



Neighbourhood Governance. Capacity for Social Integration

The Danish Case Study Report. Second round of interviews

Danish Building and Urban Research
Housing and Urban Research Division
Gunvor Christensen
Hedvig Vestergaard
Anna Schou Johansen

Contents

Introduction	3
Neighbourhood problems	4
Reduction of social inequality among youngsters	4
Social isolation among teenagers	5
Increased gap between Danes and immigrants	6
The labour market and immigrants	7
Lack of bonding between neighbourhood and surrounding society	8
Mobilisation of relevant actors	9
Professionals.....	9
Civil society	10
Trades and industries.....	11
Collaboration among actors	13
Collaboration based on Urban Committee's programme	13
Collaboration targeting youth problems	14
Collaboration concerning the employment situation.....	15
Participation of residents	16
Make a voice be heard	18
Those residents are hard to reach.....	18
Developing capacity.....	20
Developing capacity among residents	20
Renovation projects.....	20
Courses for active residents	20
Ethnicity and youngsters	21
Employment initiatives	21
Role of spiders.....	23
Dealing with conflict.....	24
Residents	24
Conflicts on the estate.....	24
Overcoming obstacles	26
New institutions of governance.....	28
Make space to the individual in the collective	29
Fighting stigma	30
Transferable lessons	31
Courses for active residents.....	31
Renovation projects	32
Homework-coaching	33
Prevention Forum.....	34
Literature	35
Word list.....	36

Introduction

This is the third report completed as a part of an EU project concerning governance and capacity for social integration in neighbourhoods. In this Danish context the neighbourhood is Borupgård, Vapnagård, and Nøjsomhed in Helsingør.

There are two previous reports that respectively concern a national description about current urban and housing policies (Christensen & Vestergaard, 2002a), and a report identifying problems in the neighbourhood seen from the perspective of residents, professionals, local business people, and spider persons (Christensen & Vestergaard, 2002b).

This present report concerns assessment of identified problems in the studied neighbourhood and how these problems are dealt with and what governance activities that exist to handle these problems. Furthermore, this report develops ideas of neighbourhood democracy and governance arrangements. Finally, transferable lessons are developed in order to put experiences achieved in this neighbourhood at a level so other actors related to other neighbourhoods may find inspiration to approach problems and solutions.

The empirical data collected for this report consist of interviews with 11 persons. The informants are chosen because they are key actors and, professionally, they are related to those problems that were identified in the previous report (see Christensen & Vestergaard, 2002b). In addition, the empirical data consist of newspaper articles and documents such as summaries from local council meetings.

The informants are:

- Two local politicians. One is chairman of Social Committee and chairman of the Municipal Social Housing Committee. The other has been a member of the local council since 1994.
- Two school principals, one is principal at a council school and the other is principal at the Arabic School.
- Two housing estate social workers respectively employed by Nøjsomhed and Borupgård.
- Two representatives of youth cultural organisations.
- One representative of an enterprise.
- One representative of an employees' organisation.
- One representative of a housing association.

We will like to thank the informants for their participation and willingness to share their experiences with the research team.

Hørsholm
June 2003

Gunvor Christensen
Hedvig Vestergaard
Anna Schou Johansen

Danish Building and Urban Research

Neighbourhood problems

The neighbourhood, as the rest of society, is constantly met with new challenges. Recently, these challenges are related to an increasing unemployment rate caused by recession in the economy and a more restrict governmental attitude to support activation projects for unemployed. In particular, seniors are met with changes related to shifts in policies to phase out early retirement. This early retirement has become too expensive according to the current government. Hence, policies aim at raising the age of retirement to keep the elderly people at the labour market. Also immigrants meet new circumstances, as the sitting government has made immigration policy more restrictive. The restrictions are based on the argument that in order to maintain and improve life chances for Danes and immigrants in Denmark, money has to be spent carefully, and those immigrants, the Danish society is to help, are those in severe difficulties. Also immigrants are met with higher demands these days, as allowances are reduced in order to motivating immigrants to enter the labour market.

In particular related to housing policies, there has been anxiety and confusion about the housing estate social worker situation as the state funding became removed by the sitting government. However, an agreement has been reached as the municipality in collaboration with the housing association pay one half of the costs and the other half is paid by The National Fund of Housing Associations.

In this second round of interview key actors' perceptions and views are employed to elaborate problems that were revealed in the previous round of interviews. The problems concern social inequality of and social isolation among youngsters, an increased gap between Danes and immigrants, unemployment due to integration problems and in general the problems of bridging the neighbourhood and the rest of Helsingør.

Reduction of social inequality among youngsters

In the previous report social inequality is identified as a problem. This inequality concerns socio-economic and cultural processes. There are distinctive differences related to families' different possibilities to support and provide activities and goods for children. Furthermore, the social inequality is related to differences in social capital, as there are major differences between youngsters in how to interact and participate in social activities. Some youngsters have never been taught certain basic social capabilities. This manifests itself in conflicts in schools, institutions and so on between professionals and these youngsters, and among the youngsters themselves.

The social inequality is part of an increased ethnic segregation of youngsters related to schools and leisure activities. First of all, there are differences related to parents participation in school matters. There is an extended cooperation between schools and parents, however immigrant parents seem harder to encourage to participate in such cooperation, as some immigrants' customs are that the school carry the responsibility for the children. As a Dane with foreign background describes it:

“Many immigrants for instance from Turkey perceive the school’s responsibility for the children in the way that the child’s bone belongs to the parents, whereas the flesh belongs to the school”.

This difference between immigrants and Danes brings the children in different position, which is parallel to those children from Danish families who are neglecting the cooperation with the school. The Gurrevej School is going to initiate a project called

Parents Room, a forum for, especially, ethnic parents as a mean to obtain a closer cooperation between these parents and the school. Furthermore, the project aims at building up a greater understanding among ethnic parents of how the Danish school system works and how parents are expected to participate in their children's school matters.

Furthermore, there is an inequality related to the use of recreational facilities. It is common practice for Danish families to enrol their children in recreation centre after school. However, there is a tendency that many parents from Arabic, Middle Eastern and African countries do not follow this practice often because they are not use to this option. In this respect, there is *difference in customs*. However, the difference must also be seen in relation to the fact that many immigrant families are dependent on welfare allowances, and hence meet *economic difficulties*, as the benefits they receive are not sufficient to cover the fee to these recreation centres. Although the Danish welfare system is organised in such ways that less affluent families have possibilities to apply for a no-fee vacancy, many immigrant do not. This is often because they are not aware of this possibility.

When an immigrant family at some point gets employed and, subsequently, the economic free scope increases this does not imply that children get enrolled in a recreation centre. This is often due to an attitude concerning the fact that if the elder children did not attend such leisure facilities any of the children at all should; though the family can afford it. Parents do not want to treat children differently.

The Danish system is not able to act on this variety of children's capabilities and competencies. At this point the kindergartens, schools, after-school centres are to become aware of how to deal with this inequality and to tune knowledge to the youngster in order to overcome the inequality and to break with the social reproduction. The institution, Vapnagårdparken, has initiated a programme to deal with this circumstance, and the teachers are to pay attention to children's different needs and to teach children basic knowledge about how to participate and interact with other.

Social isolation among teenagers

A major problem relates to a lack of contact between adults and youngsters. There seem to be an increased number of youngsters, with Danish and immigrant background, which are left alone and on own devices. This creates a vacuum that the youngsters take advantage of as a free scope to act. Sometimes a *different sense of justice* is identifiable which happens to put the youngsters in conflict with the law.

When a *lack of contact between youngsters and parents* is visible in Danish families, it is often single parent families. Children due to being left alone grow up with little knowledge about how to interact with other. Teachers see this in relation to the way children communicate as quite often they have an unsuitable way of approaching each other, and often disagreements are settled with trashing.

This lack of support from both the parents and the system can be seen as a result of the individual rationality today. The lack of community spirit effects the children when no one wants to take responsibility for their upbringing. Today a great deal of the parents both Danish and ethnic expect the school to take responsibility for not only the educational but also the social upbringing of the children. Hence, schools are not made to carry out this task and the vulnerable children are at a great risk as becoming dropouts or left behind.

Increased gap between Danes and immigrants

Like most countries Danish integration policies are proclaimed to have failed. In 1990s, the sitting government was criticised for having a too laid-back attitude towards putting forwards demands to immigrants such as learning Danish, getting a job and participate in Danish customs. The current government has decided to act on the never solved integration problems. As a consequence integration policies have undergone restrictions such as inviting fewer immigrants, rising the age for immigrants to get married, and cutbacks on welfare allowances to immigrants as a mean to encourage them to find a job.

This development in integration policies does not seem to bridge immigrants and Danes, and the environment seems more hostile between immigrants and Danes compared to earlier times. In addition, September 11 (2001) and the Iraq-war have not made integration easier, on the contrary, bridging between Danes and immigrants seem even more complicated nowadays.

In many immigrant circles the current political action on integration matters are viewed as a political marker to indicate that no special attention is deserved integration of immigrants. In many parts of society conflicts arise out of these perceptions; on schools, recreation centres, labour market, and on the housing estates.

Conflicts relate for instance to the removal of mother-tongue courses on council schools. From the city council's perspective the removal is grounded in financial priorities due to the financial frame set out by the government. However, many immigrants perceive this removal of mother-tongue courses as political hostility towards immigrants. According to a local politician with immigrant background a consequence is that children most likely will experience difficulties in communicating with parents and grandparents, and the rootlessness many youngsters already experience will only increase.

Another conflict is between schools' evaluation of immigrant children's readiness to attend to regular school classes and parents' perception of their children. Many immigrants view that the maturity tests to evaluate a particular child's ability to attend regular school are inadequate due to cultural bias. Immigrants experience that their children are declined school attendance on wrong premises.

These two conflicts make the immigrants displeased with the treatment of their children and the consequence is that some parents move their children from the council school to the Arabic School. An unfortunate side effect is the gap between Danish and immigrant youngsters increases, hereby. This side effect is many professionals as well as immigrants aware of, yet several immigrants view the side effect is less important compared to the capacities their children achieve on the Arabic School.

In Helsingør, and especially on Nøjsomhed, there is a large Gypsy population. It seems that integration policy tuned to Gypsy population is insufficient. The tendency is that both the municipality and the residents have given up on Gypsies, as they are perceived culturally very different from the rest of the population in the neighbourhood. Also Gypsies are perceived as citizens who do not want to become full members of society. However, there are no empirical data indicating this and this perception might be grounded on myths and speculations.

A local politician accentuates that the first and second generations of immigrants are out of reach in terms of integration. These two generations have been left on own devices, and now they stick to their own ones. Therefore, it is much more advantageous to assure an integration policy for third generation of immigrants according to this politician. Hence, the children should be the centres of orientation. A severe problem is

therefore that the schools are left alone with these issues. They experience the culture clash everyday between both the children and the parents in the neighbourhood.

The labour market and immigrants

In the first round of interview residents with a foreign background 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 qualifications to obtain a job, and if they are in job activation they often experience that they have to do a job that do not match the qualifications they have. This, however, is not only related to immigrants as most citizens on job activation experience a mismatch between qualifications and the actual job.

It appears that there is a lack of readiness in the Danish system to make use of or to take advantage of the professional and vocational qualification people with non-Danish background might have obtained before they arrived in Denmark. Also the increasing unemployment in Denmark makes it harder to get job with poor skills.

The regular entrance to the Danish labour market is often through individual initiative or networking. This means that personal contacts to people, like family members, neighbours and friends, being active on the labour market is very important for getting a job or moving on to a new job. Likewise, a personal introduction to potential employers can be very important.

People lacking such contacts, as persons with an immigrant background, are often unemployed and depend on the organised, public system to get a job. The authorities handle the employment situation by demanding that unemployed get into a job. If it is not possible for the unemployed persons to find a job on their own initiative they have to participate in activation. Those having regular employment for a period of 18 months can qualify for unemployment insurance. Persons not covered by unemployment insurance are through the Job House under the Social Service Department offered a special training job or some kind of job activation as a condition for receiving social benefit. In some cases people get the possibility to have further 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. AF also has the function to help job seekers to find jobs as well as helping employees with acquisition. Professionals working in the job placement institutions have built 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. An immigrant in the neighbourhood puts it like this:

“To create a success it will require a greater effort. An effort to inform the residents and show consideration for them that is very important. Most important is a coordination of this effort. And to optimise this coordination it would be profitable to have some kind of experience-based committee or something like that”.

The Social Co-ordination Committee where both employer and employee is represented could play an outgoing part in enhancing the understanding of which opportunities there are in taking on an immigrant. Also they could help preparing the immigrants about the working culture in Denmark as it is often quite different to what they know. This knowledge could help them become integrated at the labour market.

Lack of bonding between neighbourhood and surrounding society

The first round of interviews showed in general that the residents like their housing estate and that the surroundings have a lot of prejudice towards the neighbourhood and perceive it as a low status area. This makes some residents feel embarrassed when they are communicating with other citizens in Helsingør and have to tell where they live. Some of rumours of the neighbourhood are related to crime. However, the crime rate in the area is not higher than the in the rest of Helsingør. When people living outside the area come to visit, they often become surprised to see that it is a very nice area. However, a major problem is that most people living outside the neighbourhood have no reason to enter the neighbourhood, as there are few service functions and activities to participate in. The housing estate social worker from Borupgård describes the Borupgård estate like this:

“I have been a frequent guest out here for many years and I also think that it is a monotonous area and I understand why people isolate themselves. Everyone looks after his own interests. The neighbour is not one you have chosen yourself. Maybe it is someone placed by the municipality who reverses day and night. So there is a lot of problems that can not be solve overnight but we are supposed to create better understanding of each other”.

The housing estate social worker provides counselling four hours a week. Here the residents have the option of having a talk and to express their ideas to improve the area physically and socially and till now the housing estate social worker has been ready to meet their wishes. This outgoing and innovative function is also meant to send a signal to the surrounding society that the image is changing and that the problems in the area are being dealt with.

Mobilisation of relevant actors

Structural changes in Danish society are emerging, and the traditional strong Scandinavian welfare society has undergone changes. The welfare benefits are provided by the state but within the last five years, especially with the government-of-today, the state as a provider has changed. These changes are related to contemporary and future problems of maintaining the service standard we are used to have. The view of the state as responsible under public management for individuals' well-being is transformed into a view that individuals carry the responsibility for its own life as a way to avoid the welfare state's burden of support and provision. Both politicians and professionals carry this perception which, political, is very similar to Tony Blair's New Labour discourse.

The mantra in political and professional thinking is learning for life and developing qualifications that labour market can benefit from. However, there is some confusion about who carries the responsibility for a person's learning period. According to the Council for Competency each individual has the sovereign responsibility for his or her learning. Professionals seek to motivate individuals to participate in societal reproduction as a way to counteract a passive attitude to society.

Hence, professionals play an important role, and in this section mobilisation of professionals, civil society, and trades and industries are analysed. These actors' patterns of mobilisation are viewed in relation to informal and formal initiatives, and the barriers that are identifiable in actors' mobilisation are described.

Professionals

Mobilising professionals to take part in the processes in the neighbourhood has been troublesome and difficult, and to a certain extent it still is. This has to do with the circumstance that political and professional actions towards altering unsuitable socio-economic and cultural processes have been carried out separated from the neighbourhood until the mid 1990s. Housing estates have not been seen as an integrated part of the problems that residents in such neighbourhood may have. Hence, the mobilisation of professionals has been limited in the context of housing estates.

In 1994 this situation changed on Vapnagård when Helsingør Housing Association employed a housing estate social worker and later a social adviser. These two professionals established a wide network anchored on the estate. They have managed to mobilise professionals from youth recreation centres, schools, community, Social Service Department etc. These two employees have succeeded in building up a network in which professionals are able to cooperate across professional boundaries. Hence, mobilising relevant actors related to problems on Vapnagård has been less difficult in the last five to ten years compared to Nøjsomhed and Borupgård.

Hence, housing estate social workers are crucial key actors as they can function as the connecting link between professionals, and between residents and the system. Housing estate social workers are in a position to create and establish a network by contacting all relevant actors. It is characteristic for the two newly employed housing estate social workers on Borupgård and Nøjsomhed that they have put a lot of effort into making new and activating already established contacts; get to know professional in the municipality, community police etc. Housing estate social workers are those in

the best position of establishing networks as they function as both a collaborator to the residents and to other professionals, the housing association and the municipality.

It is characteristic when it comes to establishing a network that the housing estate social workers build on personal networks. It seems to be a crucial quality and almost a requirement for housing estate social workers, in order to do their job that they already have a network they can bring in when they start as housing estate social workers.

Often, the housing estate social worker thinks in terms of connecting individuals and making contact. In a sense, this creates a greater understanding between individuals. At Nøjsomhed this is also one of the on-going activities the housing estate social worker does, as an ambition is to create understanding between some of the different resident groups on the estate. The housing estate social worker says:

“What I did the last time was to introduce three of the Arabic fathers to the senior residents so they could see what the Arabs look like, and that they are not dangerous. The senior residents got around to ask the Arabic fathers a lot of questions, and building knowledge about each other developed at the same time as bringing people closer together. The meeting I made turned out to be a success”.

Between the housing estate social workers on the three housing estates a network is established. The promising part is that the housing estates having a formal network between the housing estate social workers become a more formalised network that recreation facilities, schools, social workers, community police and municipality etc. may participate in and take advantage of. Seen in a longer perspective, the Municipal Social Housing Committee may become a formalised framework for the network initiated by the housing estate social workers. On a long-term basis this formalised network when it settles may develop an understanding between the residents and provide a base for residents to sense a common identity and belonging to the neighbourhood.

A general barrier professionals meet in their mobilisation pattern is resistance from residents. It is difficult to mobilise residents to participate in projects and activities. Often professionals meet resistance when they organise projects in which a problem is clearly defined and so are the means to solve this problem. Whenever a problem is put into isolation from a context, and a project is defined to solve this problem it is partly more difficult to mobilise residents and keep them involved in the project, partly to solve the actual problem. It is understandable though that professionals separate a problem from other problems as any application for funds need to deliver a precise description of problems. Subsequently, funds are given to target these problems.

However, positive results in the sense of mobilising residents and solving problems are more easy to obtain, when professionals think in initiating a process that generally aims at improving residents' everyday life, secure safety and well-being. First of all, this perspective is less likely to define certain groups or certain actions or behaviours as problems. Secondly, this perspective focuses on anchoring a process in the neighbourhood instead of carrying out a specific project. Thirdly, this perspective does not see it as the prime activity to locate and enrol a number of voluntary residents, as such an activity is likely to become a specific project in itself. Instead attention is paid to spread the word and carry activities out for the number of persons who are interested. Activities are regarded as a part of a master plan to lift up the neighbourhood.

Civil society

To the social deprivation and fragility in the neighbourhood, civil society has not really answered back. There have been few initiatives based on volunteers, but they have

been very sporadic. There do not seem to be any tradition of civil society getting mobilised to take actions.

One of the initiatives that has been carried out is a private supervision team of parents who on weekends walk around on the streets to target youth problems at night-time. This team is called Night Owls and has been going on for five years in Helsingør. The initiative is private and carried out on private hands, sponsored by a large insurance company, Scandia. Night Owls are widely respected by community police, SSPK-consultants, parents, and youngsters.¹

Another recent initiative that is a response from civil society is targeting the cut back of homework-coaching in the municipality though professionals argue that there is a need for this kind of coaching. Red Cross Youth has initiated a project to coach youngster on Vapnagård with their homework, primarily for children living on the estate. Some adults on Vapnagård have volunteered to do coaching also. The number of children attending indicate the need of such a project, and it also indicates that housing estates may be better contexts for homework-coaching than schools, as the children are more likely to take advantage of the coaching while it is situated on their estate. Furthermore, adult residents on the estate may volunteer coaching.

This model is intended to be implemented on Nøjsomhed and Borupgård. Already there have been volunteers signing up to coaching on Borupgård, as well.

Trades and industries

According to the sitting government welfare is anchored in each individual's knowledge and flexibility to possess any job position that is relevant and necessary to society. This puts forward new demands to trades and industries to develop a new perception of human resources, education and learning on labour market, social progress and societal cohesion. Knowledge-based society is intended to consist of well-integrated individuals where the distinction between professional and personal development is cancelled. Hereby, each individual, supposedly, is better equipped to manage the continuously increasing demands that societal conditions cause.

Helsingør has been a shipyard city, and the political power has been based on the shipyard and similar old industries. The neighbourhood has been the living place for the employees at these industries. However, when they closed down many residents got unemployed and the political power balance has shifted. There is like an empty vacuum after these industries, and the cooperation between the city council and the trades and industries is not self-understood or given anymore.

The trades and industries seem very difficult to mobilise to partake a social responsibility. They seem reluctant to be partners. However, there has been set up a forum, the Social Coordination Committee, to come up with suggestions on how the cooperation between labour market and the employees can be improved. Thus, the forum has to consider how it is possible to keep employees on the labour market and for the employees to qualify their skills. It is a fairly new forum, which has a budget. Thus, there is a will to carry out projects which seems to connect employer and employee more closely.

Though there seem to be some reluctance the chairman of the Social Service Committee frequently is contacted by job consultants who present proposals from companies to initiate projects aimed at providing job activation for unemployed individuals. The chairman is positive towards these proposals but it appears as consistency and continuity sometimes are lacking. In this respect, the Social Coordination Committee

¹ For a further description of Night Owls, see Christensen and Vestergaard, 2002b, p. 26.

might take advantage of this opening from these job consultants and try to commit them to do more formalised job activation projects.

Collaboration among actors

In general, the collaboration between professionals and organisations related to the three housing estates is formalised. Both when it comes to housing related issues and issues concerning social, economic and cultural matters.

Collaboration based on Urban Committee's programme

Concerning housing related issues, each housing estate has received financial means from the Urban Committee. The application for financial means has been carried out in a cooperation between municipality, housing association, and section boards. Hence, a master plan has been approved and anchored in a formalised partnership between public and private actors. The municipality has been a less visible actor in the application phase compared to the other actors and it seems to be the way residents and section boards prefer, as no one in the neighbourhood favours the idea that the municipality tells them what to do.

The municipality intends to lift up the entire neighbourhood. Hence, the establishment of the Municipal Social Housing Committee. The idea with this committee is to make a formalised framework for collaboration between professionals and organisations. However, it has been put on standby and no meetings have been held. It is a deliberate choice made by the chairman of the committee because of continuous conflicts on the estates. The chairman of the Municipal Social Housing Committee says:

"There has not been any meeting. It is just the way it is. It is my choice. It has been my way of saying that now the residents have to learn to get along at especially Borupgård. I do not want to formulate more initiatives until they have reached an agreement. It was some kind of pressure".

The holistic view on the neighbourhood that the municipality launches meet support from most professionals who work with and on the estates. There seem to be consensus about initiating projects that are able to gather the neighbourhood and to solve problems that are common for all three housing estates. However, when it comes to residents they are more sceptical about the one-neighbourhood-idea, and the housing estate social worker on Nøjsomhed shares this scepticism:

"I do not think it's possible. Kongevejen is a natural border. People would also like to cooperate with Swedes but Øresund is water separating Denmark and Sweden".

The physical boundaries in the area seem to be an important barrier that may prevent the three housing estates to cooperate on a residential level.

All three housing estates have been taking on a housing estate social worker. In particular, on Nøjsomhed and Borupgård, these two professionals are going to be the anchoring point of the projects in the context of Urban Committee programme. On Vapnagård Urban Committee's projects are anchored in the already established formalised networks between professionals.

Taking on a housing estate social worker on Borupgård has meant that the two section boards were going to cooperate and reach agreement on which person should possess the job. Reaching agreement has taken a fairly long time, but the time spent seems constructive, as the two section boards have had to meet on common terms. Thus some barriers between these two boards have been overcome. Now the housing

estate social worker has to remove more barriers and conflicts between the boards and he has to be able to manoeuvre in a field of latent conflicts.

The housing estate social workers' role has been difficult in the neighbourhood especially because the content of the job as a housing estate social worker has not been defined from the beginning. Hence, there are many expectations to what a housing estate social worker is supposed to deal with, and many of these expectations are in conflict. Often a housing estate social worker is caught in between the housing association and the residents, and confusion may also be present, as the division of labour between a housing estate social worker and other professionals is not necessarily defined either.

The three housing estate social workers in the neighbourhood have initiated a cooperation but since the two on Borupgård and Nøjsomhed are latest arrivals the cooperation tend to go through the housing estate social worker on Vapnagård. The housing estate social worker on Borupgård describes his cooperation with the housing estate social worker on Vapnagård like this:

“He is like a mentor in this. We meet when it is needed and drink a cup of coffee. We sit and have a chat. He is a sparring partner and I bring on some ideas. Then I listen to what he has to say and we discuss forth and back. He gives me a lot of inputs and vice versa. We are a good team”.

A common characteristic of the three housing estate social workers is that they use their informal contacts to navigate through the formal system and to create possibilities for the residents in the neighbourhood. The personal network is a very important factor in making things happen and to get the necessary support from both the residents and the politicians. The political support is in this case very important because a lot of the projects are depending on the funds from either the government or the local politicians. The housing estate worker on Nøjsomhed says:

“The informal network is very important in gaining experience on how to run a project and how to make people participate. I have not had any problems with the municipality because I have a large network through my earlier jobs as Night Owls, in the City Association, in Highways Department and so on. I know whom to contact I do not get knocked off my perch. No, I do not have any troubles because I know the ways inside out”.

Collaboration targeting youth problems

To a large extent various spheres meet in the so-called *Prevention Forum*² which specifically monitor young people. It is an inter-disciplinary innovation in the municipality and aims at considering youngsters 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.

According to professionals working in recreation centres and schools the involvement from kindergarten teachers needs to be increased. At the moment, kindergarten teachers seem less willing to report problems and difficulties with children. Other actors in the forum suggest that the close contract between the kindergarten teachers and the parents is a barrier as they may interpret any report as betrayal to the parents.

In regards to schools there is little co-operation between council schools and private schools such as the Arabic School. Furthermore, when it comes to the Arabic School they see themselves as being disregarded in cooperation with the public school due to an integration issue as the Arabic School is viewed as a barrier to integration. The council school and the Arabic School need to cooperate cross the ethnic differences

² Prevention Forum used to be named either the SLOGGI-model or the Mini-midi-max-forum

and maybe both parts need to have a more open-minded attitude towards each others cultures and learning methods.

The Social Service Department is an actor that preferable is more visible in the forum. However, there seems to be an understanding that the Social Service Department is busy and hence has difficulties when it comes to carry out a solution concerning youngsters.

The community police is well integrated in the Prevention Forum and contribute with information about the youngsters. The cooperation between police and teachers is crucial in any effort to prevent youngsters to start on a criminal career, and to make that youngsters are aware on justice and on norms and values for living together with a lot other people. While the teachers are able to be pedagogical and try to set up norms and rules by communicating, the police by having the law in their back can always back up the teachers and manifest senses of justice.

Collaboration concerning the employment situation

Other formal actors having an important role in the neighbourhood are firstly the Job House, the county-based employment agency (AF), secondly the trade unions (LO) and the employer's organisation (DA), and thirdly the institutions helping people going from education to employment.

There is a tendency of a lack of motive for collaboration between the different employment systems. The residents with a non-Danish background are often caught in projects that never end offering a real job. The trade union wants real jobs and real wages and has stepped down from organising people in activation. The government has just put out a proposal that is suppose to increase the number of immigrants in the labour force. The proposal aims at rewarding with a bonus any professional who has played a decisive part for an employer to take on an employee with immigrant background.

The Municipal Social Housing Committee and the Social Coordination Committee are two committees that are suppose to act on re-integrating vulnerable individuals on the labour market. However, several of interviewees claim that these committees are talking clubs and are acting very slow and bureaucratic. The efficient ways to handle things are via personal contacts:

"I have some personal contacts in the municipal administration in Helsingør – I know who to contact in order to get things done". (HR-assistant in private company)

In this case the Social Coordination Committee could play a more active role. This committee is based on representatives from employer and employee. Especially, the employers could strengthen the connection to the business community and help prevent some people from being unemployed for years. In general, this committee could help creating a dialogue between those without a great network and the immigrants who often are in the difficult position.

Meanwhile, the Municipal Social Housing Committee and the Social Coordination Committee might consider collaborating, as parts of their respective agendas are similar.

Participation of residents

In various respects society and residents' lives have changed just compared to one or two decades ago. Society has gone from being organised around collective rationality to individual-oriented rationality. Every individual sticks to itself and tends to be focused on what is in it for me and not so much what can I do to contribute to the community. This development can be identified in respect to individuals' social organising and their patterns of participation. The traditional forums for participation such as tenants' democracy, sport clubs, and political parties etc. have less support from individuals nowadays. In terms of families, there is a greater support for participating in school committees, and forums that are related to children compared to for instance housing related forums.

Meanwhile, individuals tend to ask what is in it for me, the rhetoric of the sitting government is to decentralise responsibility for the socially vulnerable individuals (Socialpolitisk Redegørelse 2002). As the state is undergoing changes charity is supposed to replace some of the state's provision of welfare benefits. This seems to be contradictory to how reality actually is.

Analysing the mobilisation of residents it is important to distinguish between the recruitment to formal and informal forums. Mobilisation of residents to formal forums concerns section boards and housing association boards, whereas mobilisation to informal forums can be short-term activities such as a masquerade for children or summer party on the housing estate.

In Denmark, there is a long tradition for having a tenants' democracy, and the support and attractiveness are wide. However, in 1990s the residents support less the tenants' democracy compared to earlier, and on the three housing estates there are difficulties related to recruit residents to participate in section boards. This trend seems parallel to individuals' general withdrawal to become member in parties, leisure clubs, voluntary work etc. Hence, this trend should not be seen as a particular condition for the neighbourhood but seen as a particular societal condition. Senses of collective responsibility demonstrated by participating in forums such as tenants' democracy is fading.

All three housing estates have section boards. Mainly, Danish residents represent these. Though it is difficult to recruit any resident it is even more difficult to recruit residents with another ethnic background. There are various reasons for that. Language problems are a major barrier; knowledge about how tenants' democracy functions is another major barrier. In addition, barriers relate to immigrants' experiences of being seen as representative of all immigrants and expectations such as immigrants in section boards have to be able to solve any conflict or issue related to immigrants. At the same token, former immigrant representatives put attention to the situation they have seen themselves in as representatives. Other residents with immigrant background think that being a member of the housing section board means that one is in a position to procure dwellings, and to solve issues related to for instance the Social Service Department.

Likewise, it is a problem in general that a lot of projects in the neighbourhood are stranding if there is missing an organiser or a leader. This is why the housing estate social worker's role is so important. There is a need for an initiator who can run or support the projects till the residents are capable to take over some of the responsibility and leadership.

Mobilising residents and anchoring projects seem very difficult on especially Borupgård and Nøjsomhed. However, it has to be taken into account that the housing estate social workers are crucial key actors in building networks and anchoring networks. To a large extent the housing estate social worker on Vapnagård has succeeded in anchoring the volunteers. The two other housing estate social workers have a longer way to go. The housing estate social worker on Borupgård says:

“I had reported sick for two weeks and those two weeks when I was not in the office everything fell apart. The meetings that were supposed to be held were not held because I was not there. So any preliminary network is fragile and need constant supervision and attention. Otherwise, things fall apart”.

Formal forums that concern children seem to have greater support compared to forums such as tenants' democracy. When families have to prioritise time to participate school committees are often in favour. However, the school-home-cooperation does function inadequately in the neighbourhood. Partly, there are difficulties related to involve immigrant parents to partake in the children's school. Partly, difficulties are related to single parent families who may have little capacity to participate.

When it seems difficult to mobilise residents to formal forums, it seems easier when it comes to informal forums. This difference has most likely to do with the degree of necessary involvement. Participating informally means much more flexibility about how and when to participate. Furthermore, participating in informal forums do need to involve the same kind of responsibility as being a member of a section board.

Taking a closer look on mobilisation patterns, there seems to be differences between the three housing estates. There has been a great success in mobilising residents on Vapnagård when a renovation project was started in the end of the 1980s. Residents were invited to meetings to discuss how each housing block was to be renovated. It seemed to be a good way to mobilise residents, and also adequate as the residents should have some kind of influence on how the close physical surroundings should look like.

This renovation project became part of a master plan for an ongoing improvement process of the housing estate, and the residents became involved as responsible partners in this plan of making the everyday life better for all residents. Furthermore, the project was not just about solving the problems about renovating the blocks but the project was also initiating a process the residents could continue after the renovation was done. In this respect, an informal way of participation transformed into formalised participation. And the ongoing process activated a large number of residents throughout the estate.

On Nøjsomhed, there have been tremendous difficulties related to mobilise residents to both formal and informal forums. According to professionals and residents, who have lived on Nøjsomhed for more than 10 years, residents used to participate in activities on the estate. However, in the mid 1990s there was a high turnover due to a rent increase because of renovation of the estate. Many new resident groups moved in, patterns of participation and involvement in the social life on the estate changed. For a long period residents have withdrawn themselves from communal life. There are certain indications that this may change as a lot of new projects for example a drop-in centre for the senior residents and a meeting group for ethnic women have been started. The housing estate social worker also intend to make space for youngsters in the afternoon as they often are in conflicts with some of the other resident groups e.g. senior residents. These two groups divert often in their behaviour and interaction, and these different ways of living affect the sense of safety and certainty. Moreover, offering these youngsters a place to hang out may minimise the risk of carrying out criminal activities.

Make a voice be heard

Traditional forums for participation have less support and attraction. Hence, traditional ways of raising criticism and disagreement such as in the framework of the tenants' democracy is no longer adequate or made use of. This demands new forums to make a voice be heard. Places for residents to be heard are therefore important. On Nøjsomhed Residents' House has become such a place for residents as the housing estate social worker has got an office at the Residents' House. When the housing estate social worker is at job she puts out a flag to indicate this, and residents have the possibility to come and have a chat with her. This is a much more informal way to be heard, and this informal way of putting criticism forward leaves lesser room for residents to feel that what they want to say is too trivial. Nothing seems too trivial to have an informal chat about. The housing estate social worker is often the right person to talk to, as the housing estate social worker knows how to put an enquiry or criticism forward. It does make certain demands on the housing estate social worker, as trust have to be build into the relations to both residents and other professionals. But when trust is inherent, the housing estate social worker can balance between the system and residents, and link these spheres together.

On Vapnagård the Service Centre has a more established but similar function as the Residents' House on Nøjsomhed, and on Borupgård the housing estate social worker has also opened up this possibility for the residents as they are welcome at the estate social worker's office. However, compared to Nøjsomhed and Vapnagård the office is not as easy to drop-by, as it is a former apartment. But with the renovation project there is going to be build a Residents' House, and the plan is that the housing estate social worker is going to have the office at this house as well.

Those residents are hard to reach

Mentally ill residents and residents with abuse problems are very hard to reach. Though immigrants are hard to reach, these two groups may be even harder. These two groups compared to immigrants are in a more fragile situation as mentally ill residents and alcoholics lack a network; a social group to belong to that offers support. These residents are often singles, and they are withdrawn and keep to themselves. Professionals perceive, especially Nøjsomhed, as having a long social unstable record. The schools experience that the teacher's role has had to change over the last five to ten years due to new group of pupils from socially weak families. Now the teachers are to provide care, nurture, and not just teaching.

In the application to Urban Committee³ Vapnagård and Borupgård mention mentally ill residents as a part of their target group. However, none of the housing estates have actually succeeded in mobilising the mentally ill residents despite efforts.

Finally, well-functioning residents are very difficult to mobilise. In a housing context the well-functioning residents already do well, hence there is no reason to worry about their social integration. However, it is a mantra in social housing policies that it is important to keep and involve well-functioning residents in the neighbourhood as they are capacities to establish activities, and to reach out for residents with little capacities. In addition, well-functioning families are also seen as role models as they possess a job, raise children and have healthy habits. Though well-functioning families are expected to be easy to mobilise in a neighbourhood context, the reality is different. They mostly look after their own interests and show little interest in the neighbourhood. Hence, the idea of well-functioning families as a capacity to the neighbourhood is arguable as they withdraw from instead of bonding with other residents.

In conclusion, the difficulties related to mobilise resident indicate that it is almost impossible to carry out initiatives based alone on volunteer work of residents. In this respect, housing estate social workers are a benefit for the estates as they can adminis-

³ For further information about Urban Committee, see Christensen and Vestergaard 2002a: 6-7.

trate and co-ordinate new initiatives suggested by residents. Furthermore, the reassurance of residents' participation needs to reflect new ways of participating instead of keep thinking how to make more residents participate in tenants' democracy and so on. The reassurance of residents' participation needs to be of the new ways individuals participate.

Developing capacity

Developing capacity at the individual as well as at the community level has been an ongoing long-term process in the neighbourhood. To overcome or prevent social exclusion different initiatives involving residents and professionals have been carried out. Also actors engaged in activities and tasks covering a wider scope than the neighbourhood have been of relevance in developing capacity. However, attempts to strengthen the relationships among actors are challenged by the new individual rationality. Hence, much work has already been invested in enhancing established and creating new relationships and networks.

At this point, it is important to strengthen formal partnership between the estates and other stakeholders at the neighbourhood level. Potentially, such partnerships can support or encourage informal as well as formal participation on the housing estates. It is reasonable to anticipate that the Municipal Social Housing Committee plays an important role in this respect, as the committee has a potential to promoting local capacity building.

Developing capacity among residents

The housing estate social worker on Vapnagård has for more than 10 years supported the process of involving residents and committing relevant actors to initiatives and projects on the estate. The recently (fall 2002) employed housing estate social workers on Nøjsomhed and Borupgård aim at initiating similar processes. On Nøjsomhed and Borupgård there are attention to how to increase awareness and tolerance among different resident groups and how to generate residents' senses of belonging to the estate. In order to increasing awareness, tolerance and commitment different events and activities are initiated continuously to facilitate the development of informal networks between residents. As an important first step it is considered significant to demonstrate the benefits of the residents being active on the estate and to show that their participation makes a difference and raises the standard of the quality of life.

Below, activities and initiatives with importance for local capacity building are described.

Renovation projects

Rather comprehensive physical renovation projects have been conducted at both Vapnagård and Nøjsomhed and a major project is planned on Borupgård. To various degrees the planning processes have been used for capacity building among the residents on Vapnagård. This includes putting forward residents' suggestions, involving residents in decision-making and encouraging residents to participate in democratic processes. The planning processes have involved residents at the estate level, the local area level, the building level as well as the stairwell level. This capacity building in relation to physical renovation projects have created or improved a basis for starting projects and initiatives in others fields like culture and social activities.

Courses for active residents

One of the most innovative capacities building initiatives is a course for active residents on Vapnagård. This course has been offered on a regular basis every year for nearly 10 years. Originally, it was established as an investment for the future. The target group has been residents on the estate active in the tenants' democracy, clubs,

and committees. The course is conducted over a period of seven weeks for three hours on a weekday and there is a choice of following evening or afternoon classes. The course is designed and organised by the housing estate social worker in co-operation with The National Federation of Housing Associations, the local vocational school (Helsingør Erhvervsskole), The municipality of Helsingør and Helsingør Housing Association. Themes like how to work on a board, run meetings, solve conflicts, laws on housing, tenants' democracy, what can the Social Service Department do etc have been taken up. Professionals from the municipality, The National Social Housing Association, and a number of consultants have assisted in conducting the courses. Participation in these courses has been in high demand and they are to be continued.

Ethnicity and youngsters

Cultural understanding between ethnic groups is another topic in focus in terms of building capacity. There is a gap between Danish and foreign residents affecting both adults and children. E.g. for some children with Arabic background it seems right to attend to the local Arabic School instead of the council school, having an increasing concentration of immigrants and youngsters with socially weak backgrounds. Moreover, parents seem to attend to meetings at the Arabic School more often than at the council school. There are also experiences of children becoming more at ease at the Arabic School, than they were when attending the council school. According to the principal of the Arabic School this is due to a greater cultural understanding between parents and schoolteachers. The rules of the school are often stricter than at other schools. Smoking and alcoholic drinks are prohibited at school premises. And there is almost no bullying among the children. The Arabic School attend to meetings in Prevention Forum but have no record of reporting children to be put on special attention. Attending the school may make integration more difficult as segregation of youngsters with different ethnic backgrounds is sustained.

However, it is important to view the enrolment of children on the Arabic School from two sides. One side is the above-mentioned in which the enrolment is capacity building. On the other side, the enrolment is counterproductive to integration, as these children get more isolated from the Danish society, Danish friends, and so on. So the picture of attending Arabic School is ambivalent.

In relation to youngsters, the Prevention Forum plays an important role. Not so much as building capacity for the youngster as building capacity for professionals who work with youngsters. The Prevention Forum is established to monitor young people and children and to take action on giving support at an early stage before problems escalate. It is an organisational invention that develops the local capacity to deal with preventive work in a holistic way. The mini-forums organised around the local schools and composed of school principal, health visitor, institution principal, psychologist, and family counsellor make it possible to utilise knowledge and competencies across institutions in relation to individual casework to the benefit of the individual child and family. The inter-disciplinary midi-forums gives space and for taking up preventive projects targeting special local areas or groups of youngsters at a short notice. Finally, the maxi-forum is joint exchange of experiences and lessons to be learned for skilled and trained persons in the area. In this way the forum gives space for local capacity building.

Employment initiatives

The Danish firm, Coloplast A/S, with a number of divisions in the local area, is recognised for its commitment and social responsibility as part of company policy. Since 1993 Coloplast has offered 100 people vocational rehabilitation and 30 percent of these now work in the company in a regular job position. The company also offers les-

sons for non-Danish speaking employees within working hours. Latest initiatives include the establishment of a sheltered production unit to assist employees who temporarily are unable to work within the mainstream production line, and the development of a company policy on social responsibility in consultation with employees.

Coloplast experiences many benefits from taking social responsibility as an explicit part of company policy including an enhanced reputation, increased employee satisfaction and better relationships to the local community. However, the limit for the number of rehabilitation jobs has been reached, according to a HR assistant of Coloplast. Furthermore, the period for wage compensation has been reduced from three months to six weeks. This makes job training (vocational rehabilitation) less interesting for Coloplast, as it is not possible to evaluate a new employee in a six-week period. At the same time regular jobs at Coloplast are in very high demand, so acquisition is not a problem. Constantly, there are around 80-100 persons waiting for a job offer in the production lines at Coloplast. In this case the initiative from the Social Coordination Committee making the business society aware of the potential in using working labour with a different cultural background is a very part in the strategy of combating social exclusion. This could also be a proactive task for the Municipal Social Housing Committee to uncover and strengthen the qualifications and competencies of the residents of the neighbourhood.

Still the private sector is also hard to withhold. There is a tendency that the private companies use the job activation programs as an ethic company branding and are often not willingly to help as soon as the public grants stops. This way a lot of substantial projects are dropped on the floor and the money go to waste. One of the informal channels to reach one of the groups having difficulties getting into regular employment is the Arabic Father Group that has direct access to most of the Arabic families. This way the Arabic Father Group would function as an intermediary between the Danish system and the Arabs. This could make it easier to prepare the Arabic parents at how the Danish working culture function and thereby make their entry at the labour market easier.

Role of spiders

Spiders are characterised by their personal motivation and involvement. They have specific interests in certain matters, and these interests are the driving forces for their commitment to the neighbourhood. Spiders must be divided into two groups. There are those spiders that can be conceptualised as volunteers e.g. residents or members in clubs or organisations. Then there are those spiders that often are professionals that do something extraordinary as they take actions they are not expected to or formally obliged to do.

Spiders fill out the space or gap between residents and the system. Where the system lacks to take certain actions, spiders may enter the arena trying to make the connections between residents and the system. In this respect, spiders do normally find it easy to fit into a governance arrangement as they think in terms of and acts on specific occurring problems which is what any governance arrangement does. Thus the steering and cooperation concerns specific problems.

In Denmark, the system is integrated in most societal conditions and the state regulates many of these societal conditions. Thus the gaps between system and residents are often small which is probably why so many spiders actually are professionals taking additional tasks on their shoulders. The professionals are close to the residents and may easily see what more is needed to improve the conditions and circumstances for the residents.

Characteristic of spiders is that they have a fairly extended network. They know many people in the municipality, the recreation centres, the organisations, the media and so on. They know whom to call on when there is a problem that needs to be dealt with.

The Integration Council is a formal forum consisting of a mix of professionals and volunteers representing various organisations and clubs. Each member of the council can be recognised as spiders in the sense that each person represents a network that deals with integration and ethnicity in some respect. These spiders are supposed to discuss integration, however the way they are going to act within the framework set up by the city council and law put restrictions on how they qua being spiders work and cooperate. The city council seems reluctant to make space for the Integration Council to be heard, and there is very little cooperation between the city council and the Integration Council. Hence, the spiders in the council have a difficult time to fill out the gap between how far the system can get with integration matters and the actual need of the residents and other citizens.

Finally, it is important to put attention to some of the possible conflicts that relate to spiders. There is an inherent risk that spiders put their perspective so much in front, that having their specific perception of how problems should be solved conflict with other actors' perspectives.

Dealing with conflict

Some of the obvious barriers to developing the capacities in the neighbourhood are the underlying conflicts between various actors. There are different ontological perceptions, which lie behind these conflicts. Residents have one perception, whereas the housing estate social worker and the housing association have two other perceptions. This tendency relates to other professionals and the municipality as well. Besides these conflicts relate to different ontological views, the conflicts also relate to stereotypical perceptions of residents, professionals, the municipality etc. The conflicts are showing themselves vertical in the hierarchical bureaucracy and horizontal in governance arrangements. Primarily, the conflicts have to do with different modes of steering among involved actors.

There are different perceptions of how to deal with conflicts. However, it is characteristic that conflicts are viewed as slowing any process of reaching consensus about how to act, how to carry out a project and so on. Thus, conflicts tend to be viewed in a negative manner.

Residents

The neighbourhood is characterised by a group of residents who have lived there for maybe 15 or 20 years, and residents who move in and out regularly. This contributes to certain instability among the residents, and contributes to conflicts about how to live and organise an everyday life. Among the group who have lived on the estate for several years a consensus about the everyday life is established, and this consensus is under pressure from all the newcomers. Moreover, a negative view can be present among the 'older' residents, which for instance is the case on Nøjsomhed. Residents who have lived on the estate, before the rent increase in the mid 1990s and the high turnover and new resident groups appeared, often share and contribute to a story about the good old days.

Among various residents' groups conflicts are visible. There is the traditional conflict between senior residents and youngsters. These two groups sometimes have a hard time to cope with each other and to take considerations towards each other. Also a conflict between Danish residents and immigrants is present, and it is a conflict that has increased since September 11, 2001.

These conflicts between residents can be conceptualised from a life style perspective, as often conflicts arise because of different preferences for living. The conflicts may affect residents' senses of safety and well being.

Conflicts between residents are dealt with in various projects that aim for raising awareness between residents. In this respect, it seems important that there are physical facilities for residents to meet such as the Service Centre on Vapnagård, and the Residents' House of Nøjsomhed.

Conflicts on the estate

Often tensions are present between tenants' democracy and housing association. When it comes to tensions and conflicts it is related to two different steering mecha-

nism in the tenant's democracy and the housing association. Moreover, tenants democrats are volunteers and though tenants' democracy is a formalised network, tenants democrats are not professionals, and they only have to consider their particular housing estate. The housing association is a professional organisation with full-time employees who have to view every housing estate in a holistic manner and take into consideration how organisational and political processes work. Hence, tenants' democracy works differently to housing association and how the housing association would prefer the tenants' democracy to work. The tenants' democracy can often be a complicated process, and it takes a long time to reach consensus and to decide which way to head. This seems to be an ongoing frustration for housing association. It takes time to reach some kind of results, and a lot of time is spent on talking which seems inefficient for the housing association.

In particular, such tensions are visible on Borupgård. The circumstance that Borupgård has two section boards seem only to contribute to the tensions and conflicts. Residents on Borupgård are likely to have this attitude that they know what is best for them and the housing association or the municipality do not. On one hand, this attitude benefits residents, as they have to reach an agreement if activities or projects are to be carried out. On the other hand, residents do not always reach an agreement and sometimes they could benefit from letting the housing association or the municipality take over. Several projects have been dragging out for ages due to the two section boards could not reach an agreement. Processes that are dragged out do not seem to serve the residents. As a fact the municipality has been so frustrated over the dragged out processes in relation to taking on a housing estate social worker that the municipality decided not to do anything until a gathered tenants' democracy could present a case. For the same reason the Municipal Social Housing Committee has been put on hold which Nøjsomhed and Vapnagård have suffered from.

In a way such an attitude from the Municipal Social Housing Committee is a clear sign to the housing estates that they have to work as a gathered unity and as long as there is no consensus among tenants democrats, the housing estate can not expect actions to be taken. On the other hand, the attitude is not necessarily benefiting the particular housing estate that has trouble reaching an agreement, and what is needed sometimes is a strong actor that takes responsibility for actions to be taken. Such an actor could be the Municipal Social Housing Committee, and the committee could be a forum to discuss common problems in the neighbourhood and exchange experiences and results from the individual projects.

At the moment, the standby of the Municipal Social Housing Committee is a barrier to all the involved partners as each of them seem to be waiting for someone to take action yet no one does. It is problematic, as most professionals seem to anticipate the functioning of the committee and many have been longing for such a forum to exchange ideas and discuss how to lift up the entire neighbourhood. In perspective, the standby of the Municipal Social Housing Committee may prevent conflicts between the neighbourhood and the municipality, as the neighbourhood has no consensus about the development of the neighbourhood. Thus, the neighbourhood is not able to put forward any collective demands or stand as a collective actor in dialogue with the municipality.

Other lines of conflicts concern the housing estate social worker's role as the job function is in between the housing association and the residents. Questions may come up such as: "Is the housing estate social worker the resident's man or the housing association's man?" Thus, the housing estate social worker has to manoeuvre in a field of tensions and conflicts between the housing association and the residents. The three housing estate social workers are aware of these tensions and conflicts and are manoeuvrable.

Overcoming obstacles

Major obstacles to overcome are related to the hierarchical organisation in the municipality and the establishment of forums bearing governance features.

The municipality is top-down steered, and on top is the city council that is elected every fourth year. For each municipal department there is a committee consisting of elected politicians. One is chairman and main authority for the department.

Especially, three forums have been established that are of interest to the neighbourhood. These are the Municipal Social Housing Committee, The Social Coordination Committee, and the Integration Council. These three committees are established to target particular problems or issues, and relevant actors are involved in these committees. They are formal network arrangements with different possibilities to carry out projects and to influence decision-making processes.

Regarding the Municipal Social Housing Committee it is a network that has the purpose to lift up the entire neighbourhood by altering the conditions that retain individuals on social security benefits. This is supposed to happen through job activation. Also families with children are in focus, as the committee aim to break social reproduction (closed memo from Municipal Social Housing Committee). The idea is to view the neighbourhood holistically and coordinate activities between different municipal departments and the three housing associations. The chairman of the committee is the chairman of the Social Service Department. Other members of the committee are two local politicians in the city council, a representative from the Development Section at City Hall, representatives of the Social Service Department, the Children and Youngsters Department, Technical Department, Department of Culture and Recreation, and the chairmen of the three housing associations boards.

The idea behind this committee seems reasonable, and most professionals related to the neighbourhood support this committee. However, nothing has really happened in the committee. There seem to be various obstacles that need to be overcome. A major obstacle is that the committee is not anchored to a particular section in the Social Service Department. It is hard to say which actor is in a position to call on meetings; who is responsible. Additionally, the competencies of the involved actors are not defined, and the tasks for the committee are also unclear and vague.

To anchor the neighbourhood governance process it is necessary to think the area as an unified entity and also solutions are not to be locked up with fixed or grand measures. Solutions to problems and challenges in the neighbourhood have to be more open and flexible. In this respect, the housing estate social worker is a pivotal point and has legitimacy and support from both the residents and the Municipal Social Housing Committee to anchor this process. Other obstacles that oppress the development of the governance structures in the neighbourhood are the stories, myths, and prejudices against the area and the social housing estates, in general.

The Integration Council consists of a number of persons who has an ethnic background or who represent recreation facilities, employer's or employee's organisation. According to the law it is a forum that has to be established if there are a certain number of immigrants with different nationalities, and they put forward a proposal to establish such a forum in the particular municipality. The council has no budget, and subsequently no option to initiate projects of activities. The purpose with the council is to be a discussing forum that discusses political proposals, ideas, and activities that have

any kind of integration aspect. After a council discussion the forum puts forward their recommendation to the city council.

There are two major obstacles that need to be overcome. First, the members of the Integration Council are appointed and it differs, what organisation or individuals that have appointed the members. Thus, the appointment seems done on random premises. This affects the legitimacy of members though they might be the most adequate representatives of their organisation. Second, a barrier is in relation to the political processes that seem less willing to hear and pay attention to the Integration Council's recommendations. This has not to do with the local politicians; it has also to do with the arrangement of the Integration Council, and that there is no dynamic in the council. There is no progressive leader to portray the council. In addition, the members wait for input from the city council instead of being progressive and put forward proposals to the city council. There are no key issues for the Integration Council. What has to be taken into consideration is of course that the members are volunteers; they have a full-time job next to the Integration Council, and they are also active in the organisation or club they represent.

The Social Coordination Committee is a committee under Helsingør Municipality. It has existed since 1999, and its purpose is to gather all relevant actors on the labour market such as trades, industries, the public system, and employees' organisations. Inherent in the purpose is to raise a social awareness and improve circumstances for employees with e.g. reduced working capacity to continue working.

This committee has a budget on its own, and subsequently has power to decide projects and activities to be carried out. The level of activity seems high compared to the Municipal Social Housing Committee and to the Integration Council. First of all, it is an obvious conclusion that the differences in activity and outgoing enterprise is caused by one committee's budget and the two other committee's no budget situation. Next, the difference is likely to be seen in relation to the circumstance that actors representing the Social Coordination Committee are from trades and industries that per se have power, political and economic. Such actors do not represent the two other committees. This condition may also affect the outcome, as the city council probably is more likely to pay attention to a committee with political and economic power than a committee without.

The most obvious obstacle in relation to the Municipal Social Housing Committee and the Integration Council is that leadership is needed. The professionals need to take responsibility and support the start-up phase. Especially, the Integration Council needs to be given a greater role to make this project take root. But it will need a greater mandate to act on some of their ideas and also a political support. At this point the Integration Council does not have politicians' confidence.

A partnership between housing estate social workers, residents, tenants' democracy, the Municipal Social Housing Committee, the Social Coordination Committee, and the Integration Council would be very beneficial for all partners that take part in the process. The main issues are to consider how to combine and motivate interplay between the representative democracy and network steering in these three committees, and how to make network steering more democratic in the committees.

New institutions of governance

The Danish welfare society is founded on a decentralised and corporative welfare model in which the bottom-up perspective is immanent. Networks are generally open and democratic as for instance tenants' democracy (cf. Sehested 2002). The Danish urban and regional politics is carried out in between hierarchy and network. Often the state makes regulations and laws framing the local development. These regulations and laws are often oriented toward the content of how local politics should be performed which is seen as typical for the hierarchical way to steer (ibid).

The hierarchy is also present when it comes to the added significance of the representative democracy such as the tenants' democracy. Though residents are difficult to mobilise to participate in tenants' democracy, they still support the tenants' democracy as authority. Likewise, residents accept that city council, county, and government are the ultimate authorities to decide how the city and the country are to be ruled. There are of course disagreements about how these decisions are made and on what grounds but the city council's, county's or government's right to make a decision is never questioned.

In this respect, it is important to focus on the process between the mandate that individuals give elected individuals via the representative democracy, and the political solutions that the elected make. This process needs to take into considerations that individuals participate in new and more informal ways. The appeal for individuals to participate in informal forums is in the flexibility when to join a forum. Most residents do not want to be obligated to put in a steady and long-term commitment. This is not a particular feature describing residents in the neighbourhood, it is a much more common, societal feature nowadays. In this respect, the system has to be ready to meet individuals from this perspective. A tendency is that individuals living in socially vulnerable or deprived neighbourhoods are expected to participate in forums such as traditional tenants' democracy, political parties, clubs, organisations, etc. though the patterns for participation has changed. This seems paradoxical; why think that individuals living in these areas aspire to participate in such forums if individuals from other areas do not.

Hence, governance arrangements based on open, informal network in which actors can join in and out enjoying equal responsibility and respect need to be further developed. However, in order to developing these arrangements there has to be some professionalism involve, as professionals are the only persons to anchor a process and make sure the process is continuing. The implication of this is not that the arrangements have to have a hierarchical steering mode as horizontal steering of the arrangement partly sustained by professionals is more likely to be adequate. However, there are risks related to these of kind of arrangements if politicians are represented. In current arrangements it can be identified that when local politicians or bureaucrats are represented in networks, they can force their formal authority on the network, as the hierarchical way of steering still is very manifest. Hence, the development of governance is in need of new democratic principles and new democratic institutions that are to take into considerations that steering conditions are to be developed into network steering. The great challenge lies in developing mechanisms and structures so that they can hold all different groups, including immigrants, organisations and individuals with an interest in the neighbourhood.

An ethnic city councillor suggests an Information Desk to create a better dialogue between residents, especially immigrants, and municipality. He says,

"Well I have mentioned that we need some kind of information desk. So whenever there is something from the municipality then individuals can put forward a proposal to this office and then be guided how to move along in the system. I have suggested this, however the city council says that it is too expensive in salary and so on. And that is why they say no".

But these financial savings might in the very end become more expensive for the system than if there were made some investments in projects like this above-mentioned one. Lack of communication sustains individuals in their marginalised position, which costs the system much money every year. There seems to be a need for a more flexible approach how to organise things and loosen up this very bureaucratic thinking. The municipality could consider being more *preventive* in stead of acting when the damage is done.

Make space to the individual in the collective

Policies and programmes have been and to a large degree still is based on universal planning in the sense that one problem is solved by one solution no matter how the context or conditions are. However, identifying problems, challenges, and current solutions related to the neighbourhood indicate a need to move away from universal ideas and instead combine collective means to a broad defined framework in which there is space for contextual conditions. Solutions have to be distinct, but distinct solutions anchored in collective means and a collective framework.

Furthermore, it seems crucial that housing and social programmes replace the problem-identification-logic with a view on problems as constructive conflicts and challenges where there is no single, predefined solution but a solution that reveals during the process of tackling conflicts and challenges. When tackling conflicts and challenges it is important to acknowledge the variety of perspectives from residents, professionals, spiders and municipality on the neighbourhood and to bring these perspective into play instead of advancing one perspective. Solutions, planning, decision-making, and subsequently, governance arrangements have to recognise differences and make space for these differences.

Fighting stigma

Stigma problems are characteristic of the neighbourhood. Each housing estate is labelled as troublesome by media and individuals living outside the neighbourhood. The housing estates have described a range of problems in their efforts to have a share of the funds from the Urban Committee. In this respect, the housing estates contribute to create and sustain the label - troublesome. However, it seems difficult to avoid drawing attention to problems and hereby a stigma automatically is sustained in order to attract resources.

Though the starting point is related to stigma in order to attracting outside funds to a housing estate, it is possible to change a stigma situation. All the housing estates have as an ambition to remove the stigma, and efforts are inherent in most activities carried out on the estates. In this respect, Vapnagård has already done a good job to remove the stigma and draw attention to the capacities on the estate.

A main reason for why Vapnagård has managed to remove or almost remove the stigma is that Vapnagård has created a story about what the estate can offer the residents and the surrounding society. A successful branding of events and activities has removed the stigmatising story of the estate. Hence, stigma can be removed but it has to happen through the range of activities in the neighbourhood, and in this respect it is important to make so-called popcorns that can be boosted to become brands of the estate. The popcorns have to be small at the beginning for instance carrying out activities for few residents and making sure these activities are run successfully. It can be dangerous to aim for activities that cover most residents as such activities are less likely to be successful if there is a history of minimal participation from residents.

The popcorns are extremely important to story telling and when a word spreads among residents that positive activities have been going on, this story become self-sustaining at some point. This is what has happened on Vapnagård, as residents, professionals, the housing association, and the municipality keep confirming the story of how living on Vapnagård has improved to each other. As one of the informants says,

“For residents in general it does not make a difference that seniors are on a trip but when it becomes a part of the story of the housing estate and is launched as a success it makes a difference for the entire housing estate”.

This story telling is in a way capacity building as an awareness of possibilities of cooperation among relevant actors is present. Social capital is increased by actors' increased bonding and bridging to new actors, who sometimes are outside the housing estate.

In the story telling process housing estate social workers have a crucial significance. The housing estate social workers have to function as suppliers of the so-called popcorns and make sure that all the successful activities that are held reach media. In other words make sure that visible successes come out to the public. Hence, it is important that the housing estate social worker establish a cooperation to the local press and make sure that there is some sort of consensus about how to promote the housing estate yet telling stories that are relevant reading for people outside the housing estates. In this respect, it is important to remember that one negative story can shoot down a good story telling.

Transferable lessons

In this section, four transferable lessons are described. One lesson is courses for active residents, which is transferable because of the way a problem with lack of competencies to participate in tenants' democracy is defined and tackled. The focus of the course is to promote residents' democratic capacities, and the outcome is recognisable and seems successful. The second lesson is a renovation project as this project is an example of how to connect and bond residents and show them the potentials of community in terms of influencing and making decisions concerning the community and everyday life. The third lesson is a homework-coaching project, which successfully has managed to capture needs and preferences in the neighbourhood and subsequently to find solution that matches what users aspire. Finally, a transferable lesson is the Prevention Forum due to its identification of problems and the way these are tackled. With the forum a crucial network of teachers, social workers, community police, etc. is developed in which professional boundaries are almost overcome.

Courses for active residents

One of the most innovative capacities building initiatives is a course for active residents on Vapnagård. This course has been offered on a regular basis every year for about 10 years. Originally, the course was established as an investment for the future. The primary target group is residents on the estate who are active in the tenants' democracy as members of e.g. the section board or one of 11 local area boards.

Problem: On Vapnagård there is a need to promote and recruit residents' active participation in the tenants' democracy and in local initiatives and projects for the present as well as for the future.

Solution: The idea of the course is to offer competence building, knowledge, and information about possibilities and the formal framework for participation in a local democratic perspective. The intention is to bring democracy closer to the residents. To achieve this the local housing estate social worker took on the task to develop a professional course that could be offered active residents every year. This has made it possible continuously and simultaneously to update the knowledge of residents already involved in the tenants' democracy and to coach residents just starting to be active. Also it gives the participants a common platform for developing democratic skills and networks with other residents and local professionals. The course is developed and conducted in collaboration with section board members and professionals from the municipality, local institutions involved in the neighbourhood, the local vocational school (Helsingør Erhversskole), Helsingør Housing Association, and The National Federation of Housing Associations. Each of these actors has the task to contribute to the course with their knowledge and expertise. This includes providing information on the services and activities they are offering, which have interest and importance for Vapnagård. Themes like how to work on a board, including responsibilities and competencies, how to run meetings, and how to follow up on decision-making and solve conflicts are basic tools the course participants are given. The same counts for the local organisational set-up, administration, and financial framework. How to deal with complaints and conflicts between residents. Professionals and also volunteers present cultural and social projects and initiatives. The possible services from the community police officer and the housing estate social worker are also put forward. Laws on housing and the formal rules of the tenants' democracy including important updates are recurring themes. Services offered by the Social Service Department and contact

persons in the department are presented. Also IT is a theme. Participation in the courses has been in high demand and the courses continue.

Conditions: The project requires funding, as it has to be offered on a professional basis. This counts for every aspect of the course and includes the materials handed out, the premises, provision etc. And it is important that the individual participants do not have to pay for participation and that the course is held locally, preferably on the estate. It has to be offered as a coaching possibility, which is part of taking an active role on the estate. The course programme has to be designed to fit the local conditions and be relevant for local tasks and challenges. The course is conducted over a period of seven weeks for three hours on a weekday and there is an option of attending evening or afternoon classes.

Lesson: Utilise local resources in capacity building and training and offer courses located in the neighbourhood or on the estate.

Renovation projects

Rather comprehensive physical renovation projects have been conducted at both Vapnagård and Nøjsomhed and a major project is planned on Borupgård. To various degrees the planning processes have been used as capacity building among residents. This includes putting forward residents' suggestions, involving residents in decision-making, and encouraging residents to participate in democratic processes. The planning processes at Vapnagård have involved residents at the estate level, the local area level, the building or housing block level as well as the stairwell level. This capacity building in relation to physical renovation of the estate has created or improved a basis for starting projects and initiatives in others fields like recreation and social activities.

Problem: When run down housing estates emerge as an issue in Denmark in the 1980s, Vapnagård was one of the larger housing estates applying for special financial support to fund measures to overcome the problems. The estate had substantial building technical as well as social and image problems. But it did not qualify for support from the first programme in 1985. The reason for this was mainly that Vapnagård had never suffered from prolonged periods of rent losses due to empty flats, which was an important criterion employed for evaluating if an estate was qualified for support from the programme. So there was a need to develop a special solution to solve the problems on the estate. Also there was a need to turn the estate with 57 uniform grey looking housing blocks into a more varied urban area.

Solution: The section board in cooperation with the housing association decided in 1987 to start the planning of a renovation project for the estate in collaboration with the residents in the 11 local areas. The boards in the local areas got their own authority within an overall economic frame. Five different architect offices were called in to assist with the project. One was responsible for the overall plan. The plans for the renovation of the housing blocks in the 11 local areas, the outdoors and the building facilities for the local day-care institutions became the responsibility of the other four architects. The architects were assigned to conduct the planning independently with the participation of the local residents and in collaboration with the local boards. The aim of this procedure was to commit the residents to the project and to give them a voice in the process as well as to secure that the estate would get a new and a much more varied appearance in the future. There was a need to change the estate with 57 uniform housing blocks into a more varied urban area where the local areas got more individual. The implementation of the first part of the planned physical project started in 1991 and the last part of this major operation was finished in 1996. It turned out that the renovation project became part of a master plan for an ongoing improvement process of the housing estate, and the residents are involved continuously as responsible

partners in this plan of making the everyday life better for all residents. Furthermore, the project is not just about solving the problems about renovating the blocks. The project has also initiated a process the residents continue after the major renovation was done. In this respect, an initial informal way of participation has been transformed into formalised participation. And the ongoing process activates a large number of residents throughout the estate. Since the middle of the 1990s new renovation and improvement projects covering less comprehensive scopes have been developed and implemented.

Conditions: The project requires local willingness and capacity to engage in planning activities without knowing how the practical implementation of the plans can be financed. Basically, this means that local actors have to be able to take upon them the responsibility for meeting the challenge to create solutions to problems. The legal framework for the tenants' democracy opened this possibility and the residents were able and willing to make use of it. In this context it is important to note that there was an established practise of actively using the tenants' democracy before the planning project was initiated in the end of the 1980s.

Lesson: It is important to have goals for the future of the estate and to develop plans for how these goals can be reached even financial resources for realising the plans are not available. Residents' participation has to be continuously developed and practised.

Homework-coaching

In 2002 the city council in Helsingør decided to cut the budgets for teaching mother-tongue to ethnic minority children and for homework-coaching in the council schools. In relation to homework-coaching the argument for this decision was that there was no need for the offer any longer as attendance to coaching sessions at the schools were limited.

Problem: Homework-coaching is no longer offered the children attending the local council schools. This has the implication that children without coaching possibilities at home or elsewhere are at risk of being left behind in learning and school education. Citizens, including a 19 year old woman, decided to take actions as they suspected a need for homework-coaching on Vapnagård though the city council had another opinion.

Solution: A local department of Red Cross Youth was formally established for the first time ever in Helsingør. This department was used as an organisational basis for initiating a project to coach youngsters on Vapnagård with their homework, primarily aimed at children living on the estate. The housing estate social worker has supported the initiative with physical facilities on the estate and other actors have donated dictionaries, handbooks, and other basics. Besides, a young initiator and other young people from the Red Cross Youth, some adults on Vapnagård have also volunteered to do coaching. The number of children attending indicate the need of such a project, and it also indicates that housing estates may be better contexts for homework-coaching than schools, as the children are more likely to take advantage of the coaching while it is situated on their estate. The children attending are mostly from ethnic minority families. Also many of them are quite young, which means that they could have difficulties taking advantage of the offer if they had to go outside the estate where they are living. It is the intention to implement the same model for homework-coaching in cooperation with the housing estate social workers on Nøjsomhed and Borupgård.

Conditions: The initiative requires accommodations on the estate, volunteers able to do coaching and organising the activity and a budget for dictionaries, handbooks and other necessary materials.

Lesson: Offer homework-coaching on the estate close to where the children live.

Prevention Forum

Problem: Youngsters who need special attention and support due to social or family related difficulties. Youngsters without an adult to take care and pay attention to the young one's needs and problems that cause severe difficulties in schools, recreation centres etc. Youngsters who are at risk getting into criminal activities and intimidating others by their sometimes anti-social behaviour.

Solution: The Prevention Forum is established as a forum to deal with these youngsters' difficulties. The forum is an inter-disciplinary 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.

The forum is organised around the council schools in the municipality. The mini-forum is a local, coordinating 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.

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.

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

Conditions: The cooperation among the professionals depends on willingness and readiness to put behind professional boundaries, and to be willing to share information about a particular youngster. The sharing of information is not supposed to conflict with confidentiality, but it is important that confidentiality is not kept to an extent that the professionals are unable to communicate. Furthermore, it is crucial that there are real options and alternatives for the youngster, e.g. if there are family related problems and the youngster is better off living with other family members or at an institution, it is important that actions of placement are taken. Similarly, if a child needs to see a psychologist a waiting list cannot be a barrier.

Lesson: It is important that professionals are aware of their authorities and responsibilities, so they are aware of the possibilities to share information without risking the confidentiality they are obligated to keep.

Literature

Christensen, Gunvor; Vestergaard, Hedvig. (2002a). *Neighbourhood Governance in Vapnagård, Borupgård and Nøjsomhed. A Danish National Report*. Hørsholm: Danish Building and Urban Research. (working paper).

Christensen. Gunvor; Vestergaard, Hedvig. (2002b). *Neighbourhood Governance. Capacity for Social Integration. The Danish Mid-term Report*. Hørsholm: Danish Building and Urban Research. (working paper).

Rhodes, R. A. W. (1999). *Understanding Governance: Comparing public sector reform in Britain and Denmark*. Institut for Statskundskab. KU. Arbejdsrapport 17/1999.

Sehested, Karina. (2002) *How New Public Management Reforms Challenge the Role of Professionals*. In *International Journal of Public Administration* 2002. Vol 25, 1513-1537.

Socialpolitisk Redegørelse (2002). *De udsatte grupper. Fra kanten af samfundet til kernen i socialpolitikken – socialpolitik på brugernes præmisser*. Socialministeriet: Socialpolitisk Juridisk Center

Word list

English word/phrase	Danish word/phrase
Children and Youngsters Department	Børne- og Ungeforvaltningen
Department of Culture and Recreation	Kultur- og Fritidsforvaltningen
Social Committee	Socialudvalget
Development Section	Udviklingsafdelingen (Rådhuset)
Integration Council	Integrationsrådet
Housing association board	Organisationsbestyrelse
Housing estate social worker	Beboerrådgiver
Local board	Områdebestyrelse
Night Owls	Natteravne
Municipal Social Housing Committee	Det boligsociale Udvalg
Residents' House	Beboerlokale/Beboerhus
School committee	Skolebestyrelse
Section board	Afdelingsbestyrelse
The National Fund of Housing Associations	Landsbyggefonden
The Social Coordination Committee	Det sociale koordineringsudvalg
Urban Committee	(Regeringens) Byudvalg