

Who has the right to the Neighbourhood?

A case study of the revitalization of Grønlandskvarteret



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Abstract:

This report investigates gentrification in social housing through revitalization, in a socially burdened suburban neighbourhood called Grønlandskvarteret in the city of Aalborg, Denmark. The main research question the project seeks to answer is how the historical development of the neighbourhood has affected the current reputation of the neighbourhood, and whether the revitalization of the neighbourhood will lead to gentrification. In order to answer the first part of the research question, a document analysis of the historical development in the neighbourhood has been conducted. This has been done by looking at how the neighbourhood has been articulated in local newspapers from 1960-2020. To investigate the current reputation, local residents have been interviewed with the purpose of investigating their perception of the neighbourhood. To answer the second part of the research question, scenario building as a technique has been used, to create four different scenarios of how the future may look for Grønlandskvarteret based on the critical uncertainties high/low rent and good/bad reputation, which have been determined through a theoretical framework about the concept of gentrification, the document analysis and the interviews with residents. The research concludes that the bad reputation the neighbourhood got in the 1970's still affects the perception of the neighbourhood today. As some early signs of gentrification can already be seen in the neighbourhood, it is furthermore concluded, that the two scenarios most likely to happen may both lead to gentrification in different ways.

Dansk resume

Dette speciale undersøger hvorvidt et kvarterløft af Grønlandskvarteret i Aalborg vil føre til gentrificering. Kvarteret har i mange år haft et dårligt ry, og er blevet set som et socialt belastet område. Især området omkring Grønlands Torv, som primært består af almene boliger. Dette er det område der er brugt som case i dette projekt.

Problemformuleringen der bliver undersøgt, er i to dele. Den første del omhandler hvordan den historiske udvikling i området har haft indflydelse på kvarterets omdømme i dag. For at undersøge dette er der brugt metoderne dokumentanalyse kombineret med interviews med beboere i området. Dokumenterne der bliver analyseret er avisartikler fra lokale nyhedsmedier omkring området skrevet i årene 1960-2020. Den historiske udvikling viser, at hvad der ellers var planlagt som et banebrydende byplansprojekt – det største af sin slags på den tid, hurtigt skulle komme til at blive et socialt belastet område. Især i 1970'erne bærer avisartiklerne præg af overskrifter omkring vold, terror og bange beboere. Problemerne har især rødder i Højhuset på Grønlands Torv. På trods af utallige forsøg på at komme problemerne til livs, igennem boligsociale helhedsplaner og miljømedarbejdere indsat i området, vender problemerne tilbage i perioder. Dette kan tydeligt ses på den måde mange opfatter området på i dag, hvor det på sociale medier bliver beskrevet som forstadie til en ghetto og socialt belastet. De interviewede beboerne i området har dog ikke denne opfattelse af kvarteret, men omtaler alle bydelen positivt, og har altid været glade for at bo der. Størstedelen af beboerne føler sig særligt tilknyttet til området, idet de har boet der i mange år, og nogle også er født og opvokset i området. Mange af dem oplever dog at folk som ikke bor i området har en anden opfattelse af kvarteret end de selv har.

Den anden del af problemformuleringen omhandler hvorvidt et kvarterløft af Grønlandskvarteret vil føre til gentrificering. Dette bliver undersøgt igennem udformningen af fire scenarier delvist baseret på nogle af de interviewede beboeres udtalelser. Siden utallige indsatser før i tiden aldrig for alvor har slået igennem i en længere periode, tyder det på at kvarterets omdømme har meget at sige. Derfor er den ene usikkerhed i fremtiden netop dette. Nogle renoveringer af almene boliger i kvarteret er allerede blevet foretaget, og har resulteret i en stigning i husleje, hvilket har medført at mange tidligere beboere ikke har kunnet eller villet vende tilbage. Dette er også en af de faktorer som de interviewede beboere nævner som en vigtig faktor for om de vil vende tilbage efter renoveringerne. Derfor er den anden usikkerhed huslejeniveau. Ud fra dette er der levet produceret fire forskellige scenarier der giver et bud på hvordan fremtiden kan se ud for Grønlandskvarteret. Det konkluderes at især to scenarier er mest sandsynlige baseret på den nuværende situation i kvarteret, og at begge i en vis grad vil føre til gentrificering af kvarteret.

Acknowledgements

This master thesis has been written during the 4th semester of the master in Geography programme at Aalborg University. The thesis was written from 10th of August 2020 to 10th of November 2020. The overall theme of the thesis is gentrification in social housing in Denmark through revitalization of deprived suburban neighbourhoods with focus on the neighbourhood “Grønlandskvarteret” in Aalborg.

The research is a continuation of research conducted on the 3rd semester, which was spent as an internship at COWI A/S, where the author had the opportunity to work with quantitative data related to the case area. Some of the findings and conclusions from the previous research will be included in the preliminary stages of this thesis.

I would like to thank my supervisor Carla K. Smink for help, guidance and feedback during the process. I would especially like to thank her for her patience with me and support during a difficult time.

Apart from my supervisor, I would also like to thank my interviewee Mogens Rank, who has provided great insight and knowledge about several issues related to social housing through his work within the field for almost thirty years. Additionally, I would like to thank all the residents who has participated in interviews for providing their knowledge, opinions and concerns about the neighbourhood in general and about the ongoing renovations in the neighbourhood.

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1. Introduction

This project is a continuation of research conducted on the 3rd semester on the master in Geography programme at Aalborg University. The research investigated to what degree renovation of social housing along with rental tools can have an effect on the resident composition and rent level in social housing settlements, and whether something could be concluded about this using quantitative data. This was investigated through four cases of social housing settlements located in areas in Aalborg, that have a reputation of being socially burdened. The basis for the research was, that in Denmark around 17% of the population lives in social housing, and the sector accounts for around 20% of all housing in Denmark, hence the social housing sector is important for many people, and almost everyone will experience living in social housing at some point in their life, whether it is as a student, family or as an elderly (Andersen S. , 2019). The purpose of social housing cf. "*Almenboligloven*" (*Law about social housing*) §5 b is for social housing organisations to provide suitable housing for all those in need at a reasonable rent as well as to give the residents influence on their own living conditions (Thrane & Qwist, 2016). Because of reasonably cheap rent, the sector has been dominated by people with a low income, ethnic people and people on transfer payments from the state. In the recent years however, in an attempt to avoid having too large a concentration of these groups gathered in one area, different political initiatives on the subject and tools have been taken into use to put an end to particularly vulnerable areas. These tools for example include flexible renting – a tool that gives housing associations permission to give requirements to new residents about documenting either having a job or being young and under education in order to be offered a dwelling. Another more extreme tool is that of combined renting, where all applicants on transfer payments from the state are straight up rejected without any further ado (Andersen S. , 2019). Furthermore, the government publishes a "ghetto list" every year. Along with these rental tools, a lot of apartment blocks built in the 1960's and 1970's, are being renovated these years, both because of the buildings being in bad conditions but also in an attempt to attract more resourceful people to the areas and create a social mix in the resident composition. These initiatives are likely to exclude some people from living in certain areas, since renovations will often lead to an increase in rent, which makes the renovated apartments too expensive for some people, and the rental tools will also automatically exclude some people, because of the certain requirements used when appointing housing (Andersen S. , 2019).

This is also the case for the settlements investigated in the previous research, which focuses on four settlements built in the same time period in two socially burdened areas in Aalborg. The purpose was to investigate how a settlement that is renovated differs from one that is not in relation to rent level, resident composition, ethnicity, moving frequency among other things (Andersen S., 2019). This was investigated through the use of statistical data consisting of two large data sets from the Danish Building and Housing Register (BBR) and the Central Person Register (CPR) visualized and analysed by using GIS. The conclusion to the research was, that the statistical data do display some clear differences, especially between the settlements that have been renovated and the one that has not, however it was also difficult to conclude something about why there are these differences based on quantitative data alone. The most recent case of renovation has a significantly higher rent than the rest of the settlements despite no significant difference in sizes of the apartments and location (Andersen S., 2019). This case – the case of Thulevej, was initially meant to be the focus of this research, since it was the one that stood out the most, however it could also be derived from the research, that renovation of a single settlement might not have the biggest effect in a socially burdened area, if the goal is to attract a different group of people to the neighbourhood. In that case a revitalization of the entire neighbourhood is probably a better strategy. Exactly this is happening in the neighbourhood of Grønlandskvarteret, and in other neighbourhoods in Aalborg as well. The settlement on Thulevej is located in Grønlandskvarteret, and since this was the case that stood out the most, it was decided that the focus of this research should be on the revitalization of Grønlandskvarteret investigated through the use of mixed, but mainly qualitative methods.

2. Problem Analysis

In Denmark, social housing represents around 20% of the housing market, and around 17% (equivalent to around 1 million people) of the population lives in this type of dwelling. In many ways, social housing differs from the rest of the housing market, as the purpose is to ensure good, attractive housing everywhere in Denmark, for everyone in need hereof (Domea, u.d.). Social housing includes both family housing (which everyone can apply for), student housing (where you have to be under education) and housing for the elderly, hence almost everyone will experience living in social housing at some point in their life. This makes it a highly influential type of dwelling, which affects a large group of people (Social- og Indenrigsministeriet, 2016).

Social housing is owned by non-profit social housing organisations with the purpose of “*providing suitable housing for everyone in need hereof at a reasonable rent level, as well as giving the residents influence on their own living conditions*” (Social- og Indenrigsministeriet, 2016). As the quote states, the resident democracy, where residents have influence on their own living conditions is an important characteristic for the social housing sector in Denmark, and it is what makes the social housing sector in Denmark unique compared to similar sectors in some of our neighbouring countries such as Germany, Norway, Sweden etc. (Andersen & Fridberg, 2006) In most of the countries, there are rules about including the residents, however in Denmark the residents have some sort of autonomy and resident elected department boards that can make decisions and disposes over some of the resources that are provided through rent (Andersen & Fridberg, 2006).

Even though the primary task of the social housing sector is to secure a satisfactory housing supply for everyone in society, the development in the Danish society has resulted in other tasks where the social housing sector should also solve social tasks in the housing supply. This development includes an increased social divide in the cities, with a high concentration of ethnic minorities and low income groups in certain social housing areas which have affected these areas to a degree, where the social housing organisations in collaboration with the municipalities have been involved in solving social problems and integration work in these areas (Andersen & Fridberg, 2006).

2.1. The origins of the social housing sector

The origin of the social housing sector in Denmark can be traced back to 1912, where the first non-profit housing associations were formed (Nielsen, 2019). It can be argued however, that the initiatives to improve living conditions for especially people in the lower class of society, all started long before this. In 1853 several thousand people died as a result of the cholera epidemic in Copenhagen, and the cause for this is said to be extremely poor living conditions and bad hygiene, especially in the most vulnerable part of the population in the city (Nielsen, 2019).

After the second world war, there was a large demand for housing in order to address the needs of the large generations that were born after the war. As a result of this, construction of social housing culminated, especially during the 1960's and the beginning of the 1970's (Boligøkonomisk Videnscenter, 2015). New construction in the social housing sector, at the same time, became an important link in the state's ambitions to rationalise and develop housing construction towards a greater degree of industrialisation. Thus from the beginning of the 1960's, it was a demand, that in order to get financial support from the state, all new construction had to be built as prefabricated buildings (Andersen & Fridberg, 2006).

2.2. Aalborg as the growth dynamo of Northern Denmark

In vision 2025, which is a vision for the future of Aalborg, it is stated, that cities all over the world have become essential motors for growth, and that Aalborg is a part of this development. Urbanization strengthens Aalborg's potential for growth, but also necessitates a focus on the city's development, since growth is a condition for welfare (Aalborg Kommune, 2013). During the last 30-40 years Aalborg has transformed from an industrial, working class town to a knowledge and cultural city. The transformation that Aalborg has undergone has meant that the city's identity has also evolved, and that Aalborg today is an attractive student city with culture and student housing all over the city among other along the harbour front and in the city centre. This has also enhanced private investments in the city and contributed to Aalborg's continuing growth (Aalborg Kommune, 2019). Aalborg is a part of both a national and also international city hierarchy and competes with other cities in Denmark such as Aarhus and Odense, in order to attract labour, companies and financial resources, but to a high degree also competes with international cities. Aalborg has the potential to compete in both the national and international urban competition, however not alone, but as a part of City Region Aalborg,

as the centre of northern Denmark (Aalborg Kommune, 2013). “Together we stand stronger” has become a common mantra in the work with developing northern Denmark, and Aalborg serves a special role as the dynamo and driving force for growth in the whole region (Aalborg Kommune, 2019).

One of the key points for Aalborg Municipality in “Planstrategi 2019”, is that the population of Aalborg Municipality has overall growth, which means growth both in Aalborg, but also in the other cities and communities within Aalborg Municipality, as the different cities offer different things and appeal to different parts of the population (Aalborg Kommune, 2019). One of the ways the municipality wants to ensure this growth is through a strategic development of the housing market, focusing on setting a new tone in regards to distribution, location and the quality of the housing stock in order to secure diversity in terms of both resident composition, housing prices, different types of housing and ownership (Aalborg Kommune, 2019). It is a goal to create urban growth amongst other things through development of housing. Aalborg stands out by having a large supply of social housing, thus housing in different price ranges, and it is a goal to continuously being able to offer this. Furthermore there has to be a balance between private housing and rental housing, which includes social housing (Aalborg Kommune, 2019), in order to secure social sustainability. The strategy and different initiatives to insure this, can be seen on figure 2.1.



Figure 2.1: Types of initiatives to ensure social sustainability by securing diverse residential areas. (Planstrategi 2019)

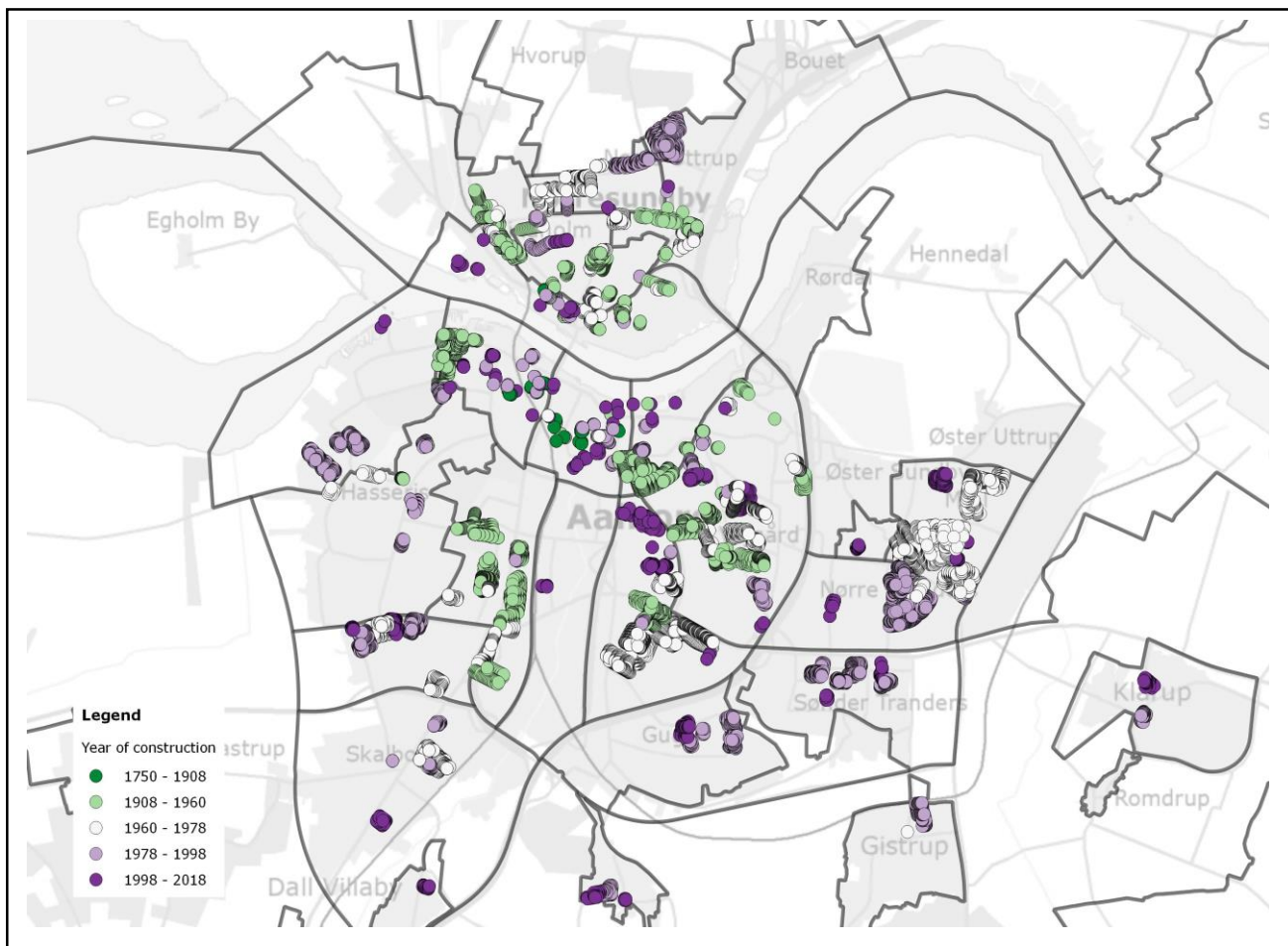
As can be seen on figure 2.1, one of the initiatives the municipality highlights, is “neighbourhood lift” or revitalization, with Grønlandskvarteret as an example. This validates the choice of case for this research. As can also be seen, this type of effort is categorized as an area with big challenges and little growth, which indicates that efforts are necessary.

Aalborg is a city in rapid development, and new construction of housing can be seen all over the city along with renovations of existing housing. But even though the intentions are good, with trying to ensure housing for everyone, it seems that the general opinion amongst the population, is that this is not what is actually happening. Recent articles state, that too much have been

built in Aalborg over the last couple of years, and that Aalborg tops the record of empty homes. This pushes the landlords to use alternative methods such as free rent and massive marketing on social media, in order to occupy the empty apartments (Christensen, 2020), (Møller S. , 2020), (Møller & Jeppesen, 2020). By looking at some of the comments for the articles on social media, there is a general resistance from the people towards all the new construction, and most of the comments are negatively loaded. One user for example writes: *"It's such a miss, for our otherwise charming city, which is now plastered with ugly, empty concrete blocks."*, and the replies for this comment is *"Agree. Clearly not a single green spot must be left untouched"* and *"Agree. With newly built apartments in Aalborg for 8,12,16 and up to 23 million for a single super liebhaver, things should go wrong. And with new rental apartments on the wrong side of 8-9000 kr, it cannot surprise anyone."* (Appendix XIII). Another user writes: *"It may also be related to the sick prices, and the fact that buildings are so close, that one has to go through the neighbour's apartment, to get into one's own"* (Appendix XIII). A lot of the comments also revolves around the fact that the city council should listen to the inhabitants, which can be seen through for example this comment: *"Well, if the City Council LISTENED to us inhabitants, you would have known long ago ☹, but you continue building, put an end to it, it's way too much now"* (Appendix XIII). The comments all paint the same picture of resistance towards the development within housing construction and does not agree with the intentions from the municipality. The general opinion is that there are way too many buildings, they are built too closely, and the rent is way too high. A user suggests that: *"From the start, they could avoid using wildly expensive architects for wildly special tasks, it also costs the box and is added to the rent. I personally give a shit about the name of the architect, the place where I should live."* (Appendix XIII). It seems, that what the municipality considers as cheap rent, does not correspond to that of the general public, and this is desired higher than new fancy apartments. However, it is also acknowledged that people may tend to comment more negatively on social media, and that some positive views on this matter may be lost. Apart from new construction, a lot of apartments are being renovated these years as for example with the example mentioned earlier of Grønlandskvarteret. This also has the potential to lead to a rapid increase in rent, which will make it more difficult for people to find cheap housing, and the purpose of social housing with it being for everyone, as mentioned in the introduction, is thus challenged.

2.3. Social housing in Aalborg and Grønlandskvarteret

27% of all housing in Aalborg is social housing and can be found in all neighbourhoods within the municipality. A map of social housing in Aalborg can be seen on map 2.1. This map is included from the previous research conducted on the 3rd semester, as described in the introduction chapter 1. Since this map was created using sensitive data made available by the company where the author did an internship, the author does not have access to it anymore, and it has therefore not been possible to recreate it.



Map 2.1: Social housing in Aalborg by year of construction (Andersen S., 2019)

The map shows, that a lot of the older dwellings are located in the city centre, while the dwellings located in the suburbs are constructed from the 1960's or later. It can also be observed that there are higher concentrations of social housing in some neighbourhoods than others, apart from the city centre, which will naturally have a high concentration of this type of dwelling.

Grønlandskvarteret, which is the focus of this research is among the five neighbourhoods in Aalborg with the highest concentration of social housing corresponding to 54% of all housing in the area. This can be seen on figure 2.2.

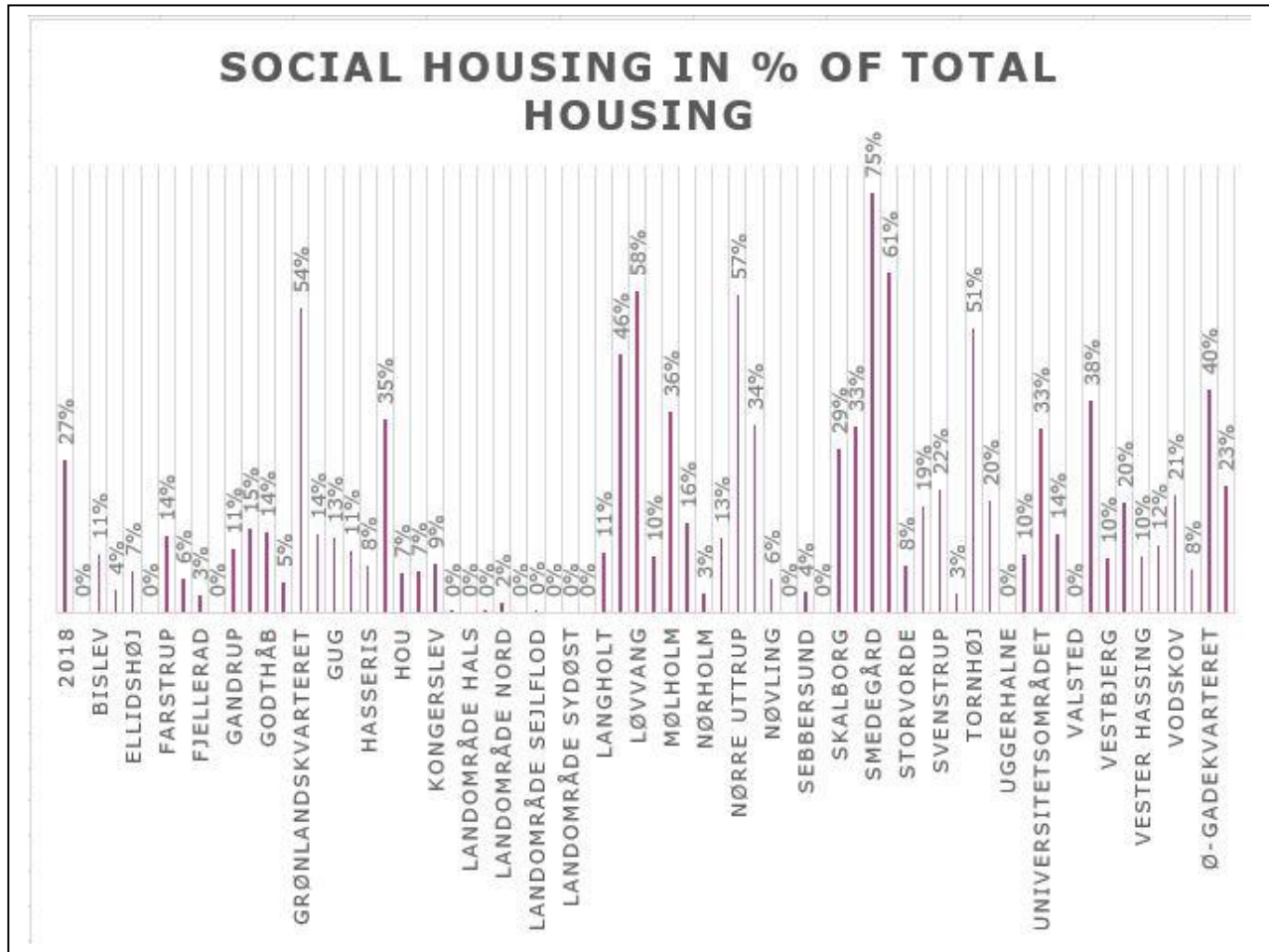


Figure 2.2. Percentage of social housing in Aalborg Municipality by neighbourhood. The data is retrieved from Aalborg Municipality's web yearbook and shows data from 2018. (Aalborg Municipality, 2018), (Andersen S. , 2019).

The other neighbourhoods with a high concentration of social housing based on this figure, also correspond to what the map shows.

The neighbourhood “Grønlandskvarteret” is a (former) deprived suburban neighbourhood located in the south east of Aalborg around 3 km from the city centre. This can be seen on map 2.2.



Map 2.2: Location of Grønlandskvarteret in Aalborg.

The neighbourhood consist of mixed housing such as high-rise buildings, lower apartment blocks and houses, but the area focused on in this project, is the area around “Grønlands Torv” – a local centre, which consist mainly of social housing, in the form of apartment blocks and a high rise building in the centre of Grønlands Torv. Photos of the neighbourhood will be presented in chapter 6.1 as an introduction to the analysis. Many of the apartment blocks have been or is undergoing renovation, in order to make the neighbourhood more attractive. In 2015, the housing area around Grønlands Torv was mapped by Aalborg Municipality in collaboration with the housing associations in the area, because of a general concern for the development of the area, with the purpose of creation a holistic social housing plan (boligsocial helhedsplan) (Aalborg Kommune; Netværkskoordinatorerne, 2017). This resulted in the housing associations in the area – AlabuBolig, Vivabolig, Lejerbo and PlusBolig, taking initiative to cooperate with Aalborg Municipality around a thorough, systematic study of the area. The results of the mapping showed, that it is a socially vulnerable area, which should be monitored, and where

social initiatives should be implemented, through for example local commitment in order to support a positive development of the area (Aalborg Kommune; Netværkskoordinatorerne, 2017). The vision is, that this positive development shall happen through new construction, renovation projects and improved public transport, which will hopefully start a positive spiral in a neighbourhood that is often overlooked (Kræmmergård, 2016).

However, the area has not always been considered vulnerable. The development of the neighbourhood began in the 1950-1960's, where educational institutions, high-rise buildings, lower apartment blocks and houses were built, and a "new city" emerged on "bare ground", and at that time, it was the largest urban project in the province (Asp-Poulsen, 1997). In "Aalborg viser vej" no. 2 1960, this new urban development project was described as:

"An interesting urban planning experiment, which in its kind is the largest so far, that has been carried out in any provincial town in Denmark, has this summer found its end in Aalborg. It is the creation of the new Th. Sauers Vej neighbourhood in the south-eastern outskirts of Aalborg Municipality, the first stage of a new suburb, that will eventually accommodate 10.000 inhabitants.

The new suburb is Aalborg's first and one of the province's few "planet cities". The new suburb has not emerged in continuation of existing buildings or around enclaves of former "relocation buildings", but partly so to say created on bare ground, partly designed as a small town for itself with most of the common urban institutions, which naturally belongs to a society of this size." (Asp-Poulsen, 1997 pp. 8-9)

As the quote states, the development of the new area was groundbreaking at the time. The development of the area began in march 1957, where the City Council approved an application from three housing associations – Fjordblink, Limfjorden and Lejerbo, that wished to construct apartments in the area now known as Grønlandskvarteret, and that was when construction truly kicked off (Aalborg Municipality, u.d.), (Asp-Poulsen, 1997). However, the development of the neighbourhood has been farther along the way, than what is most commonly known (Kjærgaard, 1994). During the 1920's there was a big population growth, which meant that Aalborg Municipality had to explore new development opportunities, in order to meet this population growth (Aalborg Municipality, u.d.). In 1925 Aalborg City Council decided to buy the manor estate "Sohngårdsholm" and in 1933 Aalborg City Council started acquiring considerable areas of land south, east and west of the city, in order to secure the city's future development

opportunities (Aalborg Municipality, u.d.), (Kjærgaard, 1994). P.C. Knudsen wrote about the development potential for Aalborg in 1933, where he stated that:

"For a number of years to secure the city's development potential, Aalborg City Council has purchased considerable areas south, east and west of the city. Already many years ago it bought the Mariendals Mill on Hobrovejen. Later, the manor "Sohngårdsholm" was bought, which in its time was called Filsted Ladegaard and belonged to Aalborghus. A large area of Sohngårdsholm's land will be laid out this year for gardens for unemployed married men, who will have the gardens tax-free for the first three years; later, a smaller annual fee is paid to the municipality." (Kjærgaard, 1994, p. 12).

It was not however until the 1950's, that development truly began in the area during a time period of ten years from 1951-1961, where several institutions and housing was built. People started moving into the finished apartment blocks in the neighbourhood In 1958, even though several facilities were still missing, such as shops and public transportation. According to a resident, who moved to the area from the very beginning, the monthly rent was rather expensive, as it was higher than a weekly salary. Even though everything was chaos in the beginning, the neighbourhood was popular, among other things because of the social bonds among the residents, and the neighbourhood continued developing (Asp-Poulsen, 1997). In 1963 the landmark and one of the buildings that dominate the area, the high-rise building often referred to as "Højhuset" on Grønlands Torv was finished, but in spite of housing shortage, the interest in living there was practically non-existing. "Højhuset" was originally planned to work as a kollegium for both handicapped people and other people as well, to avoid it becoming a ghetto – a place characterized by social problems, but people were afraid that living there would be on the grounds of the handicapped people, which resulted in the lack of desire to live there (Asp-Poulsen, 1997).

"Højhuset" became headquarters for many of the social problems the neighbourhood experienced during the 1970's and 1980's, among other things drugdealing, violence, vandalism and gangs. Furthermore, "Højhuset" was also used as a jumping place for people who wanted to commit suicide (Asp-Poulsen, 1997). A picture of "Højhuset" as it looked like in 1965 can be seen on picture 2.1. It has since been renovated twice.



Picture 2.1. Højhuset on Grønlands Torv as it looked in 1965 retrieved from Aalborg Stadsarkiv.

The bad reputation that has stuck to the neighbourhood since the 70's and 80's seems to still be a problem today, and the neighbourhood still faces some social problems. Through the anonymous social media Jodel, people's opinion of Grønlandskvarteret has been investigated, and the verdict is clear. Most of the people who has commented on the post perceives the neighbourhood as unsafe, on level with Aalborg East, a lot of social problems etc. One user for example writes: *"I perceive it as a place for the socially disadvantaged. It is actually a little unsafe too – both due to alcoholics and stabbings and other incidents, that do not come to the public's notice. I've even lived there for several years. It's definitely not a place I want to move back to."* (Appendix XII). Another user mainly thinks the problems are with "Højhuset" and Thulevej, and writes: *"Højhuset and Thulevej you should stay away from. My impression is, that the rest is okay. But all roses have thorns."* (Appendix XII). Another example of how this can be seen, is that within the last couple of years, a security guard is standing guard in one of the grocery stores close to Grønlands Torv. Through social media the general impression it has left the author with, is that

people from the outside perceive the neighbourhood as socially burdened, however people living here seem pretty happy with it, and has lived here for many years, however as mentioned earlier, social media might tend to be dominated by people with negative comments as opposed to positive comments, which is why this could be interesting to investigate further, through in-depth interviews with residents living in the neighbourhood.

In an attempt to solve some of the social problems in the neighbourhood and give it new life, Aalborg Municipality in cooperation with the four previously mentioned housing associations are working together to improve and make the area more attractive, both through renovations of existing buildings, but also through new construction and better public transport. All in all, this seems positive, however the people living in the area are concerned about the increasing rents, and some are also of the opinion, that the new apartments are badly designed, not taking people's wishes into consideration. Furthermore, several residents question whether all the new apartments can even be rented out, and are opposed and sceptical towards these constructions. As renovations are not only happening in Grønlandskvarteret, but in different neighbourhoods all over Aalborg, which results in increasing rents, this makes you wonder, whether you are just moving the problem with vulnerable people around until the next area is renovated. Along with many housing associations also using rental tools, to control which residents are offered a dwelling, this makes you wonder, whether the revitalization of suburban neighbourhoods will lead to gentrification. Some indicators of gentrification can already be identified in the neighbourhood, such as sorting in the residents, displacement of residents, changing the identity of the neighbourhood, and the conversion of 1-bedroom apartments into larger apartments, which applies to a different target group. These factors are interesting to investigate further and has led to the following main research question.

3. Research Question

Through the introduction and problem analysis, different interesting themes related to revitalization of social housing have arisen, which have resulted in the following main research question:

How has the historical development in Grønlandskvarteret affected the current reputation of the neighbourhood, and what are the chances, that revitalization of the neighbourhood will lead to gentrification?

In order to answer the main research question, different methods will be used. For the first part of the research question it is relevant to use document analysis to explore the historical development, and interviews to explore the current situation. For the second part of the research question, it is relevant to combine the findings from the interviews, with scenario building, in order to explore possible future scenarios for the neighbourhood. This will be explored further in the following chapters.

4. Project design and methodology

The aim of this chapter is to determine and present the research design and methods used for this project. With any research, it is important to consider what philosophical worldview and what specific methods are relevant in order to answer the research question. This research seeks to investigate whether the revitalization of a deprived suburban neighbourhood in Denmark consisting mainly of social housing will lead to gentrification. To investigate this, a social constructivist approach is chosen along with mainly qualitative methods, which will be presented in the following sections.

4.1. Theory of science

The theory of science chosen for this project is social constructivism. This approach is chosen, both because it is not new to the author, but also because it complements the research question. Within this approach, it is accepted that there is not one single truth to be revealed, but different constructed truths based on perspective. As both the concepts of gentrification and scenario building are complex concepts, that are difficult to define, because of many different perspectives and theories about the concepts, social constructivism is useful, when reviewing these. Kind of like the tale with the blind men and the elephant, where each researcher can only see a small part of the whole based on individual perceptions.

Ontologically within social constructivism, it is believed that reality is created by different actors based on their perceptions about different phenomena (Pedersen, 2012). It is believed that both social phenomena and physical phenomena are socially constructed. Social phenomena through social processes depending on culture, which is why it is difficult to categorize some phenomena as universal. It is accepted that there are some physical objects that exist, as for example gravity, however when it is stated that physical phenomena are socially constructed, it is with the belief that physical objects do not have any meaning until they are articulated by people (Pedersen, 2012).

Epistemologically it is believed within social constructivism, that the world can only be experienced subjectively, since everyone has a preconception about something, which can be both directly or indirectly through for example interactions between people, history or culture. When taking a social constructivist standpoint, it is believed that no neutral objective knowledge can be produced, due to everyone having preconceptions about something

(Pedersen, 2012). Because of this knowledge is considered as discursive, and research is not considered as objective, because it will always be in someone's interest. Knowledge gained is determined by social factors through the importance of language, and the meaning this has in how we understand reality. Knowledge will always be impacted by a human factor, for example when choosing the methods to use in research, this will often reflect the authors personal interests (Pedersen, 2012). The different ontological and epistemological positions within social constructivism can be seen on figure 4.1.

	Epistemology "Knowledge about the world"	Ontology "The world itself"
Social phenomena	1. Knowledge about social phenomena are socially constructed.	3. Social phenomena are socially constructed.
Physical phenomena	2. Knowledge about physical phenomena are socially constructed.	4. Physical phenomena are socially constructed.

Figure 4.1: Positions within social constructivism based on (Pedersen, 2012)

Social constructivism is relevant to use in this research, because when using methods such as interviews and scenario building, it is accepted that there is not correct solution or truth to be found, but rather the purpose is to explore different possible future outcomes based on uncertainties.

4.2. Case study

This research has been planned out and conducted as a qualitative case study in continuation of a quantitative case study conducted on the 3rd semester on the master programme in Geography at Aalborg University, where four settlements of social housing were investigated through statistical data as described in the introduction chapter 1 (Andersen S. , 2019). Yin 1994 defines a case study as *"an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident."* (Yin, 1994). There are many different types of case studies with different purposes. A case study can for example be about exploring what is going on in a place, about explaining a phenomenon or be descriptive among other things (Yin, 1994). According to Helle Neergaard 2007, there are two main approaches when selecting a case. It can either be theory-driven or data-driven, however always with a purpose of what results one wish to achieve

(Neergaard, 2007). This case is immediately neither, although it is a continuation of a previous study, which was data-driven, and therefore it can be argued that this case study is also data-driven. It can also be argued, that it is both exploratory, explaining a phenomenon and descriptive, as it explores the situation in Grønlandskvarteret, explains the phenomenon of gentrification and describes the historical development in the neighbourhood. However, as this research is a continuation of previous research, the case was chosen naturally based on the results from this. There was an interest in the case however, long before the work on both the thesis and the previous research began, based on a personal interest from the author, and fortunately it was possible to investigate this during the internship. The author lives in the neighbourhood herself, and has lived there almost her entire life, the past three years in one of the social housing complexes in the neighbourhood. The interest in using this particular case as the basis for this research arose already in April 2018, where residents in the settlement where the author lives, received a letter from the housing association administering these particular apartments, about the introduction of flexible rental in the department. In particular, the letter read:

We have worked for several years, across all housing organizations in Aalborg SØ, to maintain a varied resident composition in the residential area. Therefore, together with Aalborg Municipality, we have made the waiting list more flexible in the hope that the resident composition will be similar to Aalborg Municipality's average.

To be considered for a home, you must now document that you have a job or is young and under education. There will also be an opportunity in the agreement to get a home without having been on the waiting list in advance (Vivabolig, 2018).

Through further investigation the author discovered that the tool called flexible rental is used in most of the housing associations in the neighbourhood. The author initially thought that this would exclude certain people and questioned whether this was ethical, however it also started the interest in investigating what effects this can have on the neighbourhood. Along with a lot of renovations and new construction happening in the neighbourhood at the same time, the interest to investigate whether these different initiatives will lead to gentrification of the neighbourhood was born. The concept of gentrification has also been of personal interest for the author for a long time, since attending a lecture on the topic on the 6th semester of the bachelor in Geography at Aalborg University. Even though this research is based on a personal interest and

close to home for the author, it is attempted to avoid bias and set aside the authors personal believes by being reflective, methodical and critical.

4.3. Methods

In order to answer the research question about whether the revitalization of Grønlandskvarteret will lead to gentrification, different methods have been used throughout the project. Since this research is a continuation of a quantitative study conducted on a previous semester, the methods used within this research is mainly qualitative, however, some of the statistics from the previous research and GIS will be included to highlight some of the characteristics of the area.

4.3.1. Interviews

For this research qualitative interviews have been conducted, in the form of semi-structured interviews with an expert – referred to as MR - who has worked within social housing for almost thirty years, and with eight different residents living in the neighbourhood. According to Longhurst 2010, semi-structured interviews can be defined as *“a verbal interchange where one person, the interviewer, attempts to elicit information from another person by asking questions. Although the interviewer prepares a list of predetermined questions, semi-structured interviews unfold in a conversational manner offering participants the chance to explore issues they feel are important.”* (Longhurst, 2010). Interviews can be described as a conversation with a purpose, and is a great way of gathering information and a common way to gain knowledge about people's different situations, opinions and experiences (Tinggaard & Brinkmann, 2010). The advantage of semi-structured interviews as opposed to structured or unstructured interviews is, that there are some prepared questions beforehand, however it gives both the interviewer and the interviewee the flexibility to move between topics if something interesting derives from the conversation (Longhurst, 2010).

Interview with M.R.

M.R. was interviewed on the 9th of February 2019. The purpose of the semi-structured interview with M.R. was to gain knowledge about social housing in general and some of the issues connected to the field, but also knowledge about the neighbourhood, since the interviewee both live in the area, and has also worked within social housing for different housing associations that operate in the neighbourhood, as well as other neighbourhoods with similar issues such as Aalborg East and Gellerup Parken in Aarhus. Currently he works as an operations manager (driftschef) at PlusBolig which is a housing association that administers social housing in the

neighbourhood, and will be responsible for some of the future renovations that has started during autumn 2020. The interviewee has held the same job title at other housing associations. The interview was planned as an exploratory semi-structured interview with questions prepared beforehand. The interview started out as such, however the interviewee was very talkative and eager to share a lot of knowledge and viewpoints, so about halfway in the interview it turned out as more unstructured, and a lot of knowledge not necessarily related to the neighbourhood was also shared, however even though it is not directly related, a lot of different issues that the author might not have thought of herself was shared. The interview was recorded and has afterwards been transcribed and can be seen in appendix II along with the interview guide in appendix I.

Interviews with local residents living in Grønlandskvarteret

Eight residents living different places in Grønlandskvarteret has been interviewed for this research to gain knowledge, insight and opinions about the neighbourhood in general, the revitalization, the rehousing process and changes in the neighbourhood from the resident's perspective. The interviewees were chosen by ringing doorbells in the neighbourhood, and it was decided to focus on residents living in either dwellings that have recently been renovated or is currently in the process of being renovated. The residents were contacted during a weekend, because it was estimated that there was a bigger chance that people would be home. The goal before contacting the residents was to reach a varied group of people in relation to age, gender, education level, type of dwelling, number of years living in the neighbourhood, and both residents who plan to return after the renovations and residents who do not plan to return, in order to get as broad a perspective as possible.

Approximately 30 doorbells were rung in order to find residents for the interviews. Due to the global pandemic covid-19, nine residents were not comfortable participating. Eleven were not home – or did not open the door. One more interview was planned, however the resident had misunderstood the scheduled time for the interview and had left town. It was not rescheduled, because it was estimated that the resident would have a difficult time understanding the questions, due to her not understanding neither Danish nor English very well, which was unfortunate, since it would have been preferable to have had more residents with a different nationality than Danish. In spite of this, it has still been possible to find a varied group of residents who were willing to participate, and since there are a lot of similarities across their answers, it was

estimated that the interviews with this group of residents portray a representative picture of the situation in Grønlandskvarteret. The interviewees were promised anonymity beforehand to make them more comfortable to speak freely, and all interviews except for the one with the Turkish resident was conducted in Danish, since that was preferred by the residents. Prior to the interviews the residents were informed about the topic of the project and the case area, however many of the residents had a tendency to not think about the whole neighbourhood when answering the questions, but more the specific place where they live. The following is a description of each resident.

Resident 1:

22-year old woman of Danish decent. She has a high-school education (EUX business), but is currently on sick leave. She lives by herself in a 2-bedroom apartment on Peter Bruuns Vej, and has lived there for 2,5 years, but has always lived in the neighbourhood. Her apartment is scheduled to be renovated in spring 2021, and therefore she will be rehoused for up to a year, but she immediately plans to return after the renovations have finished. The interview was conducted on the 9th of October 2020.

Resident 2:

82-year old woman of Danish decent. She is now retired, but has previously worked as a home carer/helper. She lives by herself (due to her husband being dead and her children having moved out many years ago) in a 3-bedroom apartment on Roald Amundsens Vej, and has lived there for 45 years. Her apartment has partly been renovated, with a new balcony and new windows (some of the others also with new kitchens and bathrooms), however there was no need for rehousing. The interview was conducted on the 11th of October 2020.

Resident 3:

57-year old woman of Danish decent. She is on early retirement, but has previously worked as a clinic assistant at a dentist. She lives with her husband who works as a smith and their two daughters on Carl Rothes Vej in a 4-bedroom terrace house (rækkehus) with a small garden. They have lived there for 21 years, however both the interviewee and her husband have lived different places in the neighbourhood since childhood. Their house is scheduled to be renovated starting in November 2020, and they will therefore be rehoused, but have already decided

to return after the renovations are finished. The interview was conducted on the 11th of October 2020.

Resident 4:

52-year old woman of Danish decent. She has an education as a social- and healthcare assistant, but has been on sick leave with stress for approximately 6 months. She lives on Peter Bruuns Vej with her husband and their son (previously also their daughter) in a 4-bedroom terrace house, and has lived in their current dwelling for 16,5 years, but has lived almost her entire life around Grønlands Torv and Peter Bruuns Vej. Their house is scheduled to be renovated in spring 2021, however they are not returning after the renovations are finished, but are currently looking to buy a house outside of the city. The interview was conducted on the 11th of October 2020.

Resident 5:

55-year old man of Danish decent. He has a university degree and works as an engineer. Resident 5 is married to resident 4, and therefore also lives on Peter Bruuns Vej and has lived there for 16,5 years in their current house, but was born and raised in the area, so he has lived in the neighbourhood almost his entire life. The interviews with resident 4 and 5 were conducted separately, without any of them having seen the questions beforehand and without being able to hear each other's answers, so even though they thought they would say the same things, they provided different inputs. It was clear by the answers provided by resident 5, that he has a higher education level. The interview was conducted on the 11th of October 2020.

Resident 6:

22-year old woman of Danish decent. She has an education as a sales assistant and works in Aalborg Airport. She lives on Peter Bruuns Vej in a 4-bedroom terrace house with her boyfriend who works with trade in an office. They have lived there for approximately 1 year. The resident has grown up in the neighbourhood and wanted to return to a quieter place, after having lived in the city centre. Their house is scheduled to be renovated some time during 2021, and they do not immediately think they will return after the renovations are finished, in spite of having had a lot of doubts about it. The interview was conducted on the 13th of October 2020.

Resident 7:

79-year old man of Danish decent. He is now retired but has worked for 40 years at DSB and with women's football. He moved to Grønlandskvarteret in 1965 (55 years), and has lived there ever since in different places – first on Diskovej, and now he lives on Peter Freuchens Vej with his wife (who is also retired, but has previously worked in a grocery store) in a 3-bedroom apartment. Their apartment has been completely renovated. They previously lived in a different bigger apartment on the same street, and the one they live in now, they were offered, because the renovation was already completed before they started renovating their old apartment, so they have in a sense been permanently rehoused. The interview was conducted on the 15th of October 2020.

Resident 8:

33-year old woman of Turkish decent. She is currently a student at Aalborg University about to finish her master's degree. She lives on Roald Amundsens Vej in a cooperative apartment (andelslejlighed) with her husband who works as an EMT at Falck, while studying at the same time, and their 1-year old son. She has lived there for 5 years. Their apartment is not renovated, since it is their own responsibility, however they live right in the middle of the other renovated apartments in the neighbourhood, and have experienced the changes. The interview was conducted on 19th of October 2020.

Prior to the interviews, an interview guide was developed and divided into different themes that the author wished answers, which made it easier to compare the answers in the different interviews. The interviews were recorded and afterwards transcribed, and can be seen in appendix III-XI.

4.3.3. Document Analysis

In order to answer the first part of the research question about the historical development of the neighbourhood, document analysis has been used as the primary method.

Document analysis is a very broad method that can be used in many different ways for different purposes. Bowen 2009 describes document analysis as "*a systemic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents – both printed and electronic*" (Bowen, 2009). According to Lynggaard 2010, document analysis is perhaps the most common and most used method within the social

sciences, since documents are almost always included somehow in empirical research (Lynggaard, 2010). Document analysis is often used in combination with other methods, as is also the case of this research, however research can also be based purely on document analysis (Lynggaard, 2010). In this research, the purpose of the document analysis is to gain insight in the historical development that has been going on in Grønlandskvarteret since the first people started moving into the area in 1958 and until today. To do this, it is important to consider which types of documents are needed. Lynggaard 2010 defines a document as “*language, that is fixed in text and time.*” (Lynggaard, 2010), and Bowen 2009 describes documents as “*text and images that have been recorded without the researcher’s intervention.*” (Bowen, 2009), which supplement each other. There are many different types of documents, depending on how documents are defined. However even when choosing a narrow definition of documents, there is still a big variation of what documents can be seen as. This includes newspaper articles, newsletters, memoirs etc., which are the main documents used in this research. A broader definition of documents could also include different visualizations such as photographic material and maps (Lynggaard, 2010), which can be an advantage for geographers, and which will also be included in the research, however not in this part of the analysis, as the focus is on the development of the neighbourhood.

When using document analysis, a distinction is made between primary, secondary and tertiary documents (Lynggaard, 2010). The main documents used in this research are secondary documents in the form of newspaper articles written about the neighbourhood from ca. 1960 until today. These articles used have been found by visiting the local archive, where they have gathered all articles written about the neighbourhood, with the exception of newspapers from the current year. These have been supplemented with the book “Grønlandskvarteret I Aalborg – en registrant” by Marianne C. Kjærgaard, which can be described as a bibliography of literature written about Grønlandskvarteret from 1951, when the planning of the neighbourhood started up until the winter of 1993 (Kjærgaard, 1994). These types of documents are chosen, since the articles provides a picture of the conditions and events that happened in the neighbourhood at a given time, and can be helpful in determining how the reputation of the neighbourhood was both at that specific time, and how it has developed up until today.

To supplement the articles, the book “Grønlandskvarteret – fra herregårdsmarker til bolig- og institutionsområder” by Henning Asp-Poulsen has been used as well. This book can be described as a kind of memoir and is based on a “memory workshop” titled “*Think if the past disappeared*”.

The book includes both historical facts, but is also highly based on stories from residents who have lived in the neighbourhood, some from the very beginning.

4.3.3. Scenario Building

Scenario building as a method has been chosen for this report with the purpose of answering the second part of the research question regarding whether the revitalization of Grønlands-kvarteret will lead to gentrification of the neighbourhood in the future. This is a question connected with different uncertainties and can be difficult to predict, which is why the development of different scenarios can be useful to shed light on different outcomes following the revitalization of the neighbourhood. This technique with different scenarios is also in line with the theory of science chosen for this project, since within social constructivism there is not one single truth to be found, but different constructed truths based on for example social and historical processes. Scenario building is not a new technique for the author, who has worked with it on a previous semester project related to another local development project in Aalborg regarding the opening of Østerå.

Scenario building in its contemporary form is a relatively new method. According to Bradfield et. al. scenario planning has been around for more than 30 years, during which multiple techniques and methodologies have been developed (Bradfield, Wright, Burt, Cairns, & Van Der Heijden, 2005). As there is no consensus about methodology, characteristics and definitions there is a lot of confusion connected to the field, and according to both Bradfield et.al. and Bishop et.al. this have resulted in what can be described as a “methodological chaos”, that is unlikely to disappear, since scenarios are often developed based on practical reasons rather than theoretical (Bradfield, Wright, Burt, Cairns, & Van Der Heijden, 2005), (Bishop, Hines, & Collins, 2007). According to Bradfield et.al., 2005, a lot of the confusion connected to scenario building has to do with different origins of different techniques within the field and contradictory opinions in different literature (Bradfield, Wright, Burt, Cairns, & Van Der Heijden, 2005).

Scenarios can be difficult to define because of its various forms and approaches. According to Bishop et al. 2007, a scenario can be defined as *“a product that describes some possible future state and/or that tells the story about how such a state might come about.”*, however more than two dozen other separate definitions of scenarios can be found in literature within this field

(Bishop, Hines, & Collins, 2007). Hansen and Larsen 2014 based on a definition from Millennium Ecosystem Assessment 2005, for example defines scenarios as *“plausible and often simplified descriptions of how the future may develop based on a coherent and internally consistent set of assumptions about key driving forces and relationships.”* (Hansen & Larsen, 2014) and Moriarty et al. 2005 define it as follows: *“A scenario can be regarded as a story about the way the world might turn out tomorrow ... Such a description needs an extended analysis of current and historic trends and events in order to develop a realistic prediction.”* (Moriarty, Batchelor, Abd-Alhadi, Laban, & Fahmy, 2007). Even though the definitions are different, they do not contradict one another, however they are all relevant for the scenarios that will be developed for this research. As well as there are many different definitions of scenarios, there are also many different approaches to working with scenarios. According to Bishop et al. 2007, there are at least 8 different techniques of how to do scenarios with different underlying starting points, processes and outcomes, providing up to 23 different approaches. For this research it is not necessary to elaborate on all of the different techniques, only the one used. The author has decided to use the GBN matrix approach for this research, which is possibly the most recognized technique within the field – at least according to Bishop et al. where it is stated that *“While the GBN technique is an excellent one, it is regrettable that it has so swept the field, that most practitioners do not even know that it is only one of more than two dozen techniques for developing scenarios.”* (Bishop, Hines, & Collins, 2007).

The GBN matrix approach is part of an approach called “Dimensions of uncertainty”, and has been the go-to scenario technique since it was popularized by Schwartz in 1991, however it was developed already in the 1970’s by Pierre Wack (Bishop, Hines, & Collins, 2007). The GBN approach is based on a matrix with two dimensions of uncertainties, where the outcome is four different cells that represents four different scenarios with four different combinations of the two critical uncertainties. The critical uncertainties are often found through different driving forces related to the research (Bishop, Hines, & Collins, 2007). In this research the critical uncertainties for the scenarios will be identified through the analysis of interviews, combined with the theory about gentrification. Since the purpose with the scenarios is to investigate whether the revitalization of Grønlandskvarteret will lead to gentrification, this is important to have in mind, when determining the critical uncertainties. As stated in chapter 5.1. there are certain conditions that have to be present for gentrification to occur, and these will be taken into account when identifying the critical uncertainties. After the critical uncertainties are determined

they will be put into a matrix as figure 4.1 where each square will represent one scenario, and will be given a name according to the future they might bring about.

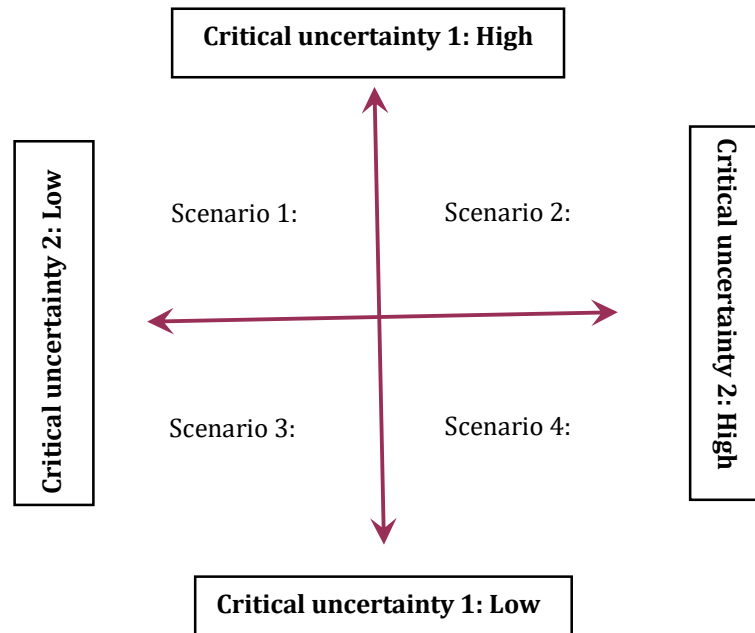


Figure 4.1: Matrix of critical uncertainties inspired by (Bishop, Hines, & Collins, 2007) and (Hansen A. M., Designing through Scenarios, 2018)

When working with and producing scenarios, it is however not enough to state the approach and technique. According to Börjeson et al. it is also important to define the typology of the project. Typology is about what the goal is to get out of the scenarios (Börjeson, Höjer, Dreborg, Ekvall, & Finnveden, 2006). Based on Amara 1981, Börjeson et al. states three different typologies to looking at the future – predictive, explorative and normative futures, with two underlying categories each (Börjeson, Höjer, Dreborg, Ekvall, & Finnveden, 2006). These can be seen on figure 4.2.

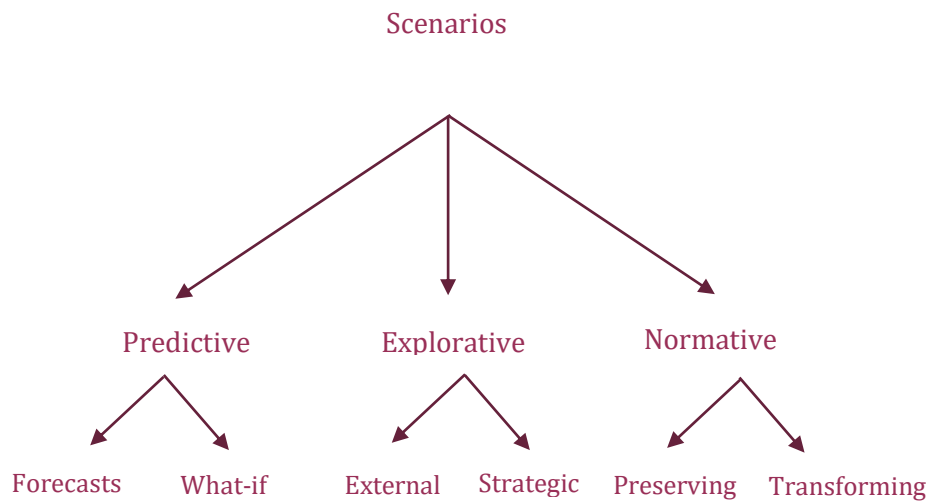


Figure 4.2.: Typologies for scenarios based on (Börjeson, Höjer, Dreborg, Ekvall, & Finnveden, 2006)

The typology chosen for the scenarios in this research is predictive scenarios with the subcategory of forecasts. Predictive scenarios are about what will happen in the future, and the scenarios are about what is likely or probable to happen. These types of scenarios are often self-fulfilling, and it is expected that by doing something, something specific will happen (Börjeson, Höjer, Dreborg, Ekvall, & Finnveden, 2006). These scenarios are often made based on historical facts and trends, with the assumption that the system is not going to change in the time frame looked upon. Under this typology, the two underlying categories are “forecasts” and “what-if” scenarios. Forecasts are about what will happen, if things go as they are in the present – what is likely to happen based on the current trends. What-if scenarios are about what will happen if a certain event happens (Börjeson, Höjer, Dreborg, Ekvall, & Finnveden, 2006). Forecasts are relevant for this research, since it fits well with the methodological approach chosen, and with the methods used in the analysis, which will result in determining critical uncertainties.

5. Theory

5.1. Gentrification

The concept of gentrification has been debated amongst scholars, researchers etc. for more than fifty years, however according to Clark, 2005, a lot of basic questions about the term and in particular the process of gentrification still remain unclear and up to debate, since there are many different definitions and opinions about what gentrification is, and what the root causes that lead to gentrification are (Clark, 2005). In several articles British Marxist sociologist Ruth Glass is credited with having been the first to use the term gentrification in 1964, where she described a new unusual process that she witnessed in the areas of London:

“One by one, many of the working class quarters of London have been invaded by the middle classes – upper and lower. Shabby, modest mews and cottages – two rooms up and two down – have been taken over, when their leases have expired, and have become elegant, expensive residences. Larger Victorian houses, downgraded in an earlier or recent period – which were used as lodging houses or were otherwise in multiple occupation – have been upgraded once again. Nowadays, many of these houses are being subdivided into costly flats or ‘houselets’ (in terms of the new real estate snob jargon). The current social status and value of such dwellings are frequently in inverse relation to their status, and in any case enormously inflated by comparison with previous levels in their neighbourhoods. Once this process of ‘gentrification’ starts in a district it goes on rapidly until all or most of the original working class occupiers are displaced and the social character of the district is changed.” (Glass, 1964, p. xviii)

According to Clark 2005, it is however careless to assume, that this is the origin of the phenomena, because he argues, that earlier descriptions of the process had been described by Neil Smith, such as the “Haussmannization of Paris”, “brownstoning” in New York City, and “whitepainting” in Toronto (Clark, 2005), (Lees, 2015). Sometimes other terms are also used for more or less the same process such as “neighbourhood revitalization“, because some are uncomfortable using the term gentrification (Lees, 2015). Lees 2015 defines gentrification based on the Dictionary of Human Geography, where it is described as follows:

“The process of gentrification is often similar to that of invasion and succession. A few gentrifiers obtain properties in a relatively run-down condition within a small area and improve them,

thereby increasing the attractiveness of the area to others who would prefer such a location, so that eventually the entire area (often only a few streets) changes its socio-economic status, and property values are substantially enhanced..." (Lees, 2015).

When discussing gentrification, it is inevitable not to include Hamnett's tale of the blind men and the elephant. This emphasizes the importance of context and perspective when dealing with complex issues. The blind men that only touches part of the elephant each shows, that you can only have a partial understanding of a phenomenon, without being able to see the full picture (Hamnett, 1991). The debate in Hamnett's article revolves mainly around two different theories about gentrification, known as the production versus consumption debate. One is that of Neil Smith, a structuralist Marxist and his rent-gap theory. This theory suggests that gentrification can have different consequences for the housing market. If gentrifiers obtain properties the value will be devaluated and a rent-gap can develop. According to Smith, this theory can explain the investments in the cities. On the opposite side is David Ley, a liberal humanist, whose theory is about the change in labour and the structure of production, which has triggered the changes in consumption in the new service class. Because of this, the residential demands have also changed (Hamnett, 1991). Hamnett attempts to do an integrated theory of gentrification based on different theories reviewed in the article. He argues that both the social restructuring emphasised by Ley and the rent-gap theory by Smith are partial elements in explaining the process of gentrification. It is argued that both gentrifiers and gentrifiable areas are essential to the process, since gentrification can not occur if there are no one to gentrify an area, but it can not occur either if there are no areas to gentrify, which is why both are essential (Hamnett, 1991). According to Hamnett, there are four requirements for gentrification to happen on a larger scale. These are a supply of suitable areas, a supply of potential gentrifiers, attractive central inner city environments and also a preference for the inner city. Gentrification will only occur if there is both an inner city preference by the new class and if a rent gap exists (Hamnett, 1991). This can be seen on figure 6.1.

	Rent gap exists	No Rent gap exists
No potential gentrifiers	No gentrification	No gentrification
Supply of potential gentrifiers exists		
No inner city demand	No gentrification	No gentrification
Inner city preference by a section of the “new class”	Gentrification	Gentrification?

Figure 6.1: Conditions for gentrifications based on (Hamnett, 1991)

According to Clark 2005, it does however not matter where or when: *“Gentrification is a process involving a change in the population of land-users such that the new users are of a higher socio-economic status than the previous users, together with an associated change in the built environment through a reinvestment in fixed capital. The greater the difference in socio-economic status, the more noticeable the process, not least because the more powerful the new users are, the more marked will be concomitant change in the built environment. It does not matter where, and it does not matter when. Any process of change fitting this description is, to my understanding, gentrification.”* (Clark, 2005).

The original understanding of gentrification has evolved since the term was first coined. Where it was originally understood as the revitalization of low-income neighbourhoods overtaken by the middleclass in central city locations, a broader understanding of the term was developed in the 1980’s where the term was linked to the processes of spatial, economic and social restructuring (Lees, 2015). Gentrification could for example be seen as a visible spatial component in regards to for example redevelopment of waterfronts, residential developments, fashionable shopping districts etc. from which new types of gentrification has emerged, such as tourist gentrification (Lees, 2015). According to Clark 2005, gentrification can no longer be narrowed down to an inner city process. It occurs in many other places as well, both suburbs and rural districts. He also questions why gentrification normally is confined to the rehabilitation of unmaintained buildings, and argues that new buildings replacing demolished buildings could also be considered as sites of gentrification (Clark, 2005). He argues, that the problem with gentrification is not so much about conceptualizing it, there is more a need for addressing the *“systematic inequalities of urban society upon which gentrification thrives.”* (Clark, 2005).

Gentrification has become a global urban strategy, often referred to as for example revitalisation, renewal, redevelopment etc. instead of gentrification legitimized by the goal to become a global city, that is attractive, creative and in competition with other cities (Clark, 2005) – just as is the strategy for Aalborg in the planning strategies from the municipality (chapter 2.2). Clark 2005, goes as far as to describing gentrification as “colonialism at the neighbourhood scale”, and when gentrification do take place, it involves replacement of tenants rather than displacement (Clark, 2005). Another new interesting term that has developed, and can also be related to Aalborg, is that of “studentification”, which refers to a similar process where social, environmental and economic changes are effected by a large number of students invading the cities, especially cities with popular universities. In this case, the role of gentrifiers are seen as the universities, hence institutional gentrifiers instead of individual gentrifiers (Lees, 2015).

5.1.1. Gentrification and global urban competition

Gentrification today must be seen in the context of globalisation, whether the emphasis is on capital or whether it is on culture or both (Atkinson & Bridge, 2005). According to Saskia Sassen 2001, cities have gotten a new role because of a globalisation of the economy, which leads to a distinct degree of gentrification in larger cities. Her thesis about the global city, which is primarily about the development in global cities like London, Tokyo and New York is, that these cities have become global centres which control a network of financial transactions. However, even though the thesis is mainly about metropolitan cities, it is also directed towards the development that has happened in other cities (Sassen, 2001). An important point in the thesis is the restructuring in businesses and the economic growth that can be seen in a lot of places, while at the same time a lot of countries has turned into knowledge societies, which have created new social structures (Sassen, 2001). This is also the case in Denmark, where the development has gone from a production society towards a change to the service sector and now to a high degree a knowledge society. These new types of professions are however also contributing to an increased degree of inequality which have resulted in an increased polarised social structure in the cities (Sassen, 2001). These economic changes have changed the labour market in almost all cities in the western world, that have experienced a deindustrialization since the 1950's (Nørgaard, 1996). According to Sassen, the changes in the labour market has led to an increased concentration of “top level management” in the cities, which means that there are both more people with a high education, but also more people with a low or no education. This has led to

a physical transformation of many cities and a change in the population – hence gentrification. Hamnett 2013 is critical towards this thesis because there is a lack of clarification about what social polarisation is characterized by. Instead he believes that the increased level of higher education has led to a professionalization rather than a social polarisation and that the expansion of “manager-jobs” represent the new middleclass (Hamnett, 2013). His study however only focuses on people with jobs, and the people without jobs are not taken into account, and in this case there will not be any signs of polarisation, as there perhaps would be if unemployed people were taken into account (Hamnett, 2013). Even though globalisation and urban competition is happening on a large scale, it can have effects on a smaller scale, where in can lead to gentrification happening in cities. Atkinson and Bridge 2005 argues, that what is happening at a global scale, can be seen in small urban areas, and that the impacts of gentrification are likely to be biggest particularly in cities where there has been a significant historical shift from manufacturing to the service sector (Atkinson & Bridge, 2005). Urban competition has also had its intake in Danish planning, where it is a goal for many larger cities to have a strong position in the global competition in order to attract jobs, businesses, people etc. One of these cities is Aalborg, which over the last 30-40 years has undergone an enormous transformation from an industrial city, to a knowledge and culture city (Aalborg Kommune, 2019)

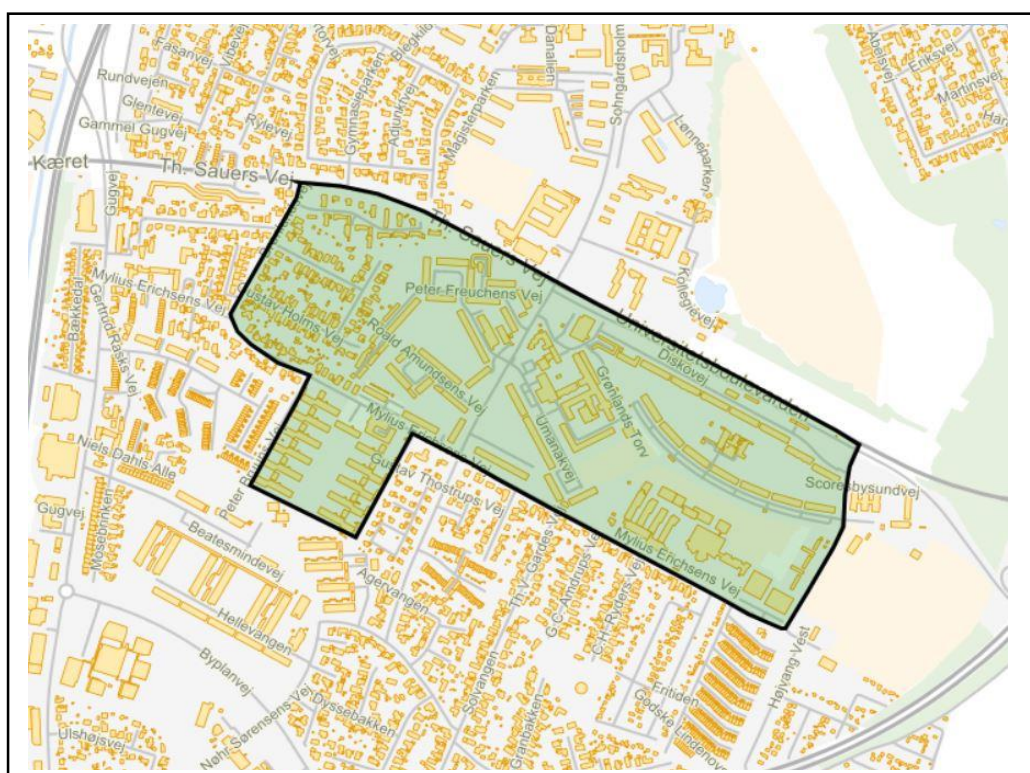
For the past at least twenty years, gentrification is a term that has also been part of the debate in a danish context. According to Larsen and Lund Hansen 2009, the types of dynamics that are related to gentrification has been present in danish cities for a long time, even though the phenomenon has only been identified recently in a danish context (Larsen & Hansen, 2009). The process have however become part of the global economy and can therefore take place on different scales, both through national and international investments, and transform large areas of cities. An example of this is given by Larsen and Lund Hansen, who mentions harbourfronts – in particular the harbourfront in Copenhagen, however also in other cities (Larsen & Hansen, 2009). This example also translates to Aalborg, where the harbourfront has been totally transformed over the last couple of years, going from one of the busiest industrial areas in Aalborg to now a cultural oasis by the water (VisitAalborg, 2020). Gentrification is not something that necessarily happens accidentally. It is a strategy that is often used within urban policies and urban planning to make the cities stand stronger in the global competition, which is what often leads to urban renewal policies. (Larsen & Hansen, 2008).

6. Analysis

6.1. Introduction to the case area Grønlandskvarteret

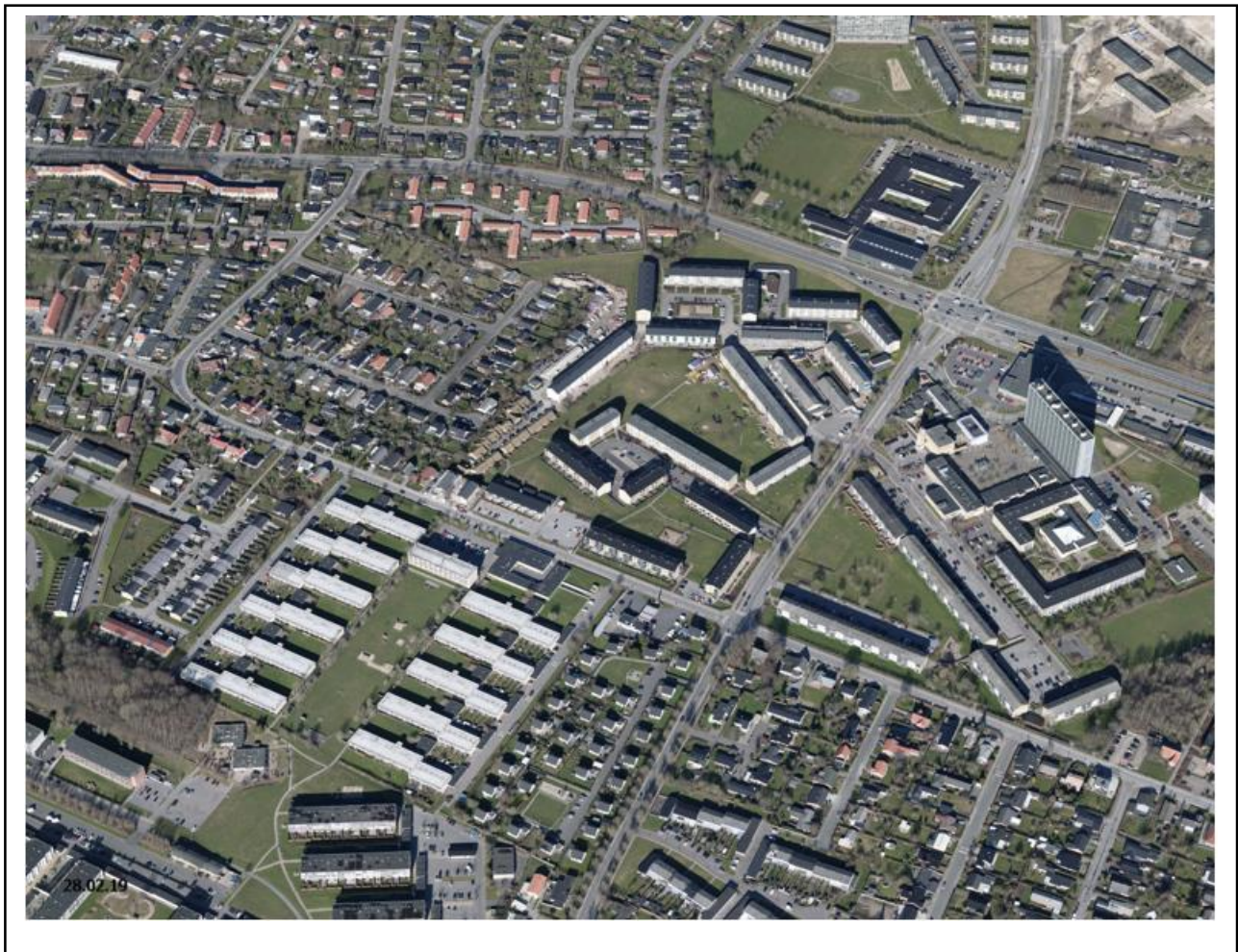
The purpose of this introduction is to give the reader a visual understanding of the neighbourhood that is the case of this research. The chapter will consist mostly of photos taken by the author accompanied with small descriptions, and will be based on the authors own observations and experiences.

As mentioned in the problem analysis chapter 2.3. Grønlandskvarteret is located in Aalborg SØ approximately 3 km from the city centre of Aalborg. The neighbourhood houses around 12.000 inhabitants according to the most recent numbers from Aalborg Municipality (Aalborg Municipality, 2020). The area consists of mixed housing, however the case area in this research is limited to the area around Grønlands Torv, which consist mainly of social housing. The case study area can be seen on map 6.1.



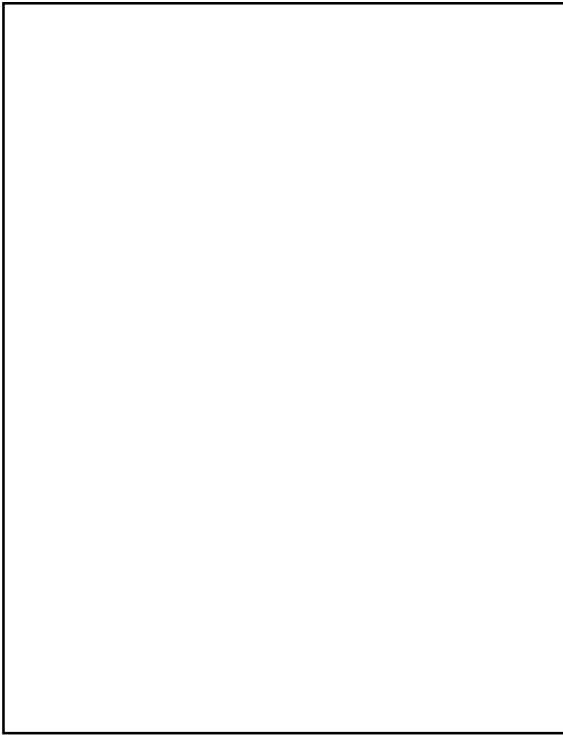
Map 6.1: The case area around Grønlands Torv made from Aalborg Municipalities online mapping tool.

From the air, the area can be seen on picture 6.1. from skraafoto.dk.

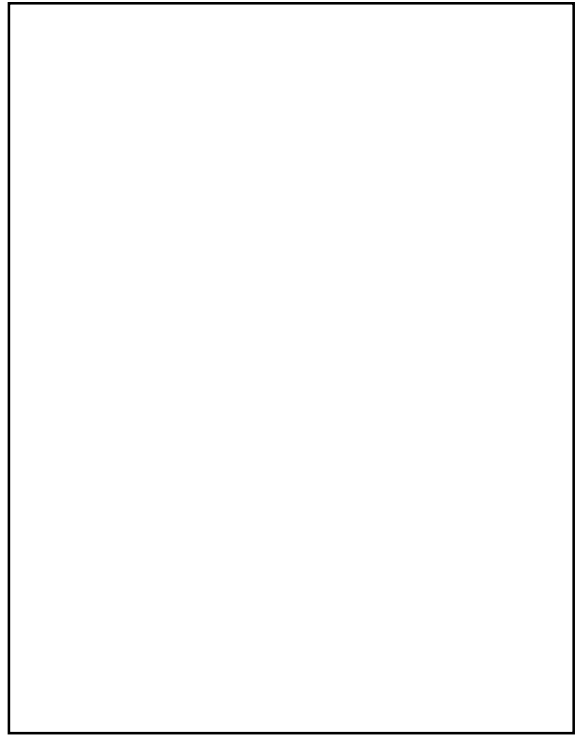


Picture 6.1: The case study area of Grønlandskvarteret from skraafoto.dk

The neighbourhood is in rapid development, and in many places construction is going on these years, both with renovation of social housing and construction of both student housing, social housing and private housing on the opposite corner of the high-rise building on Grønlands Torv. Grønlands Torv can be characterised as the local centre in the neighbourhood, and consists apart from the high-rise building of different amenities such as a fitness centre, grocery shops, physio therapist, pizzeria an outdoor stage and Hans Egedes Church. Pictures 6.2. and 6.3. shows the area of Grønlands Torv.

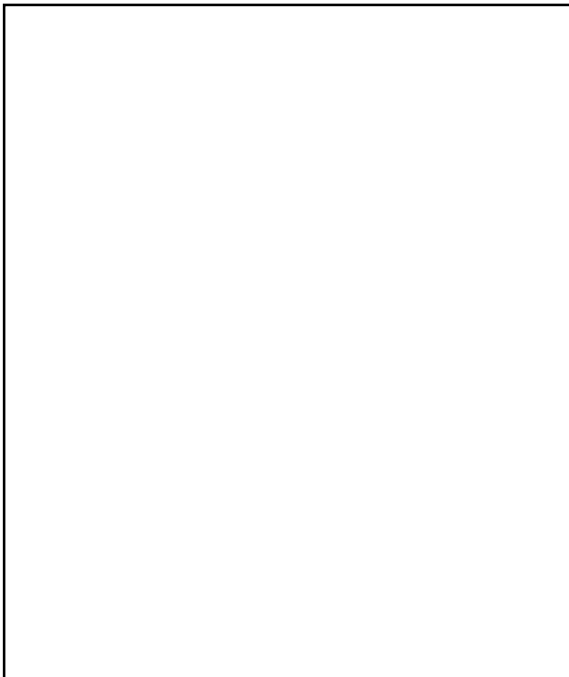


Picture 6.2: Hans Egedes Church with Højhuset in the back

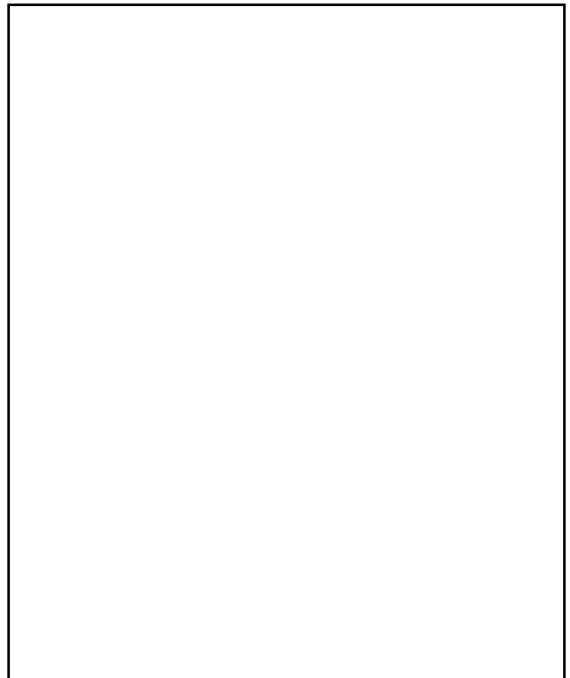


Picture 6.3: The high-rise building on Grønlands Torv

The most recent renovations that have been finished is on Peter Freuchens Vej. On one side of the road Vivabolig has a department where windows and doors have been renewed, and on the other side of the road, AlabuBolig has a department that has been completely renovated during the past three years. These can be seen on pictures 6.4. and 6.5.

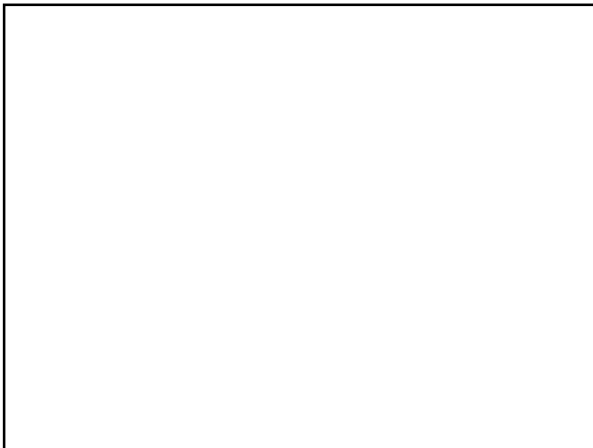


Picture 6.4: Peter Freuchens Vej – Alabu Bolig



Picture 6.5: Peter Freuchens Vej – Vivabolig

Apart from the already finished renovations, more renovations are scheduled over the next few years. Among these are PlusBolig's department on Peter Bruuns Vej, Carl Rothes vej and C.P. Holbølls Plads, and Alabu Bolig's department on Umanakvej and Ivigtutvej. These settlements are in bad conditions at least exteriorly, and a renovation is much needed. These can be seen on pictures 6.6. and 6.7.

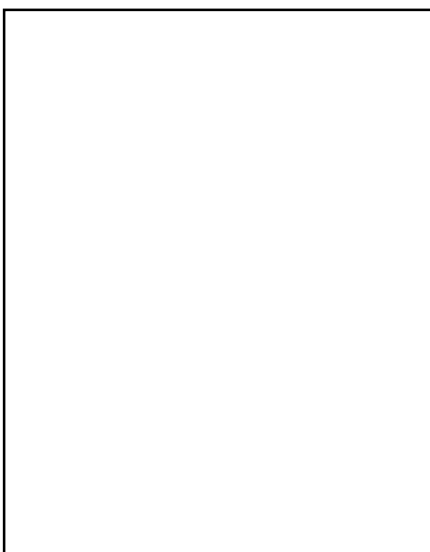


Picture 6.6: Umanakvej

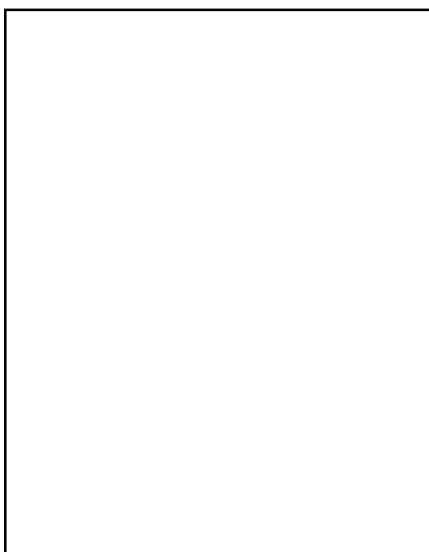


Picture 6.7: C.P. Holbølls Plads

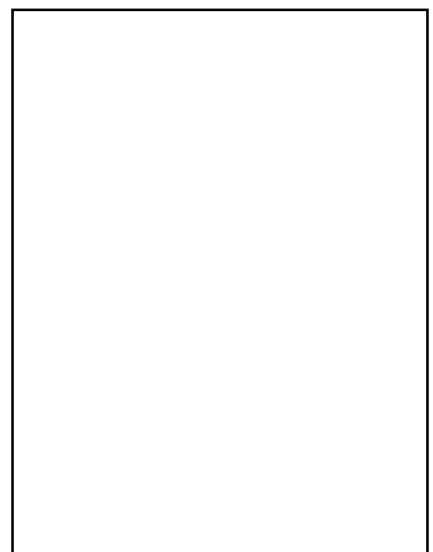
Apart from renovations of social housing in the neighbourhood, new construction is moving along. On the corner lot opposite Grønlands Torv, another high-rise building with student housing, social housing and private housing has started construction, and in "Golfparken" the new residential area "Parkbyen" is well on its way. This also consist of both private housing and social housing in the buildings of the old Aalborg Teknikum – Later Aalborg University. This can be seen on pictures 6.8., 6.9. and 6.10.



Picture 6.8: Parkbyen



Picture 6.9: Construction of Parkbyen in the back



Picture 6.10: Lektorgaarden

In general, the neighbourhood is attractive with a lot of green areas in between the apartment blocks of social housing. There are many playgrounds, good transportation opportunities with three different bus lines, different super markets in close proximity, and perhaps one of Aalborg's best views from almost everywhere in the neighbourhood, with its location on top of one of Aalborg's three hills. Still, the reputation of the neighbourhood being socially burdened, is difficult to get rid of. In the first part of the analysis the reasons for this reputation will be investigated.

6.2. Historical development in the neighbourhood

6.2.1. The 1960's: A neighbourhood in development

As mentioned in the problem analysis chapter 2.3, the first apartment blocks were built towards the end of the 1950's on a large agricultural area outside of Aalborg in the new neighbourhood to be known as "Grønlandskvarteret". It was a huge urban planning project – the largest so far in the province, and was created as a small town of its own in the south-eastern outskirts of Aalborg (Asp-Poulsen, 1997). Until this time, Aalborg Municipality had built a state gymnasium in the area, as well as apartment blocks and houses. In the 1960's, the work with expanding the area and new construction of apartment blocks and different institutions continued, which newspaper articles from this decade highly revolves around. The 10. February 1961, Aalborg Stiftstidende wrote *"Aalborg disability construction is expected to start in the spring."* (Aalborg Stiftstidende, 10/02-1961). This article is about the construction of a new high-rise building planned in the neighbourhood. The plan was to gather "the nerve" of the neighbourhood around a large square – "Grønlands Torv", which can be described as a local centre in the middle of the apartment blocks in the neighbourhood. The square should consist of shops, a bank, a library, kindergarten and other amenities (Ørnbjerg, 2012). Next to this square, the before mentioned high-rise building was to be constructed with inspiration from a high-rise building built in Copenhagen. The housing company behind the construction – The Crippled/Disabled's Housing Company (De Vanføres Boligselskab) had the intention, that the high-rise building should give people with disabilities the same opportunities to get an apartment on level with others. The high-rise building was a prestige building with many visions, however there was a great deal of scepticism about the idea of living together – with or without disabilities and the project had difficulties from the very beginning with getting tenants for the apartments. Thus Aalborg Stiftstidende on 15. June 1964 wrote: *"The vacant apartments in the disabled's high-rise building raise debate: For other commune houses the waiting lists are long."* (Aalborg Stiftstidende, 15/06-1964). And even earlier on 14. June 1961, Aalborg Stiftstidende wrote *"120 apartments in Aalborg cannot be rented out"*. (Aalborg Stiftstidende, 14/06-1961). The articles revolve around the fact, that in spite of housing shortage in Aalborg, there are available apartments in "Højhuset", as the high-rise building is known as. The critique is about the rent being too high, the kitchens untraditional and unpractical and a general tendency about the residents of Aalborg not wanting to live in commune houses. It is stated that the apartments do not correspond

to people's needs and income (Aalborg Stiftstidende, 14/06-1961). Even though a lot of the articles written about the neighbourhood in this decade revolves around the high-rise building on Grønlands Torv, there are also many articles about various other construction in the neighbourhood. In general construction is what characterizes this decade. Apart from construction of housing blocks, various institutions such as "Seminarieskolen", Aalborg Seminary, The Kindergarten Seminary, a church next to the square – Hans Egedes Church, and in 1969 the beginning of a new youth institution on Thulevej, were under construction or finished constructing. In Aalborg Stiftstidende 25/04-1968 one could read about new schools and housing in Grønlandskvarteret accompanied by a photo of the development in the neighbourhood which can be seen on picture 6.11.



Picture 6.11: Photo of the development in Grønlandskvarteret from Aalborg Stiftstidende 25/04-1968. (Aalborg Stiftstidende, 25/04-1968)

The article accompanying the photo reads: *"A few years ago, most of this neighbourhood in Aalborg was bare ground, but since then hundreds of homes have been built, just as the neighbourhood has gotten more educational places and schools. In the triangle between Mylius Erichsens Vej (far left) and Scoresbysundvej in the foreground lies Aalborg Seminary (1) with the connected training school. Further up in the picture is Aalborg State Gymnasium (2) at Sohngaardsholmsvej, and on the opposite side of the same road are the deaf school (3), Aalborg Teknikum (4) and the external school (5). In between the schools are the many homes. In the foreground are the new apartment blocks and terraced houses along Thulevej and Discovej (6). To the left the entire neighbourhood around Grønlands Torv with the high-rise building (7), to the right in the foreground Apprentice College (8). On the opposite side of Th. Saurers Vej is the technical college (9) and further back "Himmerland's" high-rise building (10) and some lower apartment blocks. The undeveloped area to the right of the picture is the so-called teaching area. (Aalborg Stiftstidende, 25/04-1968).*

Furthermore, Aalborg Municipality could publicly announce in Aalborg Stiftstidende on 11. December 1963, that the City Council had approved street names for some of the streets in the new neighbourhood, which can be seen on picture 6.12.

The neighbourhood was well on its way, however it can be argued, that it went a bit too fast, especially with the high-rise building. In Aalborg Stiftstidende 02/02-1965 one could read about a discussion of the follow-up expenses related to the high-rise building, but in spite of the expenses being larger than first anticipated, it had to be built. Thus the article read: *"New social housing construction will cost Aalborg a quarter of a million annually."* (Aalborg Stiftstidende, 02/02-1965). In the years following the completion of the high-rise building, it was experienced that the intention with a mixed composition of residents did not have the desired effect, and problems with turmoil, violence and drugs quickly arose.



Picture 6.12: New street names in Grønlandskvarteret 11/12-1963 (Aalborg Kommune, 11/12-1963).

It can be concluded, that what mainly characterizes the 1960's based on newspaper articles amongst other from Aalborg Stiftstidende and the book "Grønlandskvarteret -fra herregårdsmarker til bolig- og institutionsområder" by Henning Asp-Poulsen 1997, is a neighbourhood in major development.

6.2.2. The 1970's: Terror, fear and suicides

The final stages of the construction around Grønlands Torv was moving along. Soon the area would be finished with shops and other amenities. Unfortunately, there were growing problems of trouble in the neighbourhood which newspaper articles in the beginning of this decade is highly dominated by. The headlines in the newspapers were marked by assaults, threats and violence. The problems resulted in local police being established in the neighbourhood with officers who could create peace. One could read about this in Aalborg Stiftstidende on 9. September 1971 where the headline sounded: *"Terror plagued Aalborg neighbourhood gets its own police"* (Aalborg Stiftstidende, 09/09-1971), which is only one of many examples. The newspaper Ny Tid writes on 5. June 1971: *"Caretaker is threatened with murder"* (Ny Tid, 05/06-1971). In September 1971, a pensioner was knocked down in the library of the high-rise building, three young girls were threatened by the bullies in the neighbourhood, the residents were threatened to silence, and a mother was afraid her son could turn out as a murderer (Asp-Poulsen, 1997). It called for reactions from the surrounding neighbourhood, and the headline in Aalborg Stiftstidende on September 11, 1971 read: *"The terror must be fought now"* (Aalborg Stiftstidende, 11/09-1971), which can be seen on picture 6.13.

Although there were many problems, a bad atmosphere and not least fear, there were several positive actions on the way elsewhere in the neighbourhood. In 1971, for example, the child- and youth institution "Fri-Stedet" opened, which would become a large asset for the entire neighbourhood

in the following years. Here, lots of activities and frameworks for learning and play were created for many of the neighbourhood's children and young people, and there was a waiting list



Picture 6.13: Headline about terror on Grønlands Torv. (Aalborg Stiftstidende, 11/09-1971)

to join the club (Asp-Poulsen, 1997). At the same time the football club B52 moved to the area, which generated activity for the many boys. Furthermore, the scouts and FDF got a division in the area, and behind the football fields of B52, there was space for a small shed-town called "Duck Town" (Andeby) where the children in the neighbourhood could have a small shed. The children could care for pets such as rabbits, chickens and pigeons. It provided a great community and sense of responsibility (Asp-Poulsen, 1997). Another significant and positive measure that was implemented was the addition of a new library in the high-rise building on Grønlands Torv (Asp-Poulsen, 1997).

Unfortunately, there were still problems with a small group of young people who were making trouble. Thus on 2. March 1974 Aalborg Stiftstidende wrote *"Bully terror against 13 year old with strap and bicycle chain"* (Aalborg Stiftstidende, 02/03-1974), and in the following days, the headlines revolved around child abuse scaring the residents, and 16 year old boys going to jail for the barbaric assault (Aalborg Stiftstidende, 1974). At the same time, problems with alcohol and drug abuse were increasing, and combined with a tendency for low-income families to be placed in some of the homes by the municipality, the neighbourhood was increasingly becoming burdened. With many socially burdened people and many with mental health issues, the situation was bad in the high-rise building and for some, the resort became the most tragic - suicide by jumping from the high-rise building. In (Asp-Poulsen, 1997) a resident states:

"Unfortunately, it happened so often that children also sometimes witnessed the tragedies. It is now 10 years since the last, a young girl, jumped to death from "Højhuset" ... One particular summer, there were 4-5 people that ended themselves that way. My daughter was in the same class with a girl whose mother did. There was also someone who threw out a toddler. And there were holes in the half-roof where they went through.

There were usually three jumping during the same period, and it was the worst in spring and fall. Once one had jumped, we could be sure a few more did. The kids also got a little cynical. They could come and say, "Mom, now someone else has jumped." And then they would go out and play again..." (Asp-Poulsen, 1997 p. 17)

It can be concluded that the articles written during the 1970's draws a picture of a tough decade where, the overall problems overshadowed the good actions in the neighbourhood. This also

affected the area's popularity, where the reputation of the neighbourhood was bad and considered as a socially burdened neighbourhood.

6.2.3. The 1980's: The residents take action

In the 1980's, the housing associations and the social authorities were aware that many of the residents living in the neighbourhood were severely challenged both physically and mentally.



Picture 6.14: Article from Aalborg Stiftstidende about the residents at Grønlands Torv wanting a better environment (Aalborg Stiftstidende, 18/12-1980).

The neighbourhood needed a 180 degree turn around (Asp-Poulsen, 1997). It could thus be read in Aalborg Stiftstidende on 12. December 1980: *"The residents at Grønlands Torv want a better environment"*. (Aalborg Stiftstidende, 18/12-1980), which can be seen on picture 6.14. The article states, that the neighbourhood is plagued by vandalism and residents in "Højhuset" feeling harassed.

Different actions from the municipality, institutions in the neighbourhood and commitment from the residents resulted in the municipality employing two environmental (social) workers who were passionate about doing activities and creating a community sense around them. In collaboration with the housing associations, initiatives such as a gym, hobby workshop, entertainment and solariums were launched. An important thing in this regard, was that the residents were involved in planning the remodelling and furnishing of the premises in the high-rise building.

The neighbourhood started moving in the right direction. It was managed to develop and create new good facilities for children and young people that were highly desired by the residents. On 3. July 1981 Aalborg Stiftstidende wrote: *"Finally a playground for the children on Grønlands*

Torv" (Aalborg Stiftstidende, 1981). Fri-stedet developed many ideas and stood behind a large music festival for children and young people, where they invited bands from far and wide to come and unfold their skills. A lot of the articles from this decade revolves around the new youth club. An article in Aalborg Stiftstidende on 28. January 1984 articulates Aalborg as the hope of rock music with reference to Fri-stedet's ability to create music and youth bands, and is thus titled "*Aalborg – the hope for rock musicians*" (Aalborg Stiftstidende, 1984).

In the late 1980s, two social workers from the municipality were introduced in the neighbourhood with focus on some of the young people who had difficulties adjusting to the area. It became a place where young people had to learn practical things about life, with various different activities that are partly in the interests of young people, but also for example cooking and cleaning. The project was developed and received financial support. Aalborg Stiftstidende wrote: "*The young people must get rid of bad habits: 'leisure-club' experiment can reverse the trend.*" on the 11. September 1989 (Aalborg Stiftstidende, 1989).

The 1980s was a decade in which several of the surrounding institutions had manifested themselves and, for example, the seminar was experiencing great demand. It was also in this decade that several of the institutions were celebrating their anniversaries. Plans for renovating the high-rise building were developing and were to be implemented in the early 90's (Kjærgaard, 1994).

With an otherwise positive development and peace in the neighbourhood for a long time, it starts to become troubled again in the late 1980's. Drugs and abuse reappear, which Aalborg Stiftstidende writes about on the 28. July 1989 in an article with the headline "*Drug abuse in high-rise building*" (Aalborg Stiftstidende, 1989). Learned from past experience, Aalborg Municipality instates a social corps to reduce crime.

7.2.4: The 1990's: Renovation of Højhuset and a sorting in the tenants

By looking at some of the articles in the local news from the 1990's, it shows a positive development in the stories. Not as many bad stories are conveyed as before. In the neighbourhood there is a greater sense of enthusiasm based on the headlines. Aalborg Stiftstidende for example wrote "*Here everyone gets started. A springboard for life.*" on the 16. May 1990 (Aalborg Stiftstidende, 1990). Work is being done to improve the environment. Various activities are created and the efforts on these are kept going. Among other things, a big city party for the

residents in Grønlandskvarteret is held, where the commitment of the young people shines through.

It also helps that the major renovation of the high-rise building actually results in more of the most burdened tenants moving out of the high-rise building due to the rise in rent to come after the renovations. A sorting in the residents happened naturally because of this. The apartment building looks modern and inviting after the renovation, and the café, library and IT room are used extensively. The square on Grønlands Torv is also revitalized, and shops and businesses on site appear to be good assets (Asp-Poulsen, 1997). Where people had earlier been afraid to walk across the square during night-time, this is to a high degree not the case anymore. A resident in (Asp-Poulsen, 1997) states: *"It is perhaps more than ten years ago, you could feel a little nervous walking across Grønlands Torvet in the evening. I never think about it now. Although some foreigners of a different skin colour live here now, we must say that they have not been violent. At least not the ones we've got here ... There are still people who are anxious about violence. I know people who couldn't dream of walking across Grønlands Torv in the evening alone."* (Asp-Poulsen, 1997 p. 25)

In 1993, there was a debate about housing ghettos, which led to the former Prime Minister Poul Nyrup Rasmussen setting up a City Committee. The intention was to spread a large action plan throughout the country (Asp-Poulsen, 1997). According to a former social worker from Aalborg Municipality, for Aalborg SØ, this meant that the focus had to be on creating a preventive effect, so as to avoid conditions seen in certain areas in Copenhagen and Aarhus. A resident advisor was hired for the committee's work in Aalborg SØ, which in collaboration with environmental staff in the SØ area had focus on collaboration across all stakeholders.

All in all, the 1990's is mostly a positive decade in which renovation of the high-rise building and a sorting in the residents was of high significance. Very few articles that enhances the bad reputation of the neighbourhood are written in local newspapers. Perhaps this has to do with the holistic social plan for the area created by housing associations in 1994, which had a positive effect until the end of the 1990's.

6.2.5. The 2000's: Fear of ghetto in Grønlandskvarteret

At the beginning of this decade, attempts are being made to build on the corner lot opposite the high-rise building, and it encounters strong protests. The small grass area has a great impact

on the area. After the reactions, the company involved drops the plans, which Nordjyske Stiftstidende writes about 11. March 2002, where the headline sounded: *"Company gave up on construction after protest storm"* (Holm, 2002).

Grønlands Torv is in continuous development and the surrounding institutions and shops are running well. On the 18. August 2002 the headline in Nordjyske thus read: *The sun shines above Grønlandskvarteret*" (Møller M. , 2002). Many initiatives are being created and a lot is being done to improve the neighbourhood. Much of the publicity in the media nevertheless initiates that the area is again burdened.

On Thulevej in the neighbourhood, there is a focus on a sorting in the selection of residents. On November 15. 2003, Nordjyske Stiftstidende writes an article about immigrant families being cheated in the housing queue (Teilmann, 2003). Under the headline *"The White Cut on Thulevej"* on November 16, 2003, the newspaper wrote, that the chairman of one of the housing associations manages the list of home seekers himself and avoids the applicants with Arabic-sounding names (Teilmann, 2003).

Articles similar to these are to be found throughout the decade. In Nordjyske Stiftstidende on 5. June 2005 a headline reads: *"Fear of ghetto in Grønlandskvarteret"* and a few days later on 9. June 2005 the headline sounded: *"No help to Grønlandskvarteret. Work is underway to establish a consultation council for Grønlandskvarteret"* (Thomsen, Frygt for ghetto i Grønlandskvarteret, 2005), (Thomsen, 2005).

In 2007 the neighbourhood witnessed two tragedies within half a year apart. On 24. June 2007 a young man, 21 years of age dies, after falling down from a 1-story balcony and hitting the back of his head. This was a result of the balcony being in poor condition, where it cracked. Around half a year later during Christmas on the 27. December 2007, another young teenage boy, 14 years old, dies after sniffing gasoline (Nordjyske Stiftstidende, 2007), (Skov, 2007).

However, there are also positive stories throughout the media. In 2008, the leader of Fri-stedet, Jens Larsen is awarded "Aalborgmanden" for his work with children and young people in the neighbourhood throughout more than 30 years. Especially his work with integration is acknowledged, and in 2009, Kristeligt Dagblad writes an article about exactly this, titled *"9210 Aalborg are world champions when it comes to integration"* (Larsen T. B., 2009), where Jens talks about being proud of having more than 20 different nationalities in the youth club, and always

trying to bring the positive stories instead of the negative. He also gets the idea for the song “Ghetto-paradis” about the neighbourhood and Fri-stedet, created by the members of the club (Jens Larsen, 2012). In other areas of the neighbourhood improvements are done to beautify the area, for example a renovation of one of the shopping areas (Nordjyske Stiftstidende, 2005). All in all, the 2000’s can be seen as a mixed decade, with both positive stories and efforts being done in the neighbourhood, however also stories that indicate that the neighbourhood is beginning to get a bad reputation once again.

6.2.6: The current situation: Revitalization of the neighbourhood kicks off

This decade starts like the last one ended. Grønlandskvarteret is experiencing various creative initiatives. The area is multicultural and the resident composition is a mix of established residents and newcomers.

A decisive measure and a necessary weapon in the fight against crime in Grønlandskvarteret was the establishment of local police in the area. In Nordjyske Stiftstidende on October 12, 2010, one could read that the respected police officer who was in charge of the work in the area would stop because of the lack of support from its top management. This was immediately met by reactions from the area and especially the leader of Fri-Stedet Jens Larsen was critical in his comment in an open letter to the police director (Larsen J., 2010).

The reactions soon followed, with more incidents of crime happening in the neighbourhood. Young people in the area had been given more free space and ravaged at the library in the high-rise building. There were mass fights and several burglaries around the area, thus headlines in Nordjyske Stiftstidende sounded: “*Mass fight at Grønlands Torv*” on 17. May 2011, and “*Youngsters ravage at libraries*” on the 4. November 2011 (Tram, 2011), (Schouenborg, 2011), (Frank, 2011).

New Year's Eve 2011, a supermarket on Grønlands Torv was destroyed by arson, which also destroyed several of the surrounding shops and premises (Green, 2012). In general, there was turmoil and more problems with fires were to come later. In 2016 for example one could read the headline in Nordjyske Stiftstidende “*Five arson fires within half an hour*” (Hansen A., 2016).

During the decade, the development in the number of new residents added to certain housing blocks also led to a tilted balance, which meant that more housing companies used an opportunity to use the tool of flexible renting and thus sort in the tenants. This is what Nordjyske Stiftstidende wrote in an article on 6. March 2018 under the headline: *"Housing departments wants to sort among the tenants"* (Brauer, Boligafdelinger vil sortere blandt lejere, 2018). That topic was later followed up in a TV debate between Aalborg's Mayor Thomas Kastrup-Larsen and a member of the City Council Per Clausen on TV2Nord. The starting point for the debate was a talk about Aalborg's development of social housing and efforts to get rid of ghetto areas (Tv2Nord, 02/12-2019).

Initiatives that were previously aimed at creating a better community in the neighbourhood suffer a defeat as the City Council decides to shut down the local library, which many considers a great loss (Brauer, 2018). At a local event at Hans Egedes Church on the 4. March 2019, where Mayor, Thomas Kastrup-Larsen talked about the development in the neighbourhood, most of the questions from the residents revolved around the library.

The 2010s are a decade in which a large part of the housing blocks in the area are planned for renovation. Many of the buildings are in decay and the respective housing associations have set aside millions for renewals. In connection with this, several leases need to be redone as some of the smallest leases (1-bedroom apartments) disappear (Appendix I).

At the same time, new construction projects are emerging - among them new grocery stores to the area. The effect of the already finished renovated apartments in the neighbourhood can be seen. The rent has increased, which has resulted in many of the former residents not having returned. It can be argued that the revitalization of the neighbourhood will definitely change the image of the neighbourhood visually, however it is more uncertain, whether Aalborg Municipality will change be able to change the reputation of the neighbourhood. Despite numerous efforts in the past, with some changes for the better, through the analysis it has become evident, that crime and vandalism etc. seems to return to the neighbourhood, and stigmatize the neighbourhood as being socially burdened. It is therefore interesting to explore how residents living in the neighbourhood perceive the current situation and their take on how the revitalization will affect the neighbourhood in the future. This is explored in the second part of the analysis.

6.3. Thematic analysis of interviews with local residents

The purpose of this part of the analysis is to explore how local residents perceive Grønlandskvarteret, their knowledge and opinions about the ongoing renovations, their experiences with the involvement in the process, and their take on how it will affect the neighbourhood in the future. This part of the analysis is based on appendix III-XI.

6.3.1. Reasons for living in the neighbourhood and attachment to the neighbourhood

The residents interviewed have had different reasons for choosing to live in Grønlandskvarteret. However, it turned out that even though the residents have lived in their current dwelling for varied time periods spanning from 1-45 years, almost all of the residents have a connection to the neighbourhood that goes further back, in many cases back to childhood. The residents were asked why they had chosen to live in Grønlandskvarteret as well as if they were happy living here, and among the reasons were factors such as having family in the neighbourhood, good shopping opportunities, and a peaceful and quiet neighbourhood with a good location. Resident 3 for example states as to why she has chosen to live in the neighbourhood:

“Simply because I have come from here, since I was a child. Lived around here on Peter Freuchens Vej, Hellevangen, and we have also lived over on Peter Bruuns Vej. And my husband has also lived on Beatesmindevej, so he comes from there.” (Appendix VI p. 13 l. 43-45)

For resident 4 and 5, who are in the same age group as resident 3, and have lived in the neighbourhood for a similar time frame, the reasons for choosing the neighbourhood are similar as resident 4 states:

“We chose to return to the Grønlandskvarteret because my parents in law and my parents lived here. My parents still do. And we wanted to go back to a quiet area, from where we came from, where we lived at the time, 16.5 years ago. So it was a first choice, it was a natural choice to come here.” (Appendix VII p. 20 l. 43-45)

Even though the two younger residents have only lived in their current dwellings for a short period of time, their reasons for choosing Grønlandskvarteret are similar. Resident 1 chose to live in the neighbourhood because she was offered an apartment that suited her needs and taste, and because she has family and friends living in the area, and she is happy with living in

the neighbourhood primarily because it is close to shopping opportunities and close to the city centre. These are some of the same reasons expressed by resident 6. She lives with her boyfriend, and they wanted something bigger to live in after having lived in the city centre, and that was possible in this neighbourhood. Furthermore, she expresses that another reason was that she has grown up in this neighbourhood and she wanted to return. However, she perceives the neighbourhood more as Gug, than Grønlandskvarteret.

The older residents interviewed stand out more, since they have lived here since the beginning when the neighbourhood was not even finished yet. Especially resident 7 stands out, as he states:

"It was sheer provocation. Because there was someone who said to me, when I moved up here, I moved up on Diskovej, and they said: "Are you completely out of your mind? They are not in their right senses in that neighborhood up there." You might say they are, but on the other hand, I've never had any problems with people living up here. So that's it!" (Appendix X p. 36 l. 29-32)

This quote indicates, that even though the neighbourhood was still relatively new, when resident 7 moved to the neighbourhood in 1965, it already had a bad reputation at the time, however it may have turned around when resident 2 moved here in 1975, because she states that their reason for moving here was that it was good apartments that you could move in to, and that it still is today. She has never experienced any problems neither physically or socially, and both residents have always been happy living in the area, because they have everything they need in close proximity, and as resident 7 states, if he was not happy, he has had plenty of opportunities to move.

The opinion that differs most from the interviewees is that of resident 8, who is a woman of Turkish decent. This could possibly be because of cultural differences, since she has only lived in Denmark for approximately 6 years. While all the other residents don't think there is anything missing from the area, that they have everything they need in close proximity, resident 8 has a very different view on this, and is not completely happy living in the neighbourhood. When asked if she was happy living in Grønlandskvarteret, she responded:

"Yes and no. I really like the location of the apartment and I really like our home in general but I don't like the stuff that is missing from the area, for example, there is not enough trees, and I hate

that. And if I go outside, I feel like it's really boring to walk around. It does feel like it's just a living area and you just need to get on to some transportation and go away from there instead of spending your time in the area. There is a small activity centre, but there was a, I mean even the library closed down and now there is not even a small, there are not even any small cafés or something, where you can sit and get a cup of coffee, so it is a little bit too much on the residential side, I would say. I mean I really like how close it is to the centre, because sometimes I take the stroller, and walk to the centre even. It takes a little long, but it's okay still. It's still quite short, compared to where I was living before in Turkey, because it takes half an hour with a car to get to the centre, so this is really close, it takes half an hour to walk to the centre. But still I feel like it could have been more lively, I mean I love hearing voices of kids, and there is not even enough playgrounds, there are no, as I said, there is no place that people just uses outside, so that you see some life going on. In general, it's just boring. (Appendix XI pp. 42-43 l. 32-6)

As can be derived from the quote, resident 8's perception of the neighbourhood is very different than the other residents, who generally describes the area as a good, peaceful and quiet place, where they are happy to live. This perception of the neighbourhood could be due to resident 8 not feeling the same attachment/connection to the neighbourhood as the other residents. The residents were asked whether they feel especially attached to Grønlandskvarteret, and amongst almost all of the residents this was the case. As resident 4 expresses:

"I do. I was born and raised here and it will always be my roots, they stay here. But there comes a time when you think that now we must try something new, and that is now (Appendix VII p. 21 l. 17-18).. I love living here. I have not been away from the area for more than 12 years in my entire 52 years of life, and I came back. And that's my area. It's my hood. And it's going to be the damn thing for the rest of my life, so the only thing I hope for is that it's going to be a positive thing that something is being done out here now." (Appendix VII p. 24 l. 52-55)

Both of the younger residents feel the same way, in fact all of the residents that were born and raised in the neighbourhood feel a similar attachment as resident 4. However, surprisingly the resident that has lived in the neighbourhood the longest – resident 7, states that he does not feel particularly attached to the neighbourhood. Regarding this question resident 8 is however again the one that stands out the most from the rest of the interviewees, as she says:

"No, not at all. Because of these reasons. I'm really attached to my home, but I'm not attached to the neighbourhood. I mean wherever I can take my home, I would be happy at this point, so (Appendix XI p. 43 l. 8-9) ... As I said, I don't care for it (living in the neighbourhood as a young family). I mean I would move tomorrow without even thinking. It has nothing to do with the image of it though, it has everything to do with how boring it is." (Appendix XI p. 43 l. 43-44)

6.3.2. The reputation of Grønlandskvarteret

As stated in some of the other chapters, Grønlandskvarteret seems to have a bad reputation. To find out whether the people living in the neighbourhood also have this perception, the residents were asked about their opinion on this matter. First of all, they were asked how they articulate the neighbourhood when speaking to others. Even though most of the residents have a good experience of living in the area, they have different experiences, about how others perceive the neighbourhood, when speaking about it. Resident 1 for example articulate the neighbourhood as a nice and quiet place to live, however she has experienced that people who do not know anything about the area has a perception that it is far from the city centre, and that many of her friends would rather live there, because there is more "life". However, she also states that she perceives the area where she lives as Gug rather than Grønlandskvarteret, and that she only sees Grønlandskvarteret as the small area around Grønlands Torv, similar to resident 6. Resident 6 has almost exactly the same perception as resident 1, which might be due to the fact that they are the same age, and therefore has had some of the same experiences of the neighbourhood, since they have grown up in the same decade and area. The fact that they perceive the area as Gug, might have an influence on their perception of the neighbourhood, since they both feel that it is mostly the area and surrounding streets around Grønlands Torv, that has a bad reputation. Some of the middle aged residents have different experiences than the younger ones. Resident 4 for example, when asked how she speaks of Grønlandskvarteret states:

"Well, I say the Grønlænderkvarteret, and then people look at me and someone asks "is that Aalborg East?". No, I say then, it's Aalborg SØ, we are a part of Gug. Because it separates at T.H Sauers Vej. "Well okay", then it is as if people say, "well it is okay then". (Appendix VII p. 21 l. 22-24)

This quote both indicate that a lot of people have the perception that Grønlandskvarteret is a part of Aalborg East, that Aalborg East still has a bad reputation, and that it is a bad thing living

there. According to resident 4 however there was a long time period where there were no problems with saying that you were from Grønlænderkvarteret, and that it was okay living here. However, she feels that once again, it has gotten a negative vibe to say that you come from this neighbourhood, partly because a lot of things have started happening again, such as theft of bicycles, mopeds and vandalism of cars, which all in all brings a negative vibe.

Resident 5 who has also grown up in the neighbourhood has a similar view as resident 4, and also refers to the neighbourhood as either Gug or Grønlandskvarteret. According to him, it is more known as Grønlandskvarteret by people in his own age group, because at that time, that was the name the neighbourhood was known as. He states that you do not hear that many people calling it Grønlandskvarteret anymore, since today, it is more just a part of Gug or Aalborg SØ, and that when talking to people from other places, they do not know the neighbourhood. He does not immediately think that the neighbourhood has a bad reputation, and states, that it was more Aalborg East that was known as a place outside of Aalborg, where all the ones that could not obtain a dwelling were placed, which results in it becoming a little ghettoish. According to him, Grønlandskvarteret has been nowhere near that. However, he refers to some books that were written about the neighbourhood and expresses that

“... there is also written another book that revolves around, you can say, criminals or the environment that has been a little hidden away with drug abuse, etc., and we have always been aware that there were many who had a certain abuse of either alcohol or drugs in the area, but when you live in it, then, it is not something you notice directly, but I think things have changed a lot in the last, well 10- 15 years where we have lived here, and it is not because it has become, I do not want to say, that it has become neither better nor worse, but the composition of residents, it has become, you can say, there are many with other ethnic backgrounds, which is a challenge for some, because they behave differently than you are used to, because it has been a neighbourhood where there were many over 50, and it changes all of a sudden when some who have a completely different perception of how to interact with other people comes to the neighbourhood. But whether it's good or bad, we have not really dealt with, we have just been a little annoyed with some unfortunate elements, which we have lived close to, but usually, if there are some who have problems with the municipality or other things, then they are only here for a short period of time, and then it is as if they move on.” (Appendix VIII p. 27 l. 14-25)

Resident 3 who is in the same age group as resident 4 and 5, have had similar experiences. She herself speaks of the neighbourhood as a place where she has had a good childhood and adult life with her children, so mainly positive. However, she has also experienced when speaking of the neighbourhood to others, that people have a different perception than she does. She states:

Yes, sometimes I have, where people say "oh does she live in that" and some have also said "god I lived there as a child or as a young person" and all sorts of things, so it has been a bit mixed, but it can be a little, not negative but a little "okay". Also because I say it belongs to the area around Grønlands Torvet... (Appendix VI p. 14 l. 25-27)

She seems split however about whether or not she thinks Grønlandskvarteret has a bad reputation, but has however experienced, that sometimes when she goes shopping in the grocery store next to Grønlands Torv, you get the sense that there are some problems in the store, and a little too much turmoil, since they need to have security guards. Furthermore, she has observed that there is about to be a police station in the old facilities where the library was previously located, which could indicate that there still are some problems in the neighbourhood. She does not however feel unsafe, not more than other places.

Surprisingly again the two older residents who has lived in the neighbourhood the longest, expresses that they have never experienced any trouble in the neighbourhood, and that they only have positive things to say. Resident 2 however have experienced some others referring to the neighbourhood as "the rhubarb neighbourhood", because of all the people with other ethnic backgrounds living here, however she says that is it more on other streets in the neighbourhood, and not on the street where she lives, which consists mostly of Danish residents.

Again, resident 8 is the one that stands out the most from the other residents, which is likely to be because she does not feel the same attachment towards the neighbourhood. When speaking of the neighbourhood, she refers to it as a monotone social housing area, which as she also stated in the reason for living here, indicates, that she thinks the neighbourhood is quite boring. She does however have a different experience of the neighbourhood, being an immigrant. She states that when speaking of the neighbourhood to others, the first thing they think about, is that there are a lot of immigrants, which she tries not to be bothered by, however she does find it discouraging when people think low of an area for this reason. She expresses:

"I mean just because someone is an immigrant, it doesn't change the fact that they are human as well and they have their values and stuff they care about too, so." (Appendix XI p. 43 l. 18-19)

When asked whether she thinks the neighbourhood has a bad reputation, she says:

"A little bit, maybe. But I think it's changing as well because of the renovations. I don't know if it's a good thing or not, but even though I'm in the area, I know from people that's living in our apartment and stuff, are being judgemental towards the people living in social housing, which is right across us, and as an immigrant, I'm not happy about that of course, but yeah, Danish people are quite racist so. There is a more fundamental change that needs to be done than a change needs to be done to the area. I don't think there is any problem with the image of the area, there is a problem with people and how they are pursuing the area." (Appendix XI p. 43. l. 21-26)

This is an interesting point of view, and not necessarily wrong. It can be argued, that a more fundamental change does need to happen, if the neighbourhood should truly be improved. The goal from the municipality and the housing associations is to improve mainly the physical environment, which should lead to an improvement of the social environment, however not necessarily in favouritism of people with other ethnic backgrounds, since there can only be a certain percentage of these according to rules related to the ghetto list.

All in all, the residents themselves have a positive perception of the neighbourhood and refers to it as a nice place, however a majority of the residents also experience that people who don't live here have a different perception, in many cases because of lack of knowledge about the neighbourhood.

6.3.3. Future effects of the revitalization

The last topic explored in the interviews, was what future effects the residents think the revitalization of Grønlandskvarteret will bring to the neighbourhood. Despite different concerns all the residents seem to be generally positive that the renovations are happening, and think that they were much needed. However, all of the residents think that they will bring some changes especially in relation to the people who are going to live in the area. For example, resident 1 states:

"I think that it will be a different target group that will live in the neighborhood, because since the renovations lead to a rent increase, it is not the same people who can afford to live in the area, and therefore I

think that there are many that has to move and that there are some other people who are going to live in the area. (Appendix IV p. 7 l. 12-14)

A similar view is expressed by resident 4, who expresses:

The problem just is; that house prices are rising. I would say it's another clientele coming in. And then they just move, those who cannot join, they just move on to the next place. We are one of the cheapest departments to live in. Unfortunately, you can also feel it. But they will not continue to be. It's going to cost this. It's going to cost a lot of money..... I also think about the rent increases, there are many who say "it's not that bad". They just forget that they have to include the prices for internet and electricity, and all those things have to be counted on top of what you actually pay in rent. So it will become expensive. (Appendix VII p. 23 l. 1-4 and l. 8-10)

Almost all of the residents think that a change in the resident composition is unavoidable because of the increasing rents. Resident 3 expresses that she generally thinks the renovations are positive, however that is a shame that the rents are increasing that much. She compares it to other places in Aalborg, where social housing has been renovated, and states that she hopes that it will turn out as nice in this neighbourhood. As they want to return after the renovations, she however hopes that they belong to the “nicer clientele”, but she also hopes that there will be sorted a little bit in the resident composition and that there will be more rules, so the neighbourhood appears nicer. As it is now, she expresses that it looks terrible, and that that would be the first thing she thought, if she did not live in the neighbourhood and drove through. According to her, many of the residents have been neglecting the area for quite some time, because they knew the renovations were coming. She emphasizes though, that she does not wish that all the residents are sorted out. There are a lot of people she would like to return, because they have lived there for a long time, and they have a good relationship with many of their neighbours.

Resident 6 also thinks that the renovations will have an effect on the people who live here. She states that she thinks it will be different types that will be living here, possibly more families than young couples without children and elderly. And possibly also more students, because it will be nice newly renovated apartments close to the university.

Some of the residents also think that more people will want to live in the neighbourhood as it becomes more attractive. However, there are mixed opinions about whether the changes are positive or negative.

Resident 1 states:

I think, well I think it's both good and bad because uh, you can say when everything is renovated, well where can people then afford live, because uh, one's income does not change, because everything it is renovated, and people must also have a place to live, but you can say that of course it can also be positive that it is people with a little yes a little a different type of people, I do not know how to say it but.. you can feel that

there are many of the same types living here now, people on transfer income, at least, in my department, it is primarily pensioners, early retirees, and now I myself am on sick leave, students, low-income people living here. (Appendix IV p 7 l. 16-23)

Resident 4 hopes that the results of the renovations will be positive for the neighbourhood. She states it is a plus for the area that something is finally done out here, so it does not decay, as it is never nice to see housing areas in decay, becoming uglier and attracting the wrong clientele. She also hopes that the area will be greener and more open for everyone in the neighbourhood. Resident 5 is of the belief, that if everything goes as planned, and there won't be any unforeseen challenges along the way, that will make the project more expensive or slow it down, the result will be the same mix of young people, families and elderly as can be found in other places in the municipality. Then it is the municipality's responsibility where they place the people on transfer income. Right now, resident 5 states, that it seems like they are being moved around as to where it is cheapest to live, for example in this neighbourhood, because it is easy, fast and cheap.

Resident 8 again stands out from the other residents. As mentioned earlier, she thinks the neighbourhood is quite boring now as it is. She does think that the renovations have improved the neighborhood, and that it will attract more people who will want to live in the neighbourhood. Location wise she thinks the neighbourhood is amazing, however there are still many things missing from the neighbourhood in her opinion. She expresses that:

"..there are some other changes that need to be done in the area than just the living, to be able to call it a neighbourhood. Because right now it's just a neighbourhood by the amount of people living in the area. Other than that, it's not a neighbourhood." (Appendix XI p. 45 l. 27-29) .. the social housing companies need to stop looking at the buildings as just buildings and housing area, and they need to look at it as a neighbourhood, and understand the fact that there are people living there, and their needs are not just groceries and then sleep, eat, they also need to socialise, be outside, especially in the corona times. Now it's understood more that we need more space areas, and we need more, we need to be able to be outdoors more, instead of being stuck inside in small places, so when renovating for the apartments, it's also important to think about to create areas which are also pleasant to use, and not just plain grass with three trees. Or just not a football field, grass and a frame, I mean come on. (Appendix XI pp. 45-46 l. 43-4).

Resident 8 does make a valid point, however it can be questioned whether such social initiatives such as for example a café, would even be used, since it has failed in other places such as Eternitten. Perhaps it can again be related to the cultural differences, since Danish people are perhaps more closed, however

with all the new housing being constructed in the neighbourhood, it could possibly be successful. Another resident thus also expresses the lack of social events, and states that the ones responsible for the renovations do not think of this when planning the renovations.

All in all, the residents are generally positive towards the renovations, and everyone agrees that they have/will improve the neighbourhood for the better image wise, as it is or will become much nicer to look at.

6.4. Scenario building

For the third part of the analysis scenario, building will be used to predict four different outcomes for the future of Grønlandskvarteret. The purpose of this is to answer the second part of the research question about whether the revitalization of Grønlandskvarteret will lead to gentrification. The scenarios cannot give a definitive answer to this, as they are only possible outcomes, but it can be predicted in which scenario this is most likely to happen, if things turn out in a certain way. The time frame looked upon in these scenarios is 5-10 years into the future, where most of the renovations happening or are planned to happen in the neighbourhood has finished.

In order to make the scenarios two critical uncertainties are needed. These have been determined through the theoretic framework regarding gentrification, and the thematic analysis of the interviews with residents. As it was stated in chapter 5.1. about gentrification, according to Hamnett 1991, there are certain requirements for gentrification to occur. These requirements are, that a rent gap exists, there is a supply of potential gentrifiers, and an inner city location preference.

Since the renovations have already happened or are planned to happen, it can be argued, that there is a potential supply of gentrifiers, in this case in the form of the housing associations in collaboration with Aalborg Municipality, however they are dependent on financial subsidies from Landsbyggefonden (The National Builders Foundation) which support renovation of social housing. There is however a very long waiting list, since a lot of settlements from the 1960's and 1970's, are in need of being renovated.

It can also be argued, that there is an inner city preference by people, as a result of urbanization. Since Grønlandskvarteret is located only 3 km from the city centre of Aalborg and close to Aalborg University, along with good transportation opportunities, this means that it has the potential to be an attractive location for a lot of people, both students, families and elderly people. What is more uncertain, is how the reputation of the neighbourhood will be in the future. In spite of several efforts in the past to try and create a better environment in the neighbourhood, crime, drugs and gangs have always seemed to find its way back, and the attempt to change the reputation of the neighbourhood has never truly been successful. It can be argued, that if the reputation of the neighbourhood does not change for the better in the future, the neighbourhood cannot truly become attractive. Because of this, the first critical uncertainty is “reputation”.

The second critical uncertainty is based on Hamnett’s argument about a rent gap having to exist in order for gentrification to occur. Through the settlements that have already been renovated, it can be observed, that the rent has increased. Where the rent earlier was around 3-4000 kr a month, the rent is now more than 8000 kr. a month for some of the most expensive apartments, however not all apartments have increased that much in rent. However, it can be argued that a rent gap already exists. The uncertainty lies in not knowing how this will turn out for the settlements that are planned to be renovated in the future, but based on the current trends, it is likely that the same situation will be present regarding these. Therefore, the second uncertainty is “rent level”.

These two uncertainties have been put into the GBN matrix described in chapter 4.3.3. This results in four different scenarios that can be seen on figure 6.1.

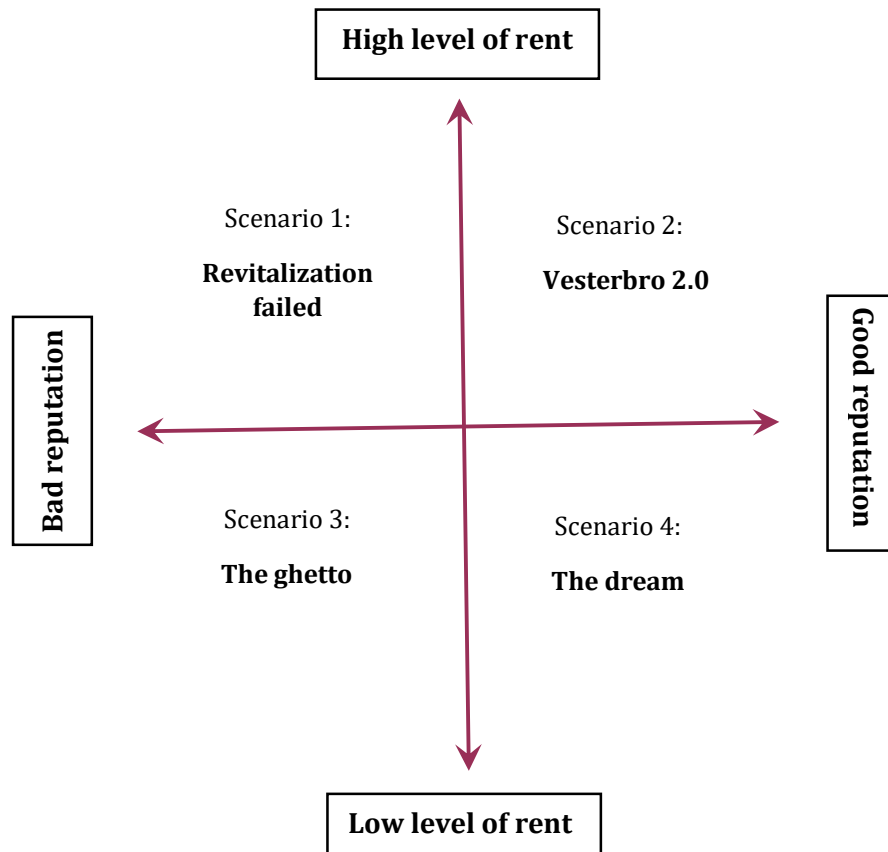


Figure 6.1: The four scenarios for the future of Grønlandskvarteret

6.4.1. Scenario 1: Revitalization failed

In this scenario there is a high rent level, however the neighbourhood still suffers from a bad reputation, which is why the name “Revitalization failed” has been given to this scenario. It has failed, because it has not been possible to change the story of the neighbourhood, and this means that it is not that attractive. Rents have increased rapidly in the neighbourhood and improvements have been made to the apartments. The renovations have lifted the area, which appears brand new and welcoming. The expectation is that the attractive housing attracts new tenants who can lift the neighbourhood socially and give it a different image. However, this is not the case, and it has not been managed to attract new people to the area. Some of those who have lived here for several years have had to move for cheaper housing elsewhere in the city or moving even further away to some of the hinterland cities in the municipality. The apartments are waiting to be rented out, but it just does not happen. The apartments are empty with no tenants for a long period of time because of the high rent. Landlords/housing associations must use alternative methods such as attracting residents with promising free rent the first 3-6

months, just to get someone to move into the empty apartments and there is a need for relaxing the flexible renting regulations, since an occupied apartment is better than an empty one. The housing associations are non-profit, so it is not possible to just lower the rent, because there still are certain costs following the renovations, and the rent only covers these. In efforts to improve the quality of the residential area, it has been forgotten that the Grønlandskvarteret is still suffering of a bad reputation. The scare examples from the previous decades of violence, drugs and other crime still leaves traces, and that keeps people from moving to the area. There is a lack of communication and coordination and a joint effort between the housing associations to tell the good story of attractive, newly renovated housing between green areas, in a neighbourhood that has every opportunity for a good life.

Although investments in new buildings have been made, such as in offices, businesses and other initiatives, people are still hesitant. They still think the rent is too high, especially since the neighbourhood after all is not the city centre, but a suburban neighbourhood outside of the city. The result is that many apartments cannot be rented out. In this scenario, it can be argued that the neighbourhood has to some degree been gentrified, since the former tenants have been pushed out of the neighbourhood as a result of the high rents, however a lot of new tenants are still missing in the neighbourhood.

6.4.2. Scenario 2: Vesterbro 2.0

In this scenario there is a high rent level, the municipality and housing associations have in collaboration succeeded in changing the story of the neighbourhood, which now has a good reputation. The name "Vesterbro 2.0" is a reference to the gentrification of inner Vesterbro in Copenhagen that happened in the 1990's as a result of the urban renewal law adopted in 1982. Based on the notion that Grønlandskvarteret gets a good reputation and as such it is an attractive area that really offers many opportunities - in terms of housing, business, leisure opportunities for children and a good social community - how will a high level of rent affect it?

In 5-10 years, the development with renovation and neighbourhood renewal has created a very attractive environment, and the waiting list to being able to move into the modern neighbourhood is long. Along the way, there has been a lot of work with telling the story of an ambitious project involving residents, businesses, housing associations, leisure clubs, unions and institutions who in a joint effort have created a good reputation. Grønlandskvarteret is now known as a residential area, where people would like to live. A good environment has been created and

the possibilities for development are many. Some of the offers previously shut down, are now emerging in new exiting ways, and people from all over of the neighbourhood are backing up and being supportive about the events on offer. The housing associations are collaborating and are on common ground across from everything such as machines and certain tasks. New businesses and offices are moving to the area and new buildings are being constructed. It is a neighbourhood in rapid development. At the same time, Grønlandskvarteret has gotten rid of the crime and violence previously affecting the neighbourhood, and stability has been created in the resident composition in the previously socially burdened areas in the neighbourhood. The image of the neighbourhood has taken a 180 degree turn for the better, however, the rent level has increased so much, that it has resulted in a new and completely different resident composition, where it now requires a slightly higher income to being able to afford to live in the neighbourhood. Most of the previous tenants have been forced to move to areas with cheaper housing, and the residents now residing in the area consists mainly of students, young families and couples. The only ones remaining are pensioners, since they can get a high percentage of the rent paid through public housing support (boligstøtte). In this scenario, the neighbourhood has been gentrified. The former tenants cannot afford to live here anymore, and have been pushed out of the neighbourhood as a result of the high rents. The new tenants are a classing example of the “middle class” taking over the neighbourhood. The wealthier people however still prefers other more affluent neighbourhoods and locations, such as waterfront locations.

6.4.3. Scenario 3: The Ghetto

In this scenario there is a low level of rent, and the neighbourhood still suffers from a bad reputation, which is why the name “The Ghetto” has been given to this scenario. With low rents and a poor reputation from the start, it will be hard to believe that it will attract anything but people who already have a poor economy and can be socially burdened. They most likely come from others neighbourhoods where rents have increased and as a result of this indirectly forced to find cheaper housing. On top of that, these people are often challenged by health problems, being unemployed and/or on state supported transfer income.

The bad reputation of the neighbourhood is not as important to this group, but it puts the residential area under great pressure with rising crime, abuse and a visibility that is pulling down the vast community. The neighbourhood demands intensive resources from the municipality and will adversely affect the area in a negative way. People who require very little, gather in

groups and live from day to day - often with very little dispersion. At the same time, people with similar interests are drawn towards each other and in the worst case, ghetto-like conditions are created, which is very little desired. Grønlandskvarteret has previously been strongly affected by problems, not necessarily by low rents, but the neighbourhood was severely challenged by the problems of renting out apartments when constructing the high-rise building on Grønlands Torv. To fill up the empty apartments, people with poor backgrounds were offered cheap housing in Grønlandskvarteret. The concept of living in an accepted community - disabled and non-disabled - has had bad conditions from day one, because things have gone too fast, and some problems could possibly be avoided if the placement of residents was made more critically. The result is a reputation that is hard to get rid of and a neighbourhood that is not desirable. The scenario, that this situation in 5-10 years will occur, is difficult to imagine with all the knowledge and efforts that are aimed at better housing, newly renovated apartments, beautiful surroundings and active social environment. Also due to that fact, that it is unlikely that the rents that have already increased, will decrease again, however the possibility that it could happen has to be taken into consideration. In this scenario, no gentrification has occurred. The neighbourhood does not have a rent gap, nor an attractive, preferable inner city location. In fact, it is the opposite. The neighbourhood is characterized by people with a low income and a high percentage of different ethnicities. No one has been pushed out of the neighbourhood, since it suffers from a bad reputation and is not a desirable place to live. The people that do move here because of the low rent quickly moves away again, because of the problems with crime and violence, which is another thing that characterizes this scenario – a high moving frequency.

6.4.4. Scenario 4: The Dream

In this scenario there is a low level of rent, and the municipality and housing associations have in collaboration succeeded in changing the story of the neighbourhood, which now has a good reputation. Therefore, the name “The Dream” has been given to this scenario. By this it is the dream of the inhabitants in Aalborg Municipality, that is insinuated. Everyone wants to have as cheap a rent as possible, but preferably still with all facilities available. This scenario requires that housing construction is rethought both in terms of renovations and new construction.

In this scenario, the municipality and housing associations have accepted, that the way they have been building for the past decade is not working, since the rent becomes too high. They

have accepted, that they have to build practically and according to people's needs, and are moving away from the idea that everything new has to be architecturally guided by what is smart. The trend with new construction today is, that in many cases the homes lack some practical interior construction wise. Many young people for example would like to have a temporary place such as student housing to live, where you have what is needed to cope and where the architectural is irrelevant. Still, student housing and dorm rooms have been built from the architect's dream during the last years, and now it is accepted, that this is not in accordance with what people desire - students are more interested in cheap housing. Renovations also show major changes in the homes. In Grønlandskvarteret, the results of the increasing rent following the first renovations have been re-evaluated, and the trouble with renting out the expensive apartments have led to a smarter way of renovating the remaining apartment blocks, which have made it possible to maintain a lower rent. The trend up until now has been to create bigger apartments, but it has now been realized, that it is a good idea to preserve one-bedroom apartments, since this type of dwelling appeals to many singles and people with low income. This also means that many people can return to the neighbourhood following renovations, because their home has not disappeared. This scenario will meet the needs of many people with lower incomes, but it may be simpler buildings containing the basic necessities. If everyone has cheap housing, Grønlandskvarteret will quickly become attractive and waiting lists will possibly be longer. With flexible rental, it is still possible to insure a quality in the area so the desired tenants, in order to create a mixed resident composition, are offered housing, but gentrification does not occur, since there is no rent gap, and people with a low income are not pushed out of the neighbourhood.

7. Conclusion

This chapter will present the findings of the report. The main research question that this thesis seeks to answer is:

How has the historical development in Grønlandskvarteret affected the current reputation of the neighbourhood, and what are the chances, that revitalization of the neighbourhood will lead to gentrification?

The first part of the research question has been investigated through a document analysis of articles written in local newspapers from 1960-2020 and interviews with local residents living in the neighbourhood. Grønlandskvarteret was initially a ground-breaking urban planning project. During the 1960's the neighbourhood was developed with social housing and different schools and institutions such as the kindergarten seminary and Aalborg Teknikum. However, especially the construction of the high-rise building on Grønlands Torv can be seen as a failed experiment from the beginning, which has been the root of many problems in the neighbourhood during the years. This seems to have affected the reputation of the neighbourhood ever since. One of the interviewees moved to the neighbourhood in 1965, which was around the time the high-rise building was finished, and he expresses that it was out of sheer provocation, because everyone said to him that people were not in their right minds in this neighbourhood. Another resident lived in the high-rise building as a child, and states that she would often experience assaults during that time. However, she just had to cross the road, and it was a completely different neighbourhood on the opposite side of the road. The problems with the high-rise building were there from the beginning, where there were difficulties with renting out the apartments, because people were not keen on living in a college type of house and people thought the rent was too high. In spite of numerous efforts over the years to create a better social environment in the neighbourhood, crime, drug abuse and vandalism always seems to return, most of it with roots connected to "Højhuset" and the area around Grønlands Torv. The problems were especially bad in the 1970's, where headlines in local newspapers were dominated by problems related to crime, vandalism, gang violence etc. The residents were threatened to silence, however ended up taking action against the problems. Through the 1980's and 1990's, the problems do not seem as extreme, with mostly positive stories in local newspapers, and a lot of different actions such as social environmental workers from Aalborg Municipality

that were instated in the area, and a holistic social plan for the neighbourhood which was created. In the new millennium the problems seem to escalate again, with arson, robberies and tragedies in the neighbourhood. There is a fear of the neighbourhood becoming a ghetto, which has led to the current initiatives about revitalizing Grønlandskvarteret through renovation of social housing, construction of new housing – both student, private and social housing, and the use of flexible rental in order to create a social mix in the residents. Some effects of the finished renovations can already be seen. Many of the former tenants have not returned due to, among other things, the high rent, and the new residents are mainly young people and families. The ones that have returned are mostly elderly people, which can be explained by the fact that they can get a high percentage of the rent paid through public housing support from the state, and also the fact that many of them have lived here for many years, which makes them more likely to return. Comments on social media shows, that the reputation of the neighbourhood is still, that it is a socially burdened neighbourhood, with alcoholics, vandalism, robberies, stabbings etc. and in general somewhat unsafe. Some even articulate it as ghetto-like and on level with the old Aalborg East. The interviewed residents do however have a different perception. The majority of the residents, describes the neighbourhood as a nice place to live with peace and quiet, and everything in close proximity. In fact, almost all of the residents do not think that there is anything missing from the area, they have everything they could wish for. Even though almost all of the residents have a positive perception of the area, they have all experienced that people who do not live in the neighbourhood have a different perception, among other thinking that it is a part of Aalborg East. It seems however that in many of the cases where people have a different perception, it is due to lack of knowledge. When investigating whether the revitalization of the neighbourhood will lead to gentrification, the reputation of the neighbourhood is something that could have a significant impact on this.

The second part of the research question have been investigated through the use of scenario building as a technique. Since the revitalization is an ongoing process, there are a lot of uncertainties connected to this, and the use of scenario building makes it possible to create four different scenarios of what the future could look like, and whether the neighbourhood will be gentrified. Through a theoretical framework about gentrification, different conditions for gentrification to occur was determined, and by combining these with analysis of the interviews, the two critical uncertainties that could determine whether the neighbourhood will be gentrified

were found. These are reputation and rent-level. Of the four scenarios created, two of them are most likely to happen. These are scenario 1 called “Revitalization failed”, and scenario 2 called Vesterbro 2.0. This can be concluded because some effects can already be seen in the neighbourhood, such as the increased rent in the renovated apartments. Therefore, it is not likely that the two scenarios with a low rent will occur. At most the rent level will stay the same in some of the settlements, that are not renovated as extensively. The first scenario suggests a future where the rent level is high, but the reputation is still bad in Grønlandskvarteret. This leads to trouble with attracting people to the neighbourhood and empty apartments, since the old tenants cannot afford to return. In this scenario it can be argued that gentrification occur on some level because of the high rent, that leads to the old tenants having been pushed out, but because the neighbourhood still has a bad reputation, people are resistant to moving to the neighbourhood.

In the second scenario, the neighbourhood has a good reputation and the rents are high. The neighbourhood has a whole different image and is very attractive, both because of the modern housing, the green areas and the location close to both the city centre and the university. The people living here now are students, young couples and families with a higher income, hence the middleclass, along with elderly people. In this scenario the neighbourhood has been gentrified, and people with a low income cannot afford to live here anymore – they have been pushed out, and the problems that the neighbourhood previously suffered from has along with the low income tenants moved to the next location with cheap housing.

All of the scenarios resemble some opinions of the interviewed residents, however most of the residents believe that the renovations will be positive for the neighbourhood, and that it will make the neighbourhood more attractive in the future. They however think that it is a shame with the increasing rents, and the majority believes that this will have an effect on the resident composition, as they all have examples of neighbours who do not wish to move back.

The future is difficult to predict, and since gentrification is a complex term where some of the processes related to this is still unclear and up for debate, along with many different definitions, this makes it extra difficult. However, if looking at gentrification in the classic sense, as the one Hamnett suggests, where there has to be a rent gap and a supply of gentrifiers, along with a preference for attractive inner city locations, it can be argued that one of these scenarios is likely to occur.

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