then the fisherman and the greengrocer come once in a while and sell their stuff in the undeclared market.”*

A very frequent problem mentioned by the residents is related to garbage as garbage has been thrown out from the balconies on some of the high-rise blocks. Also the shabby and unclean stairways and lifts smelling of urea are mentioned as highly problematic issues. Some perceive the Gypsies to be the source of this situation, however there are clear indications that these problems are not to be related to one particular ethnic group and is a general problem. A young Dane who lives in one of the high-rise buildings can illustrate this:

*“When you see this behaviour you don’t care and also you start to throw your own garbage out. You simply stop to care, when you live such a place.”*

This is an attitude that has changed over the years according to those residents that have lived in Nøjsomhed for more than 10-15 years. These residents emphasise that what Nøjsomhed is today, it did not used to be; and that there are so many incidents in the daily life that become infuriatingly. A woman says:

*“When you enter the stairway someone has urinated on the stairs, on the wall - different places - and people just empty their pockets for candy paper and so. No one did such things in previous time.”*

Hence, several of the informants living in Nøjsomhed are looking for another place to live. The reason a foreign resident gives for looking for another dwelling is:

*“I want to live in a place where there is peace and quiet and Danes.”*

## Perception of “Outsiders” View of the Neighbourhood

The informants’ perception of how individuals living outside of the neighbourhood see the neighbourhood is related to the local newspaper, Helsingør Dagblad’s representations of the neighbourhood. However, most informants dissociate themselves from the local newspaper, Helsingør Dagblad’s view of the neighbourhood. For instance, the following reaction to newspapers’ representation of Vapnagård indicated this dissociation:

*“The residents simply couldn’t recognise the picture that the press, especially the tabloid press, had been giving (Vapnagård Nyt, sep.2002, årg. 32, nr. 5).”*

The informants find that the newspaper contributes to create a bad image of the neighbourhood, as reports are negative and exaggerated.

Looking at some of the articles that have been published in Helsingør Dagblad in 2002 the stories tend to be about criminal activities, bad social and physical conditions, and only a few success stories. A tendency can be identified in the respect that small fights get blown up to a very dramatic and violent story, and that the housing estates are portrayed as ghettos. Naturally, this contributes just to make a further bad reputation and to create sentiments of the neighbourhood as a dangerous and an unsafe place to live. This can be illustrated with examples of headlines:

*“Man beaten up with a frying pan – found messed up in blood in stairwell in Vapnagård (Helsingør Dagblad 07.04.1998).”*

*“Playing children shot with a projectile of glass - girl in life danger (Helsingør Dagblad, 23.08.2002).”*

*“A car fire had been started deliberately on Vapnagård. Three or four young men with different ethnic background from Danish are suspected deliberately to have started the car fire on Saturday night (Helsingør Dagblad, 25.11.2002.).”*

The Helsingør Dagblad has tried to change its perception of the negativity of Vapnagård and in an editorial the newspaper has been focusing on the positive development the estate:

*“Vapnagård is today what Vapnagård always has been – a social housing estate, which also contains a lot of people with social problems. But this discourse has changed over the past years also inside the main road around the 57 blocks. Lots of the resident are very happy to live in Vapnagård – and are happy to tell you about it (Helsingør Dagblad 01.02.2000).”*

Another example of positive reports from Vapnagård:

*“Positive outcome in Vapnagård after successful renovation. The crime preventive council accentuates Vapnagård as a good example in a report, as how you create a safe environment (Helsingør Dagblad, 08.12.2001).”*

Though Helsingør Dagblad has altered its perception of Vapnagård, the perception of Borupgård has not changed. Borupgård is viewed as a housing estate with a lot of problems. This impression you can get from a headline such as the following one:

*“Sick refugee family lives in slum apartment (Helsingør Dagblad, 12.01.02).”*

*“Borupgård II was a true dumping ground, incompetent landlords allowed mess and garbage and a ton of cats (Helsingør Dagblad 22.07.02).”*

Unemployment and people on transfer income are relatively common and they are regarded as representative for the residents living on the estate. Other stories, which are about the residents holding pets and the tenants' democracy's opinions about pets, have been reported in a condescending way. Headlines from such articles are for instance:

*“Borupgård - round and around (Helsingør Dagblad, 27.08.02).”*

*“Russian conditions at Borupgård? (Helsingør Dagblad 06.08.02).”*

When the articles concern Nøjsomhed, often the ethnic residents are in centre of attention. The ethnic residents are divided in two groups as one group, the Gypsies, is regarded as causing the problems, whereas the Arabs and Turks are viewed more, positively. The Gypsies are represented as criminals, which is clearly in these headlines:

*“The police is drowning in Gypsy crime. The Gypsy children start their carrier already as 10 years old. They can not be rescued (Helsingør Dagblad, 21.08.2002).”*

*“The king of robbery got 8 years in jail. Like another Godfather he pulled the strings. Planned robberies against supermarkets. Got weapons for his younger henchman (Helsingør Dagblad, 03.08, 2002).”*

The latest representation of Gypsies concerns young Gypsy girls who presumably are arranged to get married to elder men who in return pay an amount of money to the girls parents. Prominent parliamentary politicians from the Danish People Party, a right wing party, have caught this story and contributed to get the story in the national media even before the suspected conditions are investigated. Meanwhile, it is possible to read headlines such as this one:

*“In Helsingør young Gypsy girls are traded as slaves to older men (Helsingør Dagblad 28.11.02).”*

Finally, as regards Nøjsomhed a young male resident describe how he experience that outsiders perceive his housing estate:

*“When I get remarks about living in Nøjsomhed these remarks do not refer to how the housing estate looks from the outside or about the apartments. The remarks are about the social milieu and the atmosphere.”*

## Informants' Description of the Neighbourhood

The residents do not perceive the three estates as one cohesive neighbourhood, as they have a very differentiated perception of each estate. Residents that plan to stay on the estates also value their own estate much higher than they value the two other estates. Two of the interview persons have experiences from living on one of the other estates and they favoured their present living conditions to the previous ones. Likewise, all residents seem to have reasons to prefer exactly the estate they live on despite the housing estate's image among “outsiders”.

Borupgård is preferred because of the spacious apartments, closeness to attractive nature, good public transport and neighbouring homeowner developments, where new residents are going to pay double the costs per month for houses of the same size. They know that the estate is nicknamed the “radiator houses” and has no prestige, and is looked upon as one of these modern concrete estates with an unhealthy indoor climate.

Vapnagård is preferred because it has turned into a nice looking estate; there are a lot of possibilities to have an active life on the estate, as the outdoor areas and playing grounds are good and attractive. All informants know that Vapnagård have had a very bad reputation and that not all “outsiders” are aware of the improvements that have taken place. Some residents still experience a negative reaction when they tell that they are living on Vapnagård.

Finally, on Nøjsomhed almost all residents emphasise the positive aspects of their estate and the neighbourhood if they meet a potential new resident. Especially, residents with immigrant background favour the neighbourhood as a place for a good and quiet life, although there are too few Danish residents. The interviewed professionals describe Nøjsomhed as a typical large-scale social housing estate with good apartments. The good location with easy access to transport systems, nature, beach, shops with all the everyday necessities, and schools, child care institutions, cinema, swimming pool etc. All these facilities add to make Nøjsomhed an attractive housing estate to live on.

However, on Vapnagård and, especially, on Nøjsomhed residents complain over the acoustics and getting disturbed by noise from other apartments and the stairwells during the nights.

Glancing through the housing estates' local magazines for Vapnagård and Borupgård, *Vapnagård Nyt* and *Borupgård Beboerblad*, these magazines highlight the more positive stories than the local newspaper. The magazines accentuate the tone in the residents' description of the neighbourhood.

The local magazine for Vapnagård is written and edited by the residents themselves with the assistance of a professional information worker. This magazine contains stories about the positive initiatives that are made, recently, such as establishment of a new local café on Sundays, daytime clubs and other network-building courses for ethnic women and their children, and invitations to social events.

The residents' description, as it is represented in the local magazine, is that Vapnagård is a well-functioning housing estate with a lot of devoted residents. The leader of Vapnagårdsparken says for instance in an interview:

*"When so much is happening it is because of the initiatives of the residents. If the residents hadn't been so motivated nothing would have happened. It is mostly about your view of human nature"*

Furthermore, in most articles in the local magazine, the social involvement of residents is highlighted as the key to positive development and nice atmosphere on the housing estate. This can be illustrated in these two headlines:

*"The united committee, multiethnic festival, singing and dancing in the barn (Vapnagård Nyt, 2001, no. 31, nr.6)."*

*"Sharing cars at Vapnagård (Vapnagård Nyt, 2001, no. 31, nr.7)."*

Finally, Vapnagård is characterised as a neighbourhood that strives to involve all residents in solving the social problems and combating the social exclusion.

As regards, Borupgård, the tone in the local magazine is much more different compared to the magazine for Vapnagård. There is a lot of criticism from the residents because of the lack of democracy and the section boards are accused for being corrupt. The impression from the magazine is also that the section boards do not regard the residents as being engaged and faithful to the housing estate. These controversies have created general mistrust and frustrations, which are reflected in the local magazine.

# Living in the Neighbourhood

## 3.1 Perception of Issues about Safety and Security

In general, individuals living in the neighbourhood sense safety and security on their particular housing estate. In terms of burglary and theft the residents feel secure and safe, and the burglaries that most often happen are into basement facilities and not into apartments. In terms of person-related crime residents tend to feel less secure and safe. This might have to do with the fact that in the municipality there has been an increase of violent crime during the last ten years as the housing estates have not experienced a higher rate of violent crime per se compared to other social housing estates. For instance, in 2001 there were twelve incidents of violent crime in Vapnagård, and they were detected, and each incident were among people who knew each other. Mostly, violent crime happens down town on weekends.

A look into the development of person-related crime from 1990 to 2001<sup>8</sup> shows that violent crime, robbery and vandalism have increased since the mid 1990s. This is illustrated in the following graph.

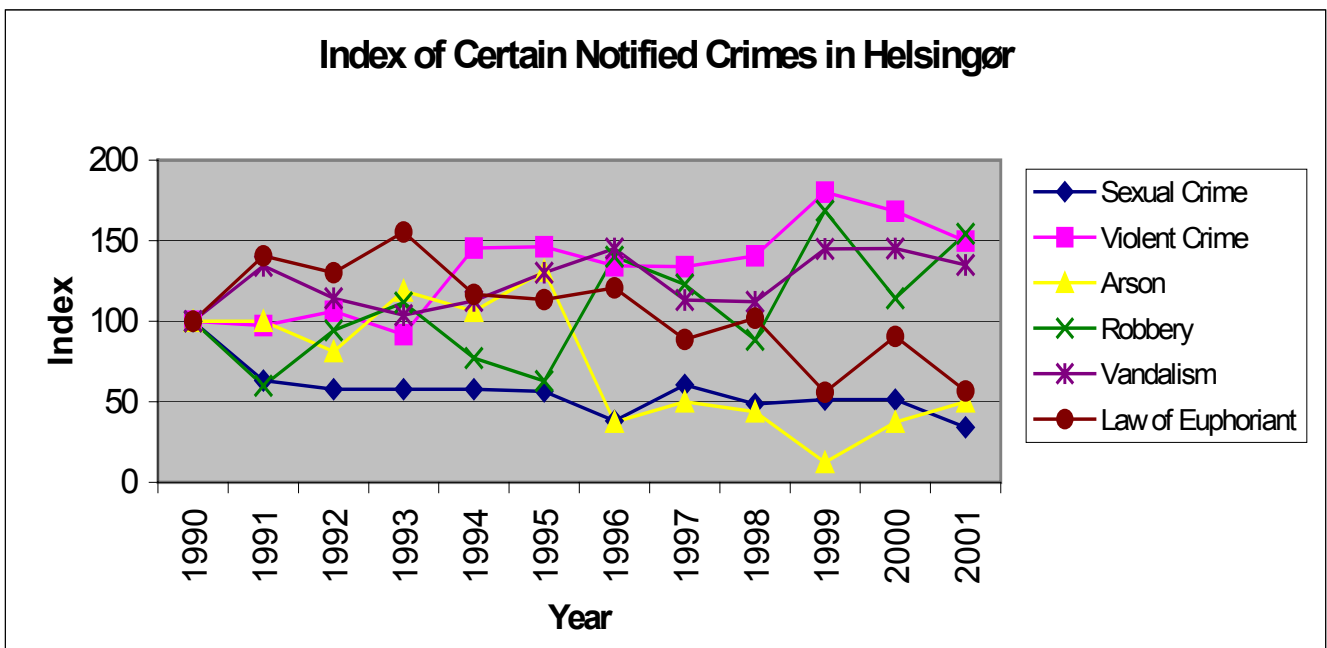


Figure 3. Index of Certain Notified Crimes in Helsingør.

Understandably, the increase, especially, in violent crime may have affected individuals' sense of safety and security. In regards to the neighbourhood, there are indications that although the residents are afraid of violent crime, they are not necessarily afraid or fear for themselves. Instead they tend to fear for their children's safety when they are hanging out, walking around or coming home when it is dark.

A single mom with three children says:

<sup>8</sup> There are no statistical calculation of notified crime previous to 1990.

*“I will not allow my children to walk alone on the estate. If my daughter (15 y.o.) is going to a party or to meet some of her friends at night, even though it is just one bloc away, we have this agreement that I pick her up when she is ready to go home, or she is in the company of a friend, and when they leave she calls me, and I know she will be at home five minutes later.”*

The fear of having youngsters and teenagers to stay alone on the estate is gender-related, too. Parents are afraid that their boys may participate in gang activities<sup>9</sup>, and that their girls may be assaulted. Especially, the presence of large groups of ethnic male teenagers produces this parental fear. Some of the informants have experienced that their daughters have been called names such as whore, slut, and bitch, and the attitudes the daughters are met with produce fear and sense of insecurity among the teenage daughters and their parents.

Especially, the parental fear is outspoken on Nøjsomhed. This is related to the lack of leisure facilities for the youth. At the moment, the Danish-Arabic Club is a recreation club for youngsters between the age of five and twelve, and the club has about 100 members, and there is waiting list to become a member. However, when these youngsters grow up and become teenagers, the worry is that they will start to hang out in the neighbourhood because there no activities for them to engage in. Parents are afraid that some of these teenagers may end up making troubles. Already among the residents in Nøjsomhed some ethnic groups are feared. There are incidents where residents have been assaulted because they have reprovved ethnic children who played too wild on the playground.

Furthermore, the ethnic-related fear has a face where ethnic groups fear each other. In Nøjsomhed Gypsies are afraid of the Palestinians, Palestinians are afraid of the Gypsies, and Danes are afraid of both groups. According to the Community Police there are conflicts between the ethnic groups, and these conflicts tend to be related to gang activities and fights about territory; which group dominate which area. In addition, these gang activities and territory fights are related to certain criminal activities, and especially, crimes done by Gypsies have increased in the last five years (Helsingør Nærpoliti 2002).

Finally, when it comes to arsons, there have been arsons on Borupgård within the past year; but that is quite unusual and in interviews with residents these arsons have not caused any anxiety. However, this is not the picture on Nøjsomhed as incidents with arsons in stairwells cause fear and anxiety. A young male resident has this story:

*“One morning at 7 am we woke up by the Police. The policeman asked me if I were all right; if I was hurt or something because there has been arson in our stairway. Someone had put a baby carriage on fire. Episodes like this are frightening.”*

Vandalism has increased in Helsingør during the last decade and on the housing estate vandalism is being perpetrated as well. However, with major financial means to physical renovation in Vapnagård, vandalism has decreased although on the borderlines to Vapnagård vandalism is still a problem. In Nøjsomhed and Borupgård vandalism can be registered as well, though it is not a tremendous problem.

Vapnagård has made a physical renovation that come up to the crime preventive standard set out The Danish Crime Preventive Council.

---

<sup>9</sup> This aspect will be further developed in section 3.2 *Perception of Issues about Public Space*.

## Problems Perceived by Professionals

Social isolation is perceived as a growing problem among youngsters. This social isolation is quite subtle and not very visible. Young people in these housing estates is at risk to loose contact to surrounding society, some youngster have only sporadic contact. In Nøjsomhed the Arabic children has the Arabic-Danish Club which works fine and do a good job of including the Arabic children into a community. However, Danish youngsters are left out of this community; but not necessarily deliberately. The Arabic children are at risk at being isolated from the surrounding society; and this might become even more problematic when these children get older.

The Gypsy youngsters are isolated as well, not in their own groups but in society and many Gypsies are in many respects in conflict with society. In general, the professionals' view is that special measures need to be taken in relation to this group.

A new growing problem, often founded in social isolation, has to do with girls that for until recently has been an overlooked group by the professionals. In two ways, the girls are popping up. There are a growing number of girls that get into fights and beat out up other girls, and these groups seem to be organised similar to the boys' gangs. Then there is another group of girls who have started to prostitute themselves. The SSPK-consultant describes the prostitution activities these girls engage in:

*"Often they do blow jobs in turn for McDonalds food, or they have sex with young married men in turn for the men driving them somewhere they need to go and for the men to show compassion for them. It is obvious that these girls prostitute themselves in order to find someone who cares for them. These girls lack love and solicitude and they lack experiences of doing well and of being acknowledged for doing well at something. They seek some kind of success and this they might gain with a guy by giving him sexually what he wants. We know for sure about 15 girls who prostitute themselves and the youngest one she is 13."*

SSP-teachers are out in the neighbourhood, and they experience that there are many adults as well as children and youngsters that need to talk to these consultants. There are tremendous social problems with the young generations. In relation to integration of individuals with foreign background, the SSP-teachers experience massive problems in relation to incorporate the parents in finding and carrying out solutions. Parents are overlooked in questions related to integration. Institutions, schools and so on tend to focus only on the children; and this actually put the children in a difficult situation. The reason is that the children try to behave and socialise as Danes when they are outside their home, and when at home they try to perform tuned to their cultural background. As the parents often are absent in the public arena (maybe because of low social resources/capital) the professionals must be responsible and support the children and strengthen their capabilities so they can take care of them selves.

Furthermore, the SSPK-consultant emphasises that among adult, in general, there is a reluctance to deal with problematic situations. There is tendency that we just shut our eyes to the facts; and this is no good for the youngsters.

Many children and teenagers daily attend municipal after school activity institutions and/or sports clubs, paid for on a monthly fee basis. In these activities, however, a large group of children and teenagers do not attend any activities. Instead they hang about and some become violent. The main reasons for their non-participation are that some parents regard these activities as too expensive.

### **How the Situation is Handled by Professionals**

The community policing are an important actor in handling the above situations in collaboration with Social Services Department, Children and Youngster Department, and the Department of Culture and Recreation.

First of all, the visibility of police on the housing estates reduces the residents' senses of not feeling safe and secure. Especially, in Vapnagård and Nøjsomhed the local policemen have become part of the everyday life. It is not that they have to do a lot of traditional police work but rather that they are on friendly terms with the residents and the people working in the area. The community policing works outreach and provides guidance and counselling. In Vapnagård, the local policeman has office hours on the estate once a week, and he participates in many of the social activities on the estate and is a well known local figure. Likewise, in Nøjsomhed the local policeman has been an integrated part of the social life, and he has as one of his main objective to work with second-generation immigrants.

The local policeman in Nøjsomhed assists in applying economic means, and the fact that the local policeman has shown sincere commitment and involvement in Nøjsomhed seem to have had a positive influence on the willingness of organisations, funds etc. to offer economic means to the housing estate.

The local policeman works in close co-operation with the Arabic-Danish Club and the housing estate board in Nøjsomhed.

SSPK-organisation takes actions in solving problems among youngsters, and there are several means employed. There are various drop-in-centres and open counselling, and outreach on street level with preventive initiatives. New projects are created continuously according to which group or problem that need to be dealt with. For instance, as regards to prostitution among young girls, a new project under progress. The SSPK-consultant is applying economic means in order to hire a female social worker who shall be monitoring the young girls and their activities and support them in finding a way out of a prostitution course.

The SSPK-organisation in Helsingør is a co-operation across sectors and professions between the municipal departments of Children and Youth, Social and Health, Culture and Leisure and the local police. Also a number of associations and organisations working with children and youngsters participate. They all to some degree work on preventing social problems and criminal conduct. The organisation has a steering committee; a professional advisory board; the SSP-teachers staff; and local operating units working together with already existing social networks and covering the whole of the municipality.

The implementation of the SSPK-organisation has meant less bureaucracy between the different departments and professions. The attention is now on children and youngsters needs. An earlier practice of giving a lot of energy to watch the domain of professions has been given in. This has according to the SSPK consultant and other professionals changed the conditions for the preventive work with children and youth tremendously.

Emphasis is on personal contact and outreach work. Also it is important to meet children and youth when they do not expect to meet the system and that the relation to the adult is based on trust. When trouble can be expected it is considered important to wrap children and youngsters up in persons from the SSP, which they already know from earlier contacts.

### **How the Situation is Handled by Informal Networks**

The fathers who run the Arabic-Danish Club are part of a large informal network, and they are respected among the Palestinians as well as the members of the section board. They have the (informal) authority to contact parents and inform them about their children who might be in some kind of trou-

ble and to motivate the parents to take action. Quite often the parents are unaware of the children's behaviour outside the home.

Night Owls (Natteravne) is a large group of parents who look after teenagers when they are hanging around at nights and mostly in the weekends they go down town to make sure that their young ones do not get into fights or other problems. Many men with immigrant background participate as Night Owls, and here among are the fathers in charge of the Arabic-Danish Club. In total there are about 10 parents living in Nøjsomhed who are Night Owls.

So to speak, the Night Owls go wherever the children and youngster are. For instance, if there is a demonstration in Copenhagen, and the Night Owls know that some of their young ones will participate in the demonstration, the Night Owls will be present as observers.

A Turkish informant who is the father of three children is Night Owl and describes the function this way:

*“When the youngsters make troubles on the streets we intervene. And the minute they see us, we can hear the youngsters warn each other by saying “now they are here”. As night owl you have no competence, we can't arrest the youngster if they do something criminal, but we can keep an eye on them, and if things get out of hand we call the police or SSP.”*

### **Co-ordination of Activities in Formal and Informal Networks**

Primarily, the SSPK-consultant tries to co-ordinate activities among formal and informal networks. Additionally, the local policemen have some kind of co-ordinating function. However, it is especially the SSPK-consultant who has an overall view of what is going on among the young people in Helsingør.

SSP-teachers provide counselling once a week, and youngsters as well as parents ask for counselling. The SSP-teachers make sure that the right authorities get involved in solutions. Once a soccer game between the youngsters and the police was arranged in order to create a forum without tension to meet in.

There is a close co-operation between a number of key persons. These are the Arabic fathers who run the Arabic-Danish Club, the chairman of housing section board in Nøjsomhed, Night Owls, the SSPK-consultant, the local policeman, and a spider person with immigrant background working with children for 15 years. This person is well respected in the local institutional world, in the municipal departments, and among the immigrants.

Community policing strive to attain a closer co-operation with all the different employees working on the estates.

### **Future Challenge**

What to do when the Arabic children in Nøjsomhed become older – how to avoid unsuitable processes. In general there is a need for better facilities and offers for young people on the estate.

The establishment of a strong partnership between the parents and the professionals may be the bringing together of unequal partners producing synergies and produce new solution to social problems with the children and young people.

## 3.2 Perception of Issues about Public Space

The residents appreciate the spacious green areas and closeness to nature and the inner city of Helsingør. Also they appreciate the public facilities they do have at the edge of the neighbourhood. These are e.g. the swimming hall, the shopping and service possibilities on different locations, cinema centre. Also there are three primary schools close to the three estates and a number of nurseries, kindergartens and after school clubs. In Borupgård there are no indoors public facilities, but the estate benefit from using the neighbourhood school for meetings etc. Vapnagård has a range of public facilities run and staffed by the estate. Among these all day open ServiceCentre, partly staffed by volunteer residents, a local municipal library and Vapnagårdsparken, which is an open institution working with 6-25 year old residents. Nøjsomhed has an activity house and an Arabic-Danish Club mainly used by 10-15 year old Arabic children.

### Problems Perceived by Residents

There are not sufficient sports facilities in the neighbourhood. E.g. a number of football clubs have to go out elsewhere to play. For small boys teams this means that parents and grandparents have to drive long distances, which excludes children from families with few resources and impedes integration and neighbourhood spirit. The residents feel that the municipality does not give the neighbourhood a fair share of the resources spent on sports. And according to several of the interviewees this is a point where things need to be changed.

In Borupgård residents find the common outdoor areas on the estate shabby and measures to introduce improvements have made things worse in the last years. Also the dismantling of the playground is a problem, as there are nowhere for the children to play outdoors. Too many of the individual gardens and front areas are not cared for. Large families have trouble with the household garbage capacity and end up filling the shed with garbage. At the same time other residents complain about this and about the untidiness around the common containers. Mothers with small children do not like to let them play outdoors alone, as they cannot look to the front area from inside the houses. Also they are afraid of the traffic on the internal roads and of letting the children visit the small neighbouring shopping centre Borupgårdcenteret. They do not like the constant presence of a large drinking group with several dogs in the centre. The shopkeepers in the centre know that the group keeps people away from the centre, but they do not see them as dangerous for anyone. One of the informants finds that the owner of the centre neglects maintenance and cleaning and nothing is done to make it a more attractive place even it has a very good location close to the train station.

In Vapnagård the outdoors green areas, playgrounds, paths etc. gives the residents a lot of satisfaction. But Danish mothers find that children from other ethnic groups mob and outnumber the Danish children and want to be able to watch their children. Some of the informants are not happy about the public bicycle and walking paths outside of Vapnagård. They find them unsafe for children and young people and do not allow them to go there alone today. A daughter of one of the Danish responders had been bothered on the path to Merete Centeret by a gang of boys. One of the informants of ethnic minority background told that his son was afraid to walk alone past a group of drinkers regularly standing on the main path between Vapnagård and Prøvestens Centeret.

In Nøjsomhed Danish informants perceive litter and untidiness in public areas inside the estate as a main problem. The large number of children roaming around the area including stairwells and lifts is looked upon as a

problem as the parents do not keep discipline. Things are damaged and litter is thrown. A Gypsy mother among the informants always had to keep the child indoors as it was beaten up when playing outside. Some of the Danish residents were also offended by seeing older children beating up younger children without the parents interfering. There is a lack of respect for the common areas and for others according to most informants. It is also looked upon as a disgrace that the local caretakers have to spend their time cleaning up the mess, while they could be doing other important things. Especially the situations with garbage being thrown out from the balconies are seen as the outmost disrespect for others and make residents feel ashamed of living on the estate. The parking facilities are also looked upon as very poor by a residents from one of the ethnic minorities. Most ethnic minority informants as well as some Danes see the low standard as a result of poor management. Some comments that the service personnel are not performing the job they are paid to do. Others seeing the estate as a common responsibility and as their own home find that a lot of resources are spend cleaning up after irresponsible residents. The situation can be illustrated by these two quotes from a young man living on the estate:

*“The negative things that are mentioned about Nøjsomhed is that it is miserable, unsavoury, dingy, and unhygienic. It is the custom to throw out garbage from your balcony. We actually had this episode this summer where my roommates and I were standing on our balcony having a beer, and suddenly a sofa fell from one of the other balconies. This practice we have adopted as well. If they can do it, so can we.”*

*“Particularly, the young second generation teenagers cause fear when they are driving their jog around on the estate. They drive fast. Also when they hang out in their clique they are intimidating. They stroll around aimless; no place to go and no place to stay. They just hang out on the street corners and on the parking lot.”*

There are not adequate outdoor facilities in Nøjsomhed. There are no natural meeting places; and those areas that are existing are so run down, no one makes use of these places.

In Nøjsomhed the construction of an Activity House has been subsidised by government money. There are different possibilities for activities such as fitness training, sun tanning, playing pool and darts. However, the residents show very little interest for the Activity House, and a major question for the estate section board is why do the residents not show up, it is a fine house with potentials. Several of the Danish respondents knew that the house was there, but they did not have any plans about visiting it.

*“.... yes in fact there is this Activity House. We haven't really look at it yet. My wife have talked about visiting the fitness, but I really do not see what she wants to do there...”*

### **Problems Perceived by Professionals**

The professionals see the neighbourhood as a little bit shabby as any other neighbourhood of social housing build around the 1970s. Those who know the neighbourhood for a longer time period see that things has improved inside the areas and notice that improvements are still needed in two of the estates; Nøjsomhed and Borupgård. Some that are new in their job function tell that they were very surprised when they visited Vapnagård the first time, as they had heard about its negative image. And now they saw it was very attractive – completely different from what they expected.

### **How the Situation is Handled by Authorities/Professionals**

Problems with litter and untidiness on the estates is not handled by the municipal authorities as it is the responsibility of the housing associations and the residents. The housing associations and the section boards continuously work to improve the situation.

The untidiness and lack of maintenance on the municipal paths in connection with the neighbourhood is of a similar standard as that of other places in the municipality except for the down town area that is cleaned much more frequent.

One of the professionals had earlier had a special EU supported activation project for Gypsy men, Naput, located in Nøjsomhed. In the beginning he mainly worked with Gypsies and one of the first things he took action on was helping the caretakers to solve the problem with garbage being thrown out from the balconies. Everybody thought the Gypsies did it, but it turned out that it was not the case. Step by step the situation was sorted out. The men picked up the garbage every morning together with the local caretakers, when it was found out from where the garbage originated the residents on the address was put out of the apartment and soon the practice of throwing garbage stopped. When the activation project moved out of Nøjsomhed the practice of throwing garbage from balconies have obviously been taken up again. The basement facilities the Arabic-Danish Club use today was originally renovated and used by the activation project. Naput also took care of improvements on the outdoor areas. People in activation have also been working with the green areas in Borupgård, but residents do not see the result as a success.

### **How the Situation is Handled Informally**

On all the estates days or weekends for cleaning up outdoors are organised by the residents. Also individual residents take action to clean up if they think it is too much.

In Vapnagård the residents taking turns clean many stairwells or they decided themselves if they want to pay professional cleaners to do the job. In Nøjsomhed residents are often very dissatisfied with the cleaning standard. Some doubt e.g. that the professional cleaners taking care of the lifts and stairwells do the job they are paid for. Several informants tell that they take action and clean the lift or the entrance to the stairwell if they have guests coming, as they feel ashamed of the situation. Another informant in Nøjsomhed just did not care. His residence was transient; as he did not have a contract of his own and expected to move on. He could not take a place like Nøjsomhed serious, as normal people would not according to his opinion be able to live under such conditions.

### **Co-ordination of Activities in Formal and Informal Networks**

In the Danish context cleaning and maintenance of public spaces on housing estates is a matter dealt with by the housing association and the residents on the estate. It is up to the residents to decide the standard, how to organise the work and the related cost level. As the municipality has a supervising responsibility in relation to housing associations and its estates, situations not handled properly have formally to be dealt with at the council level. In the end it is also a political decision what kind of maintenance level municipal roads, paths and green areas etc. should have in a neighbourhood. A low standard at the municipal areas seems to colour the standard at the estate owned areas in a negative direction. Graffiti is e.g. very visible at concrete walls and subways in connection to the municipal paths and roads.

## Conclusions and Questions

The less, residents feel part of society and member of the estate community, the harder it is to get them to take responsibility for things outside their private apartments. It is especially hard to motivate them to take responsibility for things they do not perceive as their own responsibility.

In this context it needs to be investigated if residents are aware of and informed about the responsibilities they do have living on a social housing estate. Do they think they just rent an apartment and a landlord has to take care of everything outside? Or have they simply given up because they see others not caring? Or do they think the municipality is to blame for the uncleanliness because it's a service they assume the municipality is responsible for? Or don't they care because they have situations and problems in their lives that completely overshadow such issues? Are there too many residents with such situations and problems concentrated in certain places in the neighbourhood?

## 3.3 Perception of Issues about Schools and Education

### Residents' Perception of Problems

In general, the parents are satisfied with the school system. What causes some scepticism among the Danish parents is the concentration of many ethnic children to some of the schools and what the consequences in regards to quality of lessons are. At the same time ethnic parents see it as very important that their children attend a school where they can learn the Danish language and become integrated into the Danish society. On the other hand some ethnic parents are afraid that their children will not learn their mother tongue, and therefore decide to enrol their children in the Arabic School.

Some parents express concern about the maintenance standard in the schools. An insufficient and low maintenance standard at the school can be interpreted as ignorance towards the children and a signal of them as well as the learning situation not being important. A parent in Nøjsomhed describe Skolen v. Gurrevej in this manner:

*"I experience that there is indifference at the school. Especially, the physical surroundings seem not to be devoted any attention. Just after the summer holiday my daughter told me, now the school caretakers have finally removed those broken chairs that have been lying around at different places for the past couple of years. I couldn't believe that, and I think it can't be right. If something is broken it has to be fixed, otherwise it only aspires not to take care of things."*

A few informants mention problems in the school. Unfair treatment of children, children banned from attending school, concern about the academic level are themes being mentioned. One of the three schools is experienced as very co-operative and partaking in neighbourhood life. But schools are blamed for not giving priority enough to be involved in neighbourhood improvements. Vapnagård had e.g. invited the local school to sit in on the management committee of the renovation project supported by the Urban Committee in the middle of the 1990s. But the invitation was turned down with a reference to lack of time resources.

### Professionals' Perception of Problems

Accordingly, to the professionals there are clear indications that Gypsies as a group are very distinct to other ethnic groups for instance by structuring their daily life in manners that varies to an 'ordinary' daily routine. This pro-

duces different consequences. In educational terms there are tremendous consequences as children with Gypsy background have a high rate of absence from attending school, and many have server problems with learning to write and read. The Gypsy children lack support from family. An argument that professionals often meet is that the grandparents have never learned how to read or write, and why should the children since grandparents have done well without these qualifications.

In order to give young women with a difficult background a chance to get a basic education and learn the Danish language a special educational offer (10. P) for 14-21 year old girls have been operating since 1993 at Byskolen located near the city centre. Original this offer was established for girls not allowed attending school together with boys when coming into puberty. Today a large part of the 21 girls that are benefiting of this educational opportunity lives in the case study neighbourhood. They are Gypsies, married women recently arriving in Denmark, young women that do not want to attend a regular language school together with their mother or mother in law, refugees or girls having difficulties in a regular educational setting. Most of them have small children and some of the mothers are 15 years old. All the pupils are followed until they are 21 years old and the aim is to get the women into employment. The two teachers working with the girls see this offer as the only change these girls have for getting a basic education (information given at a local public meeting on integration at Borupgårdskolen 30.04.2002).

Several professionals relate that there are problems related to teach women with children the Danish language. If there is no one to look after the children these women might never get around to learn the language. Previously, there has been an arrangement at Vapnagårdsparken where children could be looked after while the mothers had Danish lessons in a room next door.

According to the professionals, the municipality has done a bad job in maintaining further and higher education possibilities. Several education institutions have been laid down or moved elsewhere to the disadvantage of the less mobile part of the younger generation.

The professionals experience that among ethnic parents there seem to be this ambition on behalf of their children that they should be educated as engineer, lawyer or medical doctor. If none of these educational options fit their children – for whatever reason – the parents do not support any other form of education. This way of thinking is very difficult for professionals to alter. A bilingual school and educational supervisor describes the situation like this:

*“the parents are not good at supporting their children. The parents do not scrutinise how the Danish educational system functions. Most of them relate to the educational system as if they were still in their home country. That means that their children have to enrol in grammar school (gymnasium) and then enrol at university, and if grammar school is not the right way for a child to go, there is no alternative than just get an unskilled job. The parents never consider commercial college or basic vocational courses (EFG) even though this kind of education might be suitable and desirable for their children.”*

Professionals find it is crucial to work with the ethnic parents;

*“if you do not consider the parents you will never obtain any results working with the children.”*

But coaching is not offered to cover the need, as the economic resources ascribed to coaching are too limited. Teachers also inform about different capacities to learn among the pupils, which seem to be related to cultural background and an inability on behalf of the teachers to reach these pupils.

Many of the childcare institutions in the neighbourhood experience concentrations of children with foreign background and this has become a vicious circle as Danish parents withdraw their children from these institutions and enrol them in institutions dominated by Danish children. This same mechanism is identifiable in regards to schools.

### **How the Situation is Handled by Authorities/Professionals**

In order to make sure that Gypsy children go to school the municipality decided to deduct money from the cash (social) benefits the parents received. This – also called the Helsingør Model - was until recently practised for a couple of years in Helsingør. The logic behind this initiative was that if you threaten the parents on the money, they will make sure that the children go to school so they will receive all their cash (social) benefit. While this arrangement was going on the schools could register that many more Gypsy children kept their school. However, the arrangement has recently been forbidden from national quarter because it is regarded as violation of human rights. As a consequence Gypsy parents have e.g. started to take their daughters out of the educational offer for girls at Byskolen, and there are examples of very young girls being married of against their own wish are being reported (Helsingør Dagblad 17.12.2002, p. 6). But it is possible that the Helsingør-Model can become national policy. In December 2002 the minister for Refugee, Immigration and Integration Affairs has invited the Mayor of Helsingør to participate in a think-tank on integration. The background for this invitation is that the Municipality of Helsingør is considered to be one of the municipalities in Denmark with the most interesting and wide experiences on the integration questions. Especially the practice of deducting money from the cash benefits the parents receive if the children do not attend school is an issue expected to come into focus as a general mean to keep children in school (Helsingør Dagblad 16.12.2002, p. 6).

There is a SSP teacher who once a week visits the Arabic-Danish Club in Nøjsomhed, and the way that she handles situations is that she takes the function of a newsletter from the school. She informs the group of fathers about incidents at school meaning if a child is facing problems she informs the fathers and then they take action. And at school other teachers can report to the SSP teacher and they will know that she will take care of that report and make sure something will be done.

The municipality has given Vapnagårdsparken wide definitions/limitations for pedagogical work, which has the positive content that the institution has possibilities to go alternative ways. They have the possibility to be flexible according to the needs of the different children and youngsters. For instance, they have two “street workers” going out to meet children in the neighbourhood according to needs at the moment. The formulated common goal for the institution’s five departments is to reduce social inequality among the children and youngsters by giving them equal possibilities and conditions.

Politically the target group for the institution is limited to 6-25 year olds in Vapnagård, which follows the age limit for the Municipal Department of Children and Youth. This means that grown-ups and parents in contrast to earlier times now are outside the target group. Also there are no follow up of young people leaving Vapnagårdsparken and going to a recreation institution elsewhere in the municipality because they do not want to comply to the norms for behaviour in Vapnagårdsparken.

The decision not to work with parents and for instance also the Culture Cafe (Kulturcafeen) used by the local group of Turkish men and not to follow up on youngsters leaving to go elsewhere is a political decision.

Vapnagårdsparken try in vane to motivate ethnic parents to enrol their children in the organised activities you have to pay for. And the reality is that

there is segregation in the institution, where Danish children attend the clubs where you have to pay and ethnic children attend the free offers. It is possible to apply for a free place if the payment is a problem and information is given about this. But only the Danish parents use this possibility.

### **How the Situation is Handled Informally**

There are hardly any reports on handling things in relation to schools and education informally. Though two activities in relation to bilingual children needs to be mentioned.

First, in the Arabic-Danish Club in Nøjsomhed Arabic is taught to the children during the weekends. The motivation behind this initiative is to keep the Arabic children attending the local municipal elementary school where they learn the Danish language and culture. When the Arabic parents have the possibility to send the children to the club to learn the Arabic language and culture they have less motivation to send them to the next door private Moslem school (Al-Irchad Skolen).

Second, a new private initiative for organising help with homework has been taken in the fall of 2002. The background for this is a municipal council's decision to abolish the budget for this activity at the local schools. A 19-year-old grammar school girl called a public meeting on this subject and a number of volunteers have signed up to step into this activity. Currently, the activity is being set up in the ServiceCenter in Vapnagård, where the housing estate social worker has stepped in to help to realise the initiative.

### **Co-ordination of Activities in Formal and Informal Networks**

The educational offer in the Arabic-Danish Club in Nøjsomhed is benefiting from the co-operation between the four Arabic fathers running the club and the SSP- teacher, the SSPK-consultant, the chairman of the board of the housing association *Andelsboligforeningen Kingo* and the community police officer.

The ethnic parents have difficulties understanding the Danish school and educational system and vice versa. Mediators are the father-group in Nøjsomhed, an employee in Vapnagårdparken, the SSP-teacher and the bilingual educational adviser (see section 3.4).

## **3.4 Perception of Issues about Employment**

The general sentiment in Denmark is that employment is the key to integration, and therefore individuals need to be qualified to possess a meaningful position in society, a position that is enriching to society and themselves. In practice it can be very difficult to motivate people to get into employment. The manager of the former activation project in Nøjsomhed, Naput, describes the situation like this:

*"...and then it is my experience after working with them for a couple of years that they do not want to! They have no intention about being integrated. They want to be left alone in peace. They just want to go and visit the Social Service Department and get what they need if they need something. And then on a regular monthly basis they want those 11,000 DKK before tax as social benefit so they can go out and have a black job or make a little extra money on the side. You know they have debts to God and everyone anyway. That's the way to get on!"*

An inclusive labour market policy was put forward but not successfully realised by the previous Social Democratic/Social-Liberal government. The present Liberal/Conservative government has also adopted the intentions of this policy. The concept of an inclusive labour market refers to a greater open-

ness of the enterprises for individuals with temporary or permanently reduced working capacity. The efforts to create a more inclusive labour market include three main elements: prevention, retention and integration. The intention is to create better conditions for individuals with weak ties to the labour market to obtaining a job position on the ordinary labour market. Hence, the inclusive labour market targets a wide range of individuals who find themselves in a weak position. Due to illness or age they are at risk to be dismissed or have difficulties finding a new job. Furthermore individuals, who are unemployed and have difficulties entering the labour market due to long-term unemployment, reduced working capacity, ethnicity etc, are considered as target group of an inclusive labour market (Beskæftigelsesministeriet 2002).

The formal unemployment rate is very low compared to earlier, but the rate of unemployment is higher in the neighbourhood than elsewhere in the municipality. This doesn't necessarily mean that people have got real jobs, because unemployed are activated working in special projects (e.g. Naput), in public institutions on special terms or taking a new or a supplementary education in order to qualify for a real job etc. Activation have become a condition for getting cash (social) benefit if you are fit for work or have been unemployed and receiving unemployment benefit for a certain period. Today it is not possible to receive unemployment benefit for more than four years. Earlier a person could be in the unemployment system for up to ten years.

### **Problems perceived by Residents**

Most of the informants have experienced spells or even prolonged spells of unemployment. But none of the interviewed was unemployed. They were either having a job, under education or job activation, on a pension or listed as ill. None of the Danish informants saw employment as a major problem while several from the ethnic minorities was weary of the activation system and had lost hope ever getting a real job. According to one of the interviewed they simply had to change skin, hair colour and name in order to get a real job, which they felt they were qualified for but never got a chance to get. Some had been in the system for more than 10 years and had given up all hope ever getting a fair deal but hoped their children would manage to live independently in the Danish society. One Lebanese informant with a university degree in law found he was wasting his time being in activation cutting down trees and working outdoors.

Some of the Arabic informants in Nøjsomhed wanted to have the activation job running a club for children as a real job instead of being sent somewhere else. They could see the importance of doing something for the children and teenagers on the estate, but could not get the authorities to allow this. They did not fit into the formal system and rules. And they feared what would happen if they could not continue to take care of the children in the club after school hours and in the weekends. Also several of the Danish informants being active in the section board and spending a lot of time working as volunteers to the benefit of their fellow residents thought they ought to have this function as a paid job. At least if the Arabic fathers should have the work in the club as a job they might as well be paid for the work as members of the section board.

In relation to the activation that the fathers in the Arabic-Danish Club have it is a difficult situation. A street-level bureaucrat that administers their activation has told the fathers that he wears two hats.

*“When he wears one hat we can talk to him about anything and he recognises the importance of our job with the children in the club. But when he wears the other hat it is all about money, how to finance the club and the facilities and our job description. All the time we have troubles with the municipality about our activation arrangement.”*

In general, immigrants report that a systemic will to recognise immigrants' educational and professional background is lacking in Denmark. A priori Danes and the Danish system meet immigrants with no expectation and that affects the following assistance to get immigrants started with an education and job seeking.

In Borupgård some section board members also spend a lot of time which was a problem in relation to their paid work. Also here a fair payment for the volunteer work would be appropriate according to one of the informants.

One of the Danish informants in Vapnagård told that many of the persons being very active volunteers some years ago no longer participated as they had started to work. This means that it is more difficult to keep activities running and to start new ones today.

One informant had also felt the effects of globalisation and the decrease of employment in the traditional manufacturing industries. Her old company had been sold off and the production had been moved to southern Europe leaving only the design and development in Denmark. She had soon found a new job through her personal network.

A Turkish husband describes his wife job possibilities:

*"My wife can't find a job. She wants to work as a teacher assistant (pædagogmedhjælper) but there is no job to get. Every time an employer sees her application, they say: "Oh it is good that you apply". And hereafter they send her a letter informing her that she didn't get the job". Even the Employment Service is aware of the problem, and they have told us that my wife has the wrong name. Now she is in some kind of activation for six months, but when these six months have passed she will still be without job."*

### **Problems Perceived by Professionals**

Professionals that earlier and still work with volunteer residents running projects and activities also feel the present high employment. There are fewer hands and the activities have become more dependent on the older residents that are not on the job market any more.

The professionals see employment as very important and find the largest problem is to make sure that the next generation gets into employment. Many do not have sufficient knowledge about education possibilities and lack the necessary network to find jobs and training possibilities. This counts for all groups of residents with weak ties to the labour market. Especially the large Turkish ethnic group is seen to need more information about the education and training possibilities for young people. According to an advisor especially for this group the Turkish parents in Helsingør think very traditional about education possibilities for their children. They relate to how things work in Turkey more than to present day Danish society. If the son or daughter do not go on to the university in order to become e.g. a lawyer or medical doctor they think there are no other possibilities for getting a good education. Here the parents need more information among them about the possibility to get a trade where you can have your own business. Also in the school a large group of Turks attend they are aware that young people from ethnic groups very easily fall out of the educational system after elementary or upper secondary school. If they - as many young people do - take a year off and start to make their own money it is difficult to get them back into the education system again. According to the headmaster of the school it seems more difficult to get them to abstain from expensive material consumption, than the similar group of young people from Danish background.

A professional working with activation of men from ethnic groups finds that there is a hard core group of Gypsies that do not want to work, and do

not believe it will ever be possible to get them into regular employment. Another difficult group is refugees that are traumatised and/or have family members in this state. These people do not get the necessary help. Refugees with good qualifications very often get out to normal jobs quit fast according to this professional. The evaluation is that every one that is able and wants to work can get a job.

### **How the Situation is Handled by Authorities/Professionals**

The authorities handle the employment situation by demanding that unemployed get into a job and if this is not possible they have to participate in activation. Persons not covered by an unemployment insurance are through the municipal social service department (Job-huset) offered a special training job or some kind of job activation as a condition for receiving cash (social) benefit. In some cases people get the possibility to have a new education. Persons covered by unemployment insurance get unemployment benefit for a limited period. If they do not find a job they also have to be activated. This happens through an institution at the county level (Arbejdsformidlingen-AF) connected to the Ministry of Employment that also have the function to help job seekers finding jobs as well as helping employees with acquisition. Professionals working in the job placement institutions have build up relations to potential employers and find they are able to open doors for people that would have difficulties getting a job on their own. This relation is longer term and is a matter of trust according to a professional informant working with activation.

At the municipal level there are an advising institution (CUE – Center for Undervisnings- og Erhvervsvejledning) in relation to education and employment for young people. CUE is working in close co-operation with local schools and employees. The professionals in CUE help to match young people and employers and offer advise about education and training possibilities. They have a special service for bilingual youth and have build up a network to employers taking in apprentices and young persons needing practical training. They have an important function in helping young people without access to networks that usually gives these contacts to employers. These relations are also longer term and a matter of trust. One of the informants told that they also have success in placing young persons with a so-called difficult background, as many employers also took responsibility to offer such youngster a change to get ahead in life.

A large local company producing medical products (Coloplast) is active in offering job-training possibilities and does a special effort to integrate groups with weak ties to the labour market.

In 2001 a project targeting young criminals with ethnic background to include them on labour market was launched. The project, *Project Ethnic Re-absorption into Society*, is based on co-operation between The Danish Confederation of Trade Unions, LO, Helsingør Tourist and Trade Union, Community Police and a number of enterprises in Helsingør. The objective is to integrate young individuals in a job position and subsequently withdraw them from a criminal milieu. A year after the project was launched it has been evaluated, and out of 17 persons who were included in the project, it has succeeded for 12 to stay in a job and to stop their previously criminal activities (Helsingør Dagblad 18/10/02, pp. 8-9).

### **How the Situation is Handled Informally**

People find jobs through family, friends and personal networks. Also it is not unusual that jobs being advertised e.g. in the public sector already has a specific candidate. The advertisement is only a formality then. One of the informants that had to find a new job had got the new job through personal

connections. But persons with no network to others at the job market can have difficulties getting into regular employment.

### **Co-ordination of Activities in Formal and Informal Networks**

At the municipal level there are an advising institution CUE in relation to education and employment for young people working in close co-operation with local schools. The professionals here help to match young people with the job market and further education. They have a special service for bilingual youth and have build up a network to employees taking in apprentices and young persons needing practical training.

The matching of potential employees and employers seems to some degree to depend on personal networks between professionals and employers.

### **Conclusions and Questions**

There is a need to look into the possibilities for establishing more meaningful job opportunities for residents to make sure that the present parent generation does not stay outside the labour market. Activation jobs are not seen as an entry to the normal labour market. Especially the question of education of the young is important. There is a need to make it attractive for young people to stay in the education system for a longer time after compulsory school and to link them to employment possibilities during their education. Here a child coming from a background where there is no tradition for taking an education needs special attention. Also parents that recently have arrived in Denmark needs to get support from society in their effort to get their children into good education.

The relatively large group of Gypsies is a special challenge. Half of all Gypsies in Denmark live in Helsingør. None of the many local efforts and projects tried out to integrate this group has so far been very successful. School attendance is still low and irregular and the job market participation is not attractive for this group.

The two parallel systems for unemployed could be discussed. There is a municipal system for those without unemployment insurance (mostly people with a weak contact to the labour market) and one for those with unemployment insurance at the county level. This might not give people with weak ties to the labour market a fair chance of getting a real job.

## **3.5 Perception of Other Issues Important for Everyday Life**

### **Problems Perceived by Residents**

Informants from all three estates mention noise from other apartments as a problem. Difference in time schedules between working and non-working residents is part of the problem but also the difference in household size and life style between families from different ethnic cultures plays a role. An informant in Vapnagård had tried to talk with the family making noise during the nights without reaching a solution, as the family did not want to change behaviour or way of living.

Informants also mention residents with mental illness and also residents with abuse problems as very difficult neighbours. Especially when someone is running in and out of the apartment, up and down in the stairwell and trying to get into other apartments they get worried. One resident had tried to call in the "Acute Team" and was told that the situation was not serious enough for them to step in and find alternative housing.

Insufficient facilities for children and young people are issues informants with children mention. In some areas there is a lack of playgrounds or suitable playing possibilities but in general there is a lack of available sports fa-

cilities in the neighbourhood. Here the issue of safety is often mentioned. Some parents do not find it safe to let their children be outside to play.

Decline of community commitment and commitment to participate in the tenants' democracy is worrying some informants. The fact that ethnic minority groups are not represented in the section or housing association boards is also seen as precarious in the longer term. However, in Nøjsomhed the Arabic Father group plays an important role to encourage especially the Arabic men to participate in housing estate meetings. The housing section board informs the father group every time there is a housing estate meeting, and then the father group calls on the Arabic residents. Hence, there is some representation of the Arabic in the tenants' democracy.

In Borupgård some informants experience that the housing association and municipality try to put pressure on and overrule the tenants' democracy. A proposal to turn the two individual housing sections into one section as a condition for financial support for a major renovation is seen as blackmail and opposed by informants in opposition to the housing association and the municipality.

Female informants also mention gender issues and gap between age groups (the young and the elderly). Men from ethnic minority groups refuse according to some informants to deal with or to talk to Danish female residents and it is seen as a problem that women from ethnic minority groups do not participate in common life outside the home. Some also pity the traditional Muslim dress code for women and they think it is forced on the young girls. Women with foreign background experience that they get a lot of very intimate and personal questions from Danes just because they have another cultural background. Some of the women complain that they are not perceived as individuals but as for instance Turkish women. Some of the young women wonder about the fuzz among Danes that young Turkish people marry another Turkish man or woman considering that Danes marry individuals with the same socio-economic and educational level as themselves. No one makes fuzz about that.

The gender roles within ethnic families are changing. Especially, among Turkish young women there is a tendency that they are arranging their life and social pattern in manners that are similar to Danish women. For instance a young Turkish woman face this schisms between how she wants her coming wedding to be and how the Turkish tradition prescribe it to be performed:

*“My wedding will be huge although I would really like a wedding similar to a Danish wedding. It is much cosier. I like that there are fewer invited people and that you know everyone and you can talk to everyone. With us every Turk in Vapnagård and in the neighbourhood is invited and even though my fiancé and I might dislike a particular person this person will be invited just to show respect.”*

The media created reality are in several aspects a source of tension. Many reports in the local newspaper (Helsingør Dagblad) that are often based on the “activity list” on the local police station continue to stigmatise the estates as troublesome and give the neighbourhood a negative image. Ethnic minority groups also see themselves as stigmatised through these reports and feel they function as scapegoats.

Informants from the ethnic minority groups find they have very different conceptions from the Danes of reality and what is happening in the world. This has especially been pronounced after September 11 2001. The impression is that what is told and shown in the Danish news media is incorrect. It does not agree with either the first hand information they have from their home countries nor what they e.g. see on the Qatar based TV station Al-Jazeera and information they get from newsgroups on the internet.

The functioning of and the residents' participation in the tenants' democracy are looked upon as a very important issue. This is seen as the forum for regulating and taking decisions on how to live together on the estates. The older Danish residents are mostly very keen on keeping the tenants' democracy working and they stand for the elections to become members of the section boards. Informants from minority groups relate that they do not like to be members of the section board as they come under pressure from both sides. The Danes expect them to solve problems with troublemakers from their own group. At the same time members from their own group expect them to make deals with the Danes and put a lot of pressure on the person they see as their representative. This creates a lot of stress and often makes people step down from such elected posts or not seek to be reelected after a single period on the board. Some of the informants from the ethnic minority groups would like to have their own board that could run/work parallel with the regular section board. The reason for this is that they see a need for the members of their own group to learn what and how it is to work in a democratic system as it functions in Denmark. Under the present conditions it is too difficult and stressful for someone to go into the board function alone.

Some of the informants describe strong mechanism of exclusion enforced by the housing section boards, and those housing sector boards tend to be tight cliques that are difficult to intervene. The members stick together. At the same time older residents active in boards see a need for getting younger residents active in the section boards. Especially on Vapnagård this is seen as a longer time problem.

But not all residents know about the tenants' democracy. A young male resident living in Nøjsomhed about his knowledge about tenants' democracy:

*"I know almost nothing. I can't even bother to skim through the letters we receive from the housing association and when their is summoning to section meeting, I just see the headline and I don't bother reading the agenda for meeting."*

Almost every interviewed resident in Borupgård complains about caretakers lacking the will to get things repaired when needed. These residents experience that they are not taken seriously, and that they are met with indifference from the caretakers. In addition, interviewed residents have experienced that appointments they have made with caretakers are not kept by the caretakers, and this causes frustration as quite often the residents have asked for time off from work. Living in social housing means that certain facilities such as caretaker functions are paid for via the rent. In this regard, the residents also describe difficulties when asking the housing association to dismiss caretakers that do not do their job. Residents experience mistrust from the housing association although the residents should be the ones to know since they live in the area whereas the housing association is placed outside the neighbourhood.

Only very few of the informants have been in touch with the Social Service Department. – However, those who have or have relatives who have often report experiences with things dragging out, not getting the service they are entitled to and experiences with the persons treated as cases and not as individual persons. Also it is the impression that the municipality has a national reputation for not following the law in relation to social services. The source of this impression is the media.

### **Problems Perceived by Business People**

Business people have not been interested in being interviewed. Different reasons for this has being given. Some are suspicious as they think you are a reporter from a newspaper. Others claim that they have no special attachment to the neighbourhood. Two business located inside Vapnagård just did

not want to participate. Nearly all business activity is located in three shopping centres or individually located at the edges of the neighbourhood. All interviewed residents do their normal shopping here and perceive these facilities as the natural place for them to go. But the customers in the shops and especially in the shopping centres come from a wider area.

A informant in one of the shopping centres found that the negative image and the reasons for this image was a problem for building up and running a service business in the neighbourhood. The maintenance standard of the centre – buildings, paving, parking, signs etc. - is very poor and insufficient. There are too much litter, weeds and neglect. The rent for business premises is as high as in the City of Helsingør. The private owner of the centre is not taking interest in the upkeep and there is no organised co-operation between the business tenants. Even there is local political attention on improving general business conditions it is not felt in the shopping centres. The negative image has consequence for how the businesses are perceived by the insurance company e.g. when there are an event of damage or burglary.

### **Problems Perceived by Professionals**

Most of the professionals do not mention the tenants' democracy as an issue. Either they do not know very much about it or they see it as unproblematic in the sense that it opens for all the possibilities for influence that the residents can ask for. The only exception is that some professionals perceive that the Danish residents do not give the ethnic minorities a fair change to be elected as board members. They see that ethnic groups are living in parallel "life worlds" and often have a different perception of democracy than most Danes. In this respect, the professionals pay attention to housing section board sometimes being more concerned with own needs than the needs of foreign residents and of children and youngsters. Some housing section boards carry hostility towards immigrants and young people. What need to be done according to one of the professionals is to establish a committee for the ethnic residents so they can learn how democracy functions:

*"Many of the foreign residents have no experience with democracy so how should they know."*

Professionals in day-care institutions find it problematic that young people and children from ethnic minority groups are not members of the same after school clubs as Danes. Ethnic minority parents do not want to pay for children's free time activities. This means that the open and free offers for children is used by the ethnic minority groups while the normal after school clubs you have to pay for are used by the Danish children and youngsters. The professionals see this pattern, as a danger for future integration as the children also needs to have activities together outside the school. As many ethnic minorities have been living in Vapnagård for a very long time the professionals e.g. in Vapnagårdparken do not find it acceptable that they do not want to pay for the services they use, e.g. stop attending even if a small fee is introduced.

Professionals working with persons with mental problems in an acute team (Akutteamet) under the Social Service Department very often find it is not a good solution for these persons to live in a regular apartment. They often cannot cope with living close to other people at the same time as other residents find them troublesome. But for the present these persons are assigned housing at the regular housing market, as there is a lack of alternative housing possibilities. Those in question have been diagnosed as schizophrenic, manic-depressive, paranoid without insight in own disease and not taking action when things go wrong. Also in recent years more and more new young schizophrenic have surfaced and many have more than

one diagnosis. It is often very difficult to get psychotic persons with a non-Danish ethnic background to use the official health system, as they have no trust in it. It is in general very difficult to get into contact with these groups.

An informant working with people in job activation tells that many residents e.g. Gypsies do not understand the letters and other written material they get from authorities, banks etc. Because of this they get into unnecessary economic problems that could have been avoided if they had taken action on what was sent to them in time.

### **How the Situation is Handled by Authorities/Professionals**

A professional working as a housing estate social worker in Vapnagård (beboerrådgiver) has developed an educational program for residents active on the estate. The program is continually updated and run every year and gives the residence relevant data on housing laws, the social housing system in general and data on Vapnagård and *Helsingør Boligselskab* as well as training in how to prepare and run meetings and initiatives in the tenants' democracy etc. The program is very successful. In this way residents that had started out going into a limited activity without very much formal responsibility have been encouraged to engage themselves in the local democracy and be candidate for one of the board functions. Thus in Vapnagård a few residents from ethnic minorities have started to participate in some of the eleven sub boards (områdebestyrelser) that function with reference to the section board.

The professional working with job activation have started to help his clients to read letters etc. and guide them how to avoid unnecessary trouble with authorities, banks etc.

The professionals in "Akutteamet" assisting residents with mental problems living on their own in an apartment try to arrange alternative housing for the more difficult persons that either do not like to be in close contact with other residents or are very disturbing for their neighbours. They also stay in regular contact with clients in order to prevent problems with neighbours as well as they come out on short notice if neighbours of the clients call on them. But it is not always possible to find a good solution, as there are a higher need for unusual housing alternatives for this group than available.

In Vapnagårdparken the professionals intend to stop all activities for grown ups from ethnic minority groups if they do not want to pay to participate.

### **How the Situation is Handled Informally**

Residents do take direct action on situations with noise and disturbing neighbours and many situations are handled in this way. This also counts for situations in public spaces if people know about each other. Business people in the shopping centre do not call the police if the group of drunks are too dominating but go out and tell them that they disturb too much. Also they keep an eye on each other and if one have trouble with a misbehaving customer they step in and offer to help out to cool the situation down.

Except for Borupgård none of the residents complained about not getting a fair service from the caretakers or the e.g. the social service. They could have opinions about the level of service, but they did not perceive that some got a better service than they did. A Turkish resident described it: *If you keep inside the rules you do not have trouble*. Many residents had experienced or had read in the paper that the social service in Helsingør is insufficient and that the Municipality does not keep the national prescribed standard and that it pays to appeal decisions about pension and other individual benefits.

In Borupgård some of the interviewed residents found that the caretakers did not give a fair service. They did not communicate back and did not keep

appointments and some residents got a lot of service like repair while others could not get any repair done.

Inside the different ethnic groups there are a lot of informal services like giving information and advice about societal issues and language help. In Nøjsomhed this is informally organised in a relation to a club for children. This club is organised by four Arabic fathers and also function as a communication channel between the Arabic residents and the elected section board, the housing association as well as the caretakers. In Vapnagård the culture club organising a large part of the Turkish men to some degree also function as an informal communication channel between the Danes and the Turks. There is no similar communication between “the established system” and other ethnic groups like the Gypsies.

### **Co-ordination of Activities in Formal and Informal Networks**

There are a two levels of co-ordination between the formal system (housing association and or the municipal level) and the estate and the neighbourhood level. Many issues are dealt with and negotiated in an informal way between the housing associations and the municipality. The political level in these two systems negotiates and discuss solutions informally before the issues come out into the open and e.g. presented for the section boards or a residents meeting.

Co-ordination between authorities/professionals and informal networks depends on the skills and capabilities of the individual actors. This co-ordination is very or totally person related. The professional has to be able to build up and have contacts in the informal networks at the same time as he or she keeps her position as loyal to the system they work in or for. The same holds for the actors in the informal system or in the body of residents elected to a function in the tenants' democracy. These actors have to be able to build up contacts in the professional system or in the formal political system (e.g. council members) at the same time as he or she keeps the loyalty of and contact with the group they represent or work for. The successful co-ordination can take place when such professionals and informal actors work together and it depends on the building of trust, mutual respect and often long time relations between the two and the systems and arenas they represent. This system is very vulnerable to change of actors at the same time, as a change can be needed when things are stuck.

The acute team (Akutteamet) also co-ordinate with the housing associations. When a person from their target group is assigned an apartment on an estate it is an agreement that the team looks after them. The Police, the Social Service Department are also part of this co-ordination. Many of the residents with a psychiatric diagnosis are e.g. not able to deliver the necessary documents to the social service in order to get their pension. Here the acute team sorts out the situation so these persons get the money anyway. The team also has contact with the hospital, shopkeepers and business people that might run into trouble with persons from their target group.

### **Conclusions and Questions**

There seems to be a lack of networks out of the neighbourhood to the rest of Helsingør. Especially ethnic minority groups seem to have enclosed life worlds. Many express the ambition to become integrated in the Danish society and regret that their contact with Danes is limited. They are especially concerned about the integration of their children and that they learn Danish. They need the contact with the residents from their own ethnic group at the same time as they are afraid of “The Ghetto” and find it difficult to come into contact with Danes. They perceive that many Danes are afraid of foreigners. The Danes perceive that the foreigners do not want to have contact or to integrate into the Danish society.

## Analysing Neighbourhood Governance

Danish housing policies are rooted deeply in a communitaristic thinking where the presence and encouragement of a community is favoured when it comes to include individuals in society, and hence to promote social integration.

The sentiments of community and of empowering civil society are a concern to the current government, too. Hence, it has appointed a national council to attend to the most marginalised and vulnerable individuals' conditions of life. As a subsequent part of this council's commission the government has set an agenda to alter Danish people's attitude and consideration; it aims at improving our common responsibility for the most vulnerable and deprived individuals<sup>10</sup>. The common responsibility is founded on community and civil society, and hence, community and civil society need to be strengthened and intensified if the concerned group of individuals is to be a common responsibility. The intensifying of civil society is going to happen through synergy between private and public initiatives and agencies. An inherent intention in such a political strategy can be interpreted as to enforce the private sector to take further responsibility for the alteration of processes leading to social exclusion in for instance urban and suburban areas. Hence, it is an acknowledgement that the public sector not alone is able to improve individuals' life quality via traditional means such as the juridical system and allocation of money through funds and pools. With this new political agenda charity, implicitly, has become a key word, and locality-based community is elevated above all over types of communities as contexts to attend to individuals who are left out or left behind in society. Hence, civil society is to be incorporated in governance arrangements through weighting of community, voluntarism, and charity as solutions to social problems and through citizen rights and obligations in welfare society.

Primarily, relationships between residents and professionals are anchored in welfare services such as welfare benefits, attending schools, recreation centres, and job activation arrangements. The residents share to large extent a satisfaction towards professionals and their approach to deal with situations and problems. Mainly, when residents show dissatisfaction it is towards a general perception of the system and the political framework rather than dissatisfaction with street-level bureaucrats or professionals.

Residents realise that the system put limitations on individuals everyday life and that professionals do the best they can to provide welfare services. However, the system becomes a large and a queer specimen to many residents and they recognise that this system is out of their influence. This is a perception that Danish and foreign residents have in common.

At the same token, residents prefer little as possible interference from the municipality. No one outside the neighbourhood is to tell the residents what is best for them. Therefore, the municipality has to balance on a knife-edge because on one hand they have a certain responsibility to initiate and support the development of well-functioning housing estates. On the other hand, the municipality has to respect that any activity or mean of effort has to echo the residents' preferences, and residents have to set the speed otherwise any idea, even good ones, face difficulties in implementation.

The neighbourhood is characterised by being self-sufficient in providing elementary education, recreation facilities, and shopping centres. The residents do not have to go outside the neighbourhood in order to make an everyday life possible. Schools and recreation centres and clubs are visible in the neighbourhood, and they partake in the everyday life in the housing estates. Professionals attached to any of these agencies have an insight to current situations in the neighbourhood. On the contrary hand, shopping

---

<sup>10</sup> Regeringens Handlingsplan for de svageste grupper. 2002: 1-2.

centres and other local businesses do not partake in the everyday life in the neighbourhood, and they do not see themselves as integrated part of the neighbourhood. Furthermore, as regards shopping centres many individuals who live outside the neighbourhood visit these.

The opinions towards the housing associations vary a lot. On Vapnagård residents are on good terms with the housing association and they feel that the section board has their say, and subsequently, the section board enjoys legitimacy from both the housing association and the residents. On Nøjsomhed among Danes and Gypsies there is a sentiment that the housing association favours the Arabs at the expense of Danes and Gypsies, and this sentiment is a reflection of the sentiment these two groups hold to the section board and especially the chairman of the organisation board. On Borupgård it is very different, as there are two individual section boards, which conflict each other and one of the section boards has reached an impasse with the housing association.

The residents seem very satisfied with recreation centres and clubs. As regards to schools there is a wide satisfaction as well, however some parents with foreign background experience discrimination due to their ethnicity and that their children are met with prejudices that foreign youngsters are troublemakers.

The local community police is working well on two housing estates, and lacks on the third one, Borupgård. The residents seem satisfied with the work that the local policemen do though Danes and Gypsies on Nøjsomhed sometimes have a sentiment of being neglected due to positive attention that the Arabs get.

Finally, most residents participate in networks that are outside the neighbourhood. Especially, Danish residents do not see their particular housing estate as a pivotal point for their communities or networks. For foreign residents the housing estate becomes a point of departure for their communities, and seldom these communities extend the housing estate.

### **Major Problems in the Neighbourhood**

The neighbourhood is characterised by ethnic segregation of individuals. Primarily, the Turkish population is living on Vapnagård, and the Arabs and the Gypsies on Nøjsomhed. The main road that divides the two estates is named the Suez Canal. Also the neighbourhood is characterised by socio-economic segregation as individuals with few economic resources to a large extent live on Nøjsomhed and to a lesser extent on Vapnagård.

Fear among different groups of residents is visible in the neighbourhood, and ethnicity is a vector in the production of fear. For instance, on Nøjsomhed the Gypsies are afraid of the Arabs, and the Arabs are afraid of the Gypsies, and Danes are afraid of both Gypsies and Arabs. The fear is attached to myths and incidents that serve to disavour the other ethnic groups. The fear is continuously produced and sustained.

Nøjsomhed and Borupgård are distinct to Vapnagård in terms of how the social well-being is. While the residents on Vapnagård have managed to create a sense of place and belonging, residents on Nøjsomhed and Borupgård have created a sense of anomie and letting things slide.

Furthermore, understanding the main problems in the neighbourhood needs special attention to age and ethnicity as the youth population as well as foreign residents are characterised by a certain set of problems.

Starting with the youth population loneliness and social isolation are tremendous problems. An increasing number of young Danes have weak ties and relations to parents, adults, institutions, and schools. They experience no structure on their everyday life. Hence, a lack of rules and order affect these youngsters' life, and they face to different extent difficulties in socialising. These youngsters are left alone in the neighbourhood, and two highly

critical outcomes are getting more and more visible. First, youth prostitution among young girls is an emerging problem, and second, the number of young schizophrenic, several with a double diagnosis, has increased in the past decade.

Foreign youngsters also face problems of social isolation and loneliness. This isolation is more of the kind of group isolation than of individual isolation. Latent segregation can be located as a separator of Danish and foreign youngsters. This separator has to do with the youngsters' selection of recreation centres and clubs as the young Danes are enrolled in payment recreation centres whereas the young foreigners attend to those clubs with no payment. This result in ethnic segregation of youngsters in their leisure time. The payment arrangement does not seem to be a corner stone that foreign parents are not willing to pay due to for instance lack of money. Rather it seems to be a matter of tradition and custom, as generally foreign adults often do not participate in payment leisure activities. However, this ethnic segregation among youngsters is alarming as it has impacts on social integration.

Along these lines follow problems related to how the educational system recruit young people as segregation is going on. Mainly, this has to do with the fact that foreign parents have a more narrow perception of educational qualification compared to the possibilities inherent the system. There is a tendency that parents and youngsters with foreign background regard law school, medicine and engineering as education worth achieving and other kinds of education such as a technical or clerk education are disfavoured. The outcomes are that generally individuals with foreign backgrounds are in a less favourable position to attain a job, as they do not have the same educational qualifications as the Danes have.

In addition, foreign residents describe difficulties related to entering the labour market, as they find it hard to be offered a job. Moreover, they find it hard to demonstrate they have the right qualification to obtain a job, and if they are in job activation they experience that they have to do a job that is very different to the qualification they have.

Going to ethnic related problems it is evident that foreign residents who have never lived in social housing need an introduction to the social housing phenomenon. It has to become basic knowledge to these residents how for instance the toilet functions and that you cannot throw out nappies and items like that. Also these residents have to know that you cannot pour oil in the kitchen sink then the drain will be plugged up. A lack of this knowledge causes problems and frustrations and put foreign residents in less favourable position.

Furthermore, it is problematic that Danish and ethnic networks are closed to each other, which means that there is little interaction between Danish and ethnic networks. Especially, it is a problem for the foreign residents as it makes it hard for them to get integrated into society. The ethnic networks become self-sufficient, as members in the network take care of each other, and help each other out of problematic situation. Professionals (outsiders in general) will only be able to get in touch with few families of the networks, and the rest of the members are only possible to reach via those few. A Turkish informant describes this phenomenon:

*"About 100 Turkish families are living in Vapnagård but there are only 5-10 families you can get in touch with. The others you can't get in touch with; they are withdrawn".*

Finally, the existence of the tenants' democracy can be interpreted as an arrangement created as governance arrangement in terms of increasing the influence of residents on their neighbourhood. However, the tenants' democracy tradition is anchored the old corporatism in Denmark, and this way of

organising influence loses ground these days. Younger generations do not seek influence via tenants' democracy to same extent as elder generation do. This becomes apparent looking at the average age among tenant democrats, as it is often above 50.

Likewise, a tendency is that it is difficult to involve resourceful residents in activities on the housing estate. Fewer residents search for the local community as they participate in a variety of communities outside the neighbourhood. Hence, it is no longer just difficult to involve less resourceful in joint activities; the resourceful residents are also difficult.

### **Formal and Informal Networks handling Neighbourhood Problems**

The formal network consisting of SSP-teachers, community police, public schools, and recreation centres and organisations pay a devoted attention to youth problems, and the social isolation of youngsters. Over the years the co-operation between these different professionals has become improved. It has taken many efforts to exceed the various professional demarcations, and to take advantage of the knowledge and experiences each actor has.

This formal network co-operates with Vapnagårdparken, which consists of five institutions. Vapnagårdparken is in a beginning phase of implementing its newly objective to reduce social inequality among young people. This objective is meant to acknowledge that children and youngster depending on their socio-economic and socio-cultural background need a special effort in order to have and demonstrate the same qualifications and abilities that others have. Any mean of effort has to reflect the point of departure for the child or the young one.

Additionally, the formal network consisting of SSP-teachers, community police, public schools, and recreation centres and organisations co-operates with the informal network of the Arabic fathers as these four fathers are key figures to find solution to problematic situation where Arabic youngsters are involved, primarily on Nøjsomhed. The formal and informal network depends upon each other, as they need each other to translate the codes each network respond to. When the Arabic fathers are uneasy about to proceed with any situation they contact different spider persons or key professionals such as the chairman of the board of the housing association, the community policeman, the local SSP-teacher or a professional working at Vapnagårdparken. These same persons take contact to the Arabic fathers when they have to proceed with an ethnic matter. In that way, the Arabic network in the neighbourhood opens up when contact is made to the Arabic fathers.

Regarding, foreign youngsters' choice of education, the municipality has employed a bilingual education counsellor whose objective is to alter foreign parents perception of education, and to inform about the variety the educational possibilities and about the opportunities for supplementary training and education.

Finally, steps are taken to revive tenants' democracy and make it attractive for the younger generation to get involved. On Vapnagård, yearly, there are courses for tenant democrats to join. These courses focus on how to qualify the residents to participate in the tenants' democracy and to update their knowledge about rules and regulations. The housing estate social worker has been the catalyst to draw more attention to the problem of tenants' influence via their democracy. However, what is not dealt with is the lack of foreigners' representation in the tenants' democracy.

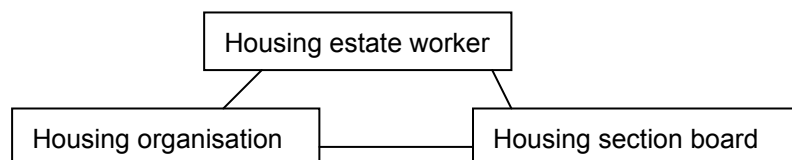
Problems that are not addressed are foreigners' lack of knowledge of how to live in social housing, and the bridging of Danish and foreign networks. Likewise, problems related to resourceful residents' withdrawal from neighbourhood activities still need to be addressed.

### Assessment of Effectiveness in Present Arrangements<sup>11</sup>

National funds are spent to improve the social processes in the neighbourhood. Vapnagård has utilised the funds efficiently; many activities and projects have been carried out. On Vapnagård residents, professionals, and spider persons have on an early stage been able to reach consensus about how to deal with a troubled housing situation, and each partner has been committed to find a solution. The residents have been able to influence how the funds are spent for instance in regards to how the greeneries on the estate are laid out. The head of Vapnagårdsparken, the local community policeman, the housing estate social worker, the social worker, and chairman of the section board have established a forum in which arrangements are made, and agreements are reached on how to deal with different matters. Each of these persons has a support base, and a mandate to reach agreements. The head of Vapnagårdsparken has the five recreation centres and all professionals working on these institutions, and the local community policeman has the city police and other local community policemen. The housing estate social worker has as his support base the residents, the housing association and the municipality, whereas the social worker has the residents, primarily. Finally, the chairman of the section board has the entire tenants' democracy as his base. This arrangement has made remarkable results, but a future challenge is the weakening of the tenants' democracy, and residents withdraw from participating in the community life on the estate.

Implementation of ideas and projects are often founded on a model of contract as a contract is made between relevant persons, and they are committed to pursue a defined objective; they have to fulfil the expectations inherent in the contract.

On Vapnagård, which is the only housing estate having a housing estate social worker employed for a longer time, there is established a well-functioning network between this housing estate social worker and the tenants' democracy. The tenant democrats and the housing estate social worker are each other's most important and crucial collaborators. The housing estate social worker functions as a connecting link between the residents and the political system, and the housing estate social worker functions as a "midwife" to implement and carry out ideas born by the residents. Furthermore, the social worker on Vapnagård has established a well-functioning network with the local community policeman, and together they have reduced the amount of domestic disputes and disputes between neighbours. Also this co-operation indicates to the residents that problems do not escalate instead problems are taken care of. The network can be illustrated this way:



The two other housing estates, Nøjsomhed and Borupgård, do not have any constellation that is as effective as the one on Vapnagård. Subsequently, national funds have had less impact on the residents' sense of well-being compared to the results reached on Vapnagård. Also the way the funds have been spent on Nøjsomhed and Borupgård have been much more spread out, and no basic idea or objective has been defined, developed or pursued. This reflects that housing associations of the two estates are rather weak when it comes to initiate long-term projects on the housing estates, and to

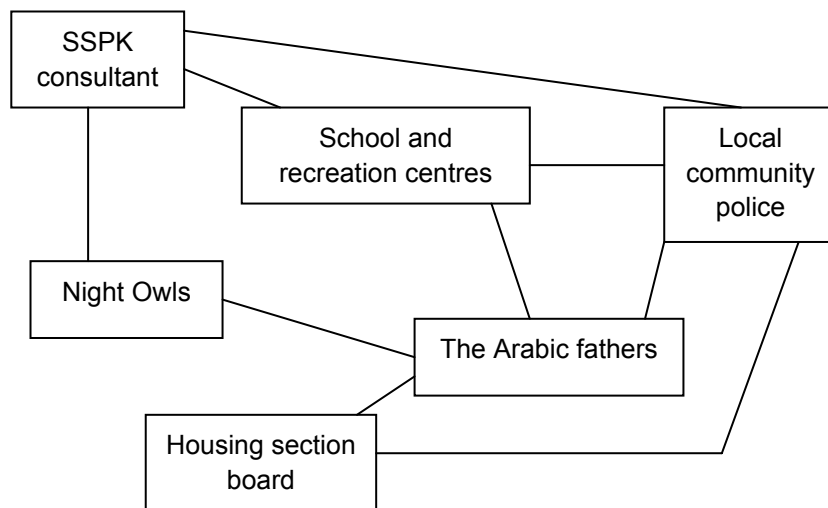
<sup>11</sup> In appendix A a map of networks is illustrated, and in the following the assessment of effectiveness in the networks is described.

commit the municipality in these projects. Also the tenants' democracy is poorly organised and to some degree characterised by internal conflicts. This causes e.g. that no consensus is made about how to develop the social well-being.

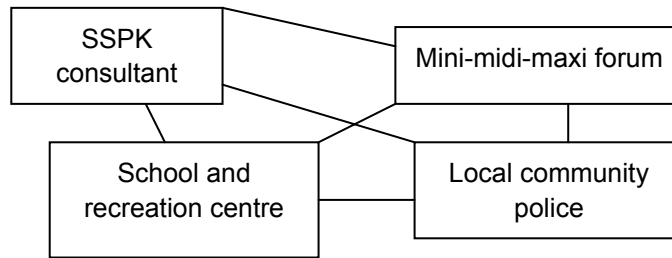
Well-functioning networks in terms of dealing with problematic situations are to start with the extensive formal network concerning Nøjsomhed consisting of professionals with different backgrounds that are part of a network having a core of attention on children and youngsters with especially foreign background. A teacher from the council school and the local community policeman are the formal network, and the informal network consists of the Arabic fathers and Night Owls. These actors are key figure in this formal/informal network. It is extremely important as even small problems can be dealt with before they grow big. However, it is a fragile network as the Arabic fathers are the pivotal point. If they are not in position to continue their work in the club as paid employees or if others replace them who do not share the trust these fathers have, the network will collapse or at least be much less efficient to deal with the children and youngster. The Arabic fathers function as a mediator between the system and the parents to the children in the area. They share trust and legitimacy and they are not just replaceable, and at this point the system puts a barrier for the fathers to continue the work, because they can not obtain an employment due to not having an educational background that formally qualifies them to the job.

The Arabic fathers co-operate with the housing section board as well, and in particular the chairman of the board of the housing association. This informal network function to minimise conflicts between especially the Danish and Arabic population on Nøjsomhed.

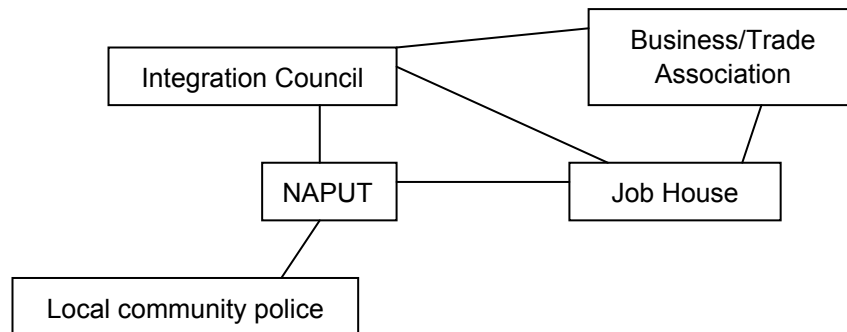
The network can be illustrated this way:



The mini-midi-maxi arrangement is a good and well-functioning network, where the upbringing of children and youngsters is monitor by professionals when these young people give out alarming signals. Professionals have made good results when they have exceeded their demarcations in efforts to support any young person who faces difficulties. Professionals exchange information; some knows about older siblings, others know about the parents, and then others again know about friends and so on. Altogether a patchwork for the young person in trouble is made, and it is possible to find the best solution and to make sure that professionals who are in touch with the concerned person work in the same direction. This network can be illustrated like this:



As regards the job situation for foreigners, NAPUT and the Job House are two important actors. Originally, NAPUT was a created job project for Gypsies based on Nøjsomhed, but now it is job activation for men, who either have perform criminal activity or are social uneasy. The Job House finds job activation for unemployed, and they have made the arrangement of having the four Arabic fathers to work in The Arabic-Danish Club. The Job House and NAPUT are also closely linked to the Integration Council as a way to create better options for foreigners to get integrated on the labour market. Likewise, the Job House co-operates with Business/Trade Association on changing industries and other employers' willingness to employ foreigners. The networks is illustrated this way:



Finally, the network between the Acute Team and housing associations is well-functioning, as those individuals with heavy psychological problems are looked after. Most of the individuals that the Acute Team is in contact with are not capable of living in social housing but live there because there are no housing alternatives. Every now and then these individuals become a burden for the neighbours, and then the Team step in and try to solve the acute problems.

### Informants' ideas to Develop Governance Arrangement

A more extensive co-operation between the various recreation centres and organisations need to be developed. There are difficulties related to enforce more discipline or to sanction certain behaviour in one centre as the children and youngsters just go to another centre. At the same token, Vapnagård-parken could open its uptake area to the entire neighbourhood instead of focusing on the children and youngsters living on Vapnagård. Also the Arabic Danish Club could be integrated into Vapnagårdparken, as a better anchoring of the club is needed in order to recognise the club as recreation centre that has an professional objective and goal.

As regards to recreation centres arrangements need to be initiated to handle the ethnic segregation to payment and non-payment centres. Foreign young people are only to a minimal extent involved in organised recreational activities, which mainly is a result of their parents' attitudes. Hence, efforts have to be done to change such attitudes, as youngsters become disfavoured in that respect.

The Municipal Social Housing Committee, which has been on stand-by for more than a year, illustrates the clash between a traditional and a new administration. In order for the committee to function the various departments'

areas need to be toned down. Extensive co-operations between various political areas also need to be developed in order to upgrade the entire neighbourhood, and special attention has to be drawn to Borupgård and Nøjsomhed as they are in a left behind situation compared to Vapnagård.

Vapnagård has had a housing estate social worker for almost ten years, and late in 2002 two housing estate social workers have been appointed to, respectively, Borupgård and Nøjsomhed. These two housing estate social workers will have to initiate their own networks and become members of existing networks. They will have to establish some public-private relationships that can be committed to upgrade the two housing estates. Also an effort is to commit the residents to participate in changing the housing situations. The residents will become to view their housing estate differently if the prevailing anomie is going to be replaced by solidarity.

Finally, the Business/Trade Association has to be committed to make business and industries interested in the neighbourhood and to draw attention to working capacities that are present in the neighbourhood.

# Developing New Governance Arrangements

## Rethinking the role and structure of professional agencies

The idea behind the Municipal Social Housing Committee receives positive attention from most professionals; and there is a wide wonder why the committee is put on stand-by for the moment. When the professionals argue that there is a need to have this committee it is from the perspective that in order to deal with and change the social processes in the neighbourhood it is necessary to look intensely into problems related to social, environmental and employment matters. Furthermore, it is argued that it is crucial to come up with solutions that cover the entire neighbourhood, and not just one of the housing estates. Additionally, the idea of this committee should be to come up with long-range policies and solutions. So far there has been many short-term activities carried out, and several of those activities have been a waste of money according to some professionals. In this respect, an anchoring of solutions and problems targeting is in need. The members of this committee also seem to find it difficult to figure out their role in this committee and what the political expectations are.

The committee does not belong to any of department; it is an outsider to the traditional administrative apparatus and to governance through hierarchy. The committee in order to deal holistic with the neighbourhood has to develop self-governance processes and consider itself to be a body of its own. A body that consists of actors with different backgrounds but who have the neighbourhood in common. These actors have a support base either in a municipal department, housing association or recreation centres and clubs. In order for the committee to develop self-governance processes a continuous dialog about objective and implementation has to be initiated, and the members will to reach consensus about how to divide resources to carry out joint projects. In other words, consensus about norms and intentions has to be achieved through affected participants' obligation and consent to an accomplished communicated agreement, and subsequently norms and intentions can be considered as legitimate. Thus, from a Habermasian perspective legitimacy of the committee's objective will be rooted in democratic procedures, which concentrate that consensus that is achievable through discursive communication.

The legitimacy of such a committee is that the committee offers a partial and provisional solution to a malfunctioning societal integration, as the system's functioning is responsible for the existence of a socially deprived neighbourhood like Vapnagård, Borupgård and Nøjsomhed. In that respect, the committee's legitimacy is founded in efforts to rectify or at least compensate such a malfunction. Furthermore, the committee will to exceed the political system's attention to certain fields, which become defined as problem hit, and involve individuals' influence on which areas are problem hit. Hereby, the committee also finds its legitimacy.

In general, the municipality may consider changing the view of individuals living in the neighbourhood. There is a tendency to view the individuals as clients and not as residents. In the municipal administration it seems like there is a predefinition of the neighbourhood as socially deprived though

there are positive steps taken towards a greater well-being in the neighbourhood.

Along these lines the municipal attitude regarding financing social housing projects in the neighbourhood may be altered, too. There is a sentiment that when the residents can reach an agreement about projects they aspire, then the municipality will consider to finance the projects. However, this is an inadequate attitude, as exactly the housing estates often experience severe difficulties when it comes to agreeing on common actions. There are internal conflicts between the various resident groups, e.g. in Nøjsomhed Danes obstruct proposals regarding activities for the foreign residents even though money are to be spent on activities for foreign residents otherwise the money will not be spent.

Furthermore, there is an opinion not only in the municipality but in society in general that if a person do not work or is enrolled in any kind of education the person do not aspire being a member of the Danish society. And subsequently, the person abdicates any responsibility towards society and fellow human beings. However, for foreign residents and residents with few socio-economic resources reality it is not as simple as just finding a job or deciding to get an education. There are barriers set by society that hinder these individuals to find a job and get enrolled in an education, and society rather deal with these barriers instead of holding individuals responsible and grade them as deliberate non-member of society.

Finally, the municipality may consider question of integration of foreign residents. At the moment, the sentiment is that schools, recreation centres and organisations are able to introduce and integrate foreign children and youngsters into society round their parents. But there are evidence that these children and youngster are divided into two sets of norms and expectations, and difficulties are experienced on how to balance between these two sets. E.g. this is clear in regards to segregation of Danish and foreign youngsters to respectively payment and non-payment recreation centres.

## The role of spider people and informal networks

The spider person is able to find alternative ways of dealing with certain problems. This is an important function made possible due to a spider person's broader limits to succeed and to fail compared to professionals' limit.

There is a symbolic function attached to spider persons, as their involvement in the neighbourhood shows common responsibility instead of indifference.

In addition, the spider person can function as a translator of the formal network to the informal network and vice versa. Every formal network has an informal network as support base, and it would be very difficult for the formal network to carry out decisions as the legitimacy of the formal networks is anchored in the informal network. Hence, informal networks play a crucial role. However, this arrangement causes frustrations for individuals outside the informal network that support a particular formal network as it seems difficult to influence the formal network.

## The linking of formal and informal networks

As mentioned above (Co-ordination Between Authorities/Professionals and Informal Networks p. 41) there are at least a two levels of co-ordination between the formal system (housing association and or the municipal level) and the estate and the neighbourhood level. Many issues are dealt with and negotiated in an informal way between e.g. the housing associations and the

municipality. The political and administrative levels in these two systems often negotiate and discuss solutions informally before the issues come out into the open and e.g. presented for the section boards or a residents meeting. This practice also holds for issues in other areas like sports, institutions, educational offers, job activation etc. where the section boards or a residents meeting do not have any formal say in relation to what finally might be decided in the municipal council. But the local actors having an indirect political influence on these decisions at the council level can be spider persons or persons active at the neighbourhood level. But the nature and the operation of this indirect political influence are closed to those that do not participate in or have no knowledge of its existence. For most residents political participation is placing your vote at Election Day and maybe at the yearly general assembly of tenants' democracy and they do not partake in the often very informal discussions deciding who and what is coming up for a formal democratic election or decision. Also, considering the low level of political activism in the neighbourhood it cannot be expected that residents have very much access to the informal discussions and influence at the council level.

You could say that the implicit corporatist model is accepted among the Danish residents being active on the estate and neighbourhood level. With this model come rules and norms for how you act, who can act, how meetings are held, how agreements are made and also an implicit striving for consensus as well as give and take. This consensus model is not well known for the ethnic groups and they are not really active partners in it. These groups have own arenas for discussion and also group control running parallel with the corporatist Danish model. The individuals are here based in a more paternalistic system, where the group leader/gatekeepers or leaders might negotiate with the Danish system on behalf of the group or be used as a contact person as well as a controller by the informal operating part of the Danish system. The positive side of this is that problems are solved and actions are taken. The negative side is the risk of the gatekeepers taking the law into their own hands with the risk of removing the possibilities for individuals from ethnic groups to become part of and to participate in society even further. Using the gatekeepers can become a short term solution shadowing for or inhibiting integration on the longer term. In this context it could be useful to consider the possibility for developing the ethnic foras to gradually adapt to the neighbourhood democratic norms in alignment with the wish of the Arabic fathers in Nøjsomhed. Such a development could especially be taken into consideration if a new or altered decision making level covering the whole neighbourhood come on the table in the future.

Finally it has to be mentioned that there is a need for the municipal council taking action on including or giving voice to the left out or left behind groups.

## Transferable lessons

The mini-midi-maxi arrangement is a good and well-functioning network, as children's and professionals monitor youngsters' upbringings when alarming signals are given out by these young people.

Acute Team is an efficient arrangement that deals with extremely mental ill individuals who are destined to live in social housing all though this kind of housing is very unsuitable for concerned person and the neighbours. The Acute Team meets the mental ill person on his or her level and finds solutions that are tuned to the concerned person.

On Vapnagård tenants' democracy coaching of residents is fine arrangement as residents are introduced to how democracy functions, how decisions are made and carried out. This coaching can be useful not only as regards to tenants' democracy but also in other forums where discussions take place and agreements have to be made.

#### Vapnagård ServiceCenter

Since five years Vapnagård has a service centre for the residents with an all day open information and reception service partly staffed by volunteers among the residents. It also has offices for the local housing administration, the housing estate social worker, the information worker, the social adviser, the community police, as well as meeting facilities for the tenants' boards. A branch of the municipal library with good facilities for children is also located here. A newly established service for giving schoolchildren help with homework is also being located here. The place has become the heart of the estate and functions as the important and attractive point of meeting and information. It is located right in the centre of the estate close to other meeting and club facilities and is easily accessible from the inside of the estate as well as from outside.

# Literature

Beskæftigelsesministeriet

[http://www.bm.dk/english/publications/fact\\_sheets/The\\_inclusive\\_labour\\_market.asp](http://www.bm.dk/english/publications/fact_sheets/The_inclusive_labour_market.asp) download 10.12.02

Helsingør Kommune, Udviklingsafdelingen. (2001). Helsingør i tal, 2001.

Helsingør Nærpoliti 2002

Madanipour, A., Cars, G, Allen, J. (eds.). (1998). *Social Exclusion in Cities*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers and Regional Studies Association.

Regeringens Handlingsplan for de svageste grupper. 2002: 1-2.

Sørensen, U. (1999). *Bypolitik – velfærd og livskvalitet*. Byplan 1. 1999.

Vestergaard, H. (1998). "Troubled Housing Estates in Denmark". In Madanipour, A., Cars, G, Allen, J. (eds.). (1998). *Social Exclusion in Cities*.

Rhodes, 1999, p. 34)

Sehested, 2002, pp. 10-2

Sørensen, 1999, p. 3)

Ministry of Social Affairs, 2001, p. 20

Vestergaard, 1998, p.12).

[www.sspk-helsingor.dk/pages/sspkorg/org.htm](http://www.sspk-helsingor.dk/pages/sspkorg/org.htm)

Vapnagård Nyt, sep.2002, årg. 32, nr. 5

Vapnagård Nyt, 2001, no. 31, nr.6

Vapnagård Nyt, 2001, no. 31, nr.7

Helsingør Dagblad, 07.04.1998

Helsingør Dagblad 06.08.02

Helsingør Dagblad, 23.08.2002

Helsingør Dagblad, 27.08.02

Helsingør Dagblad 18/10/02, pp. 8-9

Helsingør Dagblad, 25.11.2002

Helsingør Dagblad, 17.12.2002, p. 6

# Appendix A: Map of Networks

