THE MOBILITIES OF BUDOLFI SQUARE
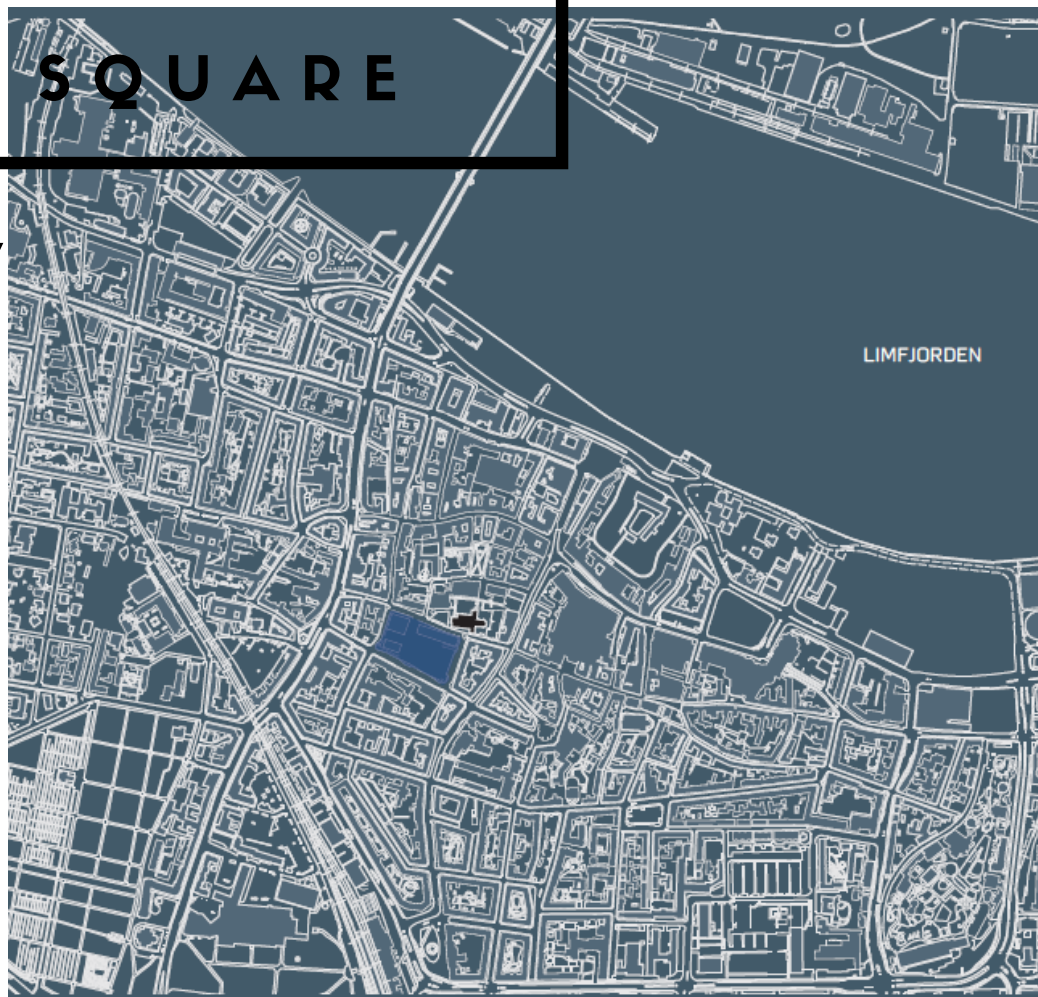
A study of user mobility and
mobility justice

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Abstract:

The importance of the human dimension in the city started to get highlighted in the 21st century, which led to the an immediate desire to achieve lively and sustainable cities. Opened in 2019, the transformed Budolfi Square was targeted for redevelopment by Aalborg city, in their new urban strategies. This thesis examines, how the configuration and semiotic systems within the new Budolfi Square affect users' mobility. Furthermore, it questions how these two dimensions affect the accessibility of the place, looking through the mobility justice lens. This is examined via the Staging Mobilities framework, through numerous literature reviews and observations of Budolfi Square space. During the observations, the focus was on: 1)the physical setting of Budolfi Square, 2)the semiotics of the place, 3)how people moved; mobile 'self' or mobile 'with', 4)the interaction between the users and their surroundings. It was determined that the users' mobility is clearly affected by the configuration and the semiotic dimension of Budolfi Square, since the mobile bodies make sense of the surroundings, as they move. Relating to the Staging Mobilities framework, a new user mindset had been identified at Budolfi Square: the consumer. From the discussion on mobility justice and accessibility, it was concluded that they are affected by the configuration and semiotics of the place. This through the planning of the retail spaces, the look of the place, and the lack of semiotics informing people about the place. It was also shown that the place has a changing character, depending on elements like climate and people using the space. Based on the findings, a number of recommendations, on how to make public spaces look more accessible are suggested.

Preface

This thesis was conducted by a student in MSc04, from the program of *Mobilities and Urban Studies*, at Aalborg University, Denmark. This thesis represents the final manifestation of the knowledge, skills and abilities, gathered throughout the study years within the field of Mobilities and Urban Studies. The goal is to develop an investigation that focuses on the contemporary built environment in relation to mobilities.

This investigation is developed within the conceptual framework of *Staging Mobilities*, and it is concerned with studying the how the users' mobility is affected by the physical settings of the chosen site, and facilitates a discussion on the accessibility of the place, from the mobility justice perspective. The study touches upon configuration analysis, the semiotic dimension, Critical Points of Contact theory, as well as accessibility and mobility justice concept.

Reading instructions

The sources in this paper are listed under the Harvard method, which refers them as (Surname, Year: Page). The unknown years are written as *n.d.*. The photos throughout this analysis are my own, unless they are referenced differently. It should be noted that, since the location of the investigation is in Denmark, a lot of material had to be translated. Hence, the marking *Own translation*, means that the referenced material is my own translation. Furthermore, the name of the site has been translated as well from *Budolfi Plads*, Danish name, into *Budolfi Square*, English translation. Please note that the names of the adjacent streets, as well as names mentioned in the historical background of the place, have been kept in their original Danish form, in order to preserve and to transpose the reader into the context.

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I would also like to express my deepest gratitude to my parents and family for providing me with unconditional love and support, throughout my years of study, and especially, through the challenging time of writing this thesis. All of which would not have been possible without them. My heartfelt thank you.

Andreea-Diana Vasile

Contents

Introduction 1

1.1 Mobilities new perspective

In the words of Phillip Vannini, people are moving creatures.(Vannini, 2010: 111) To move is a fundamental existential dynamic in humans' everyday life. From definitions, Mobilities are omnipresent. *"Moving your hand, walking, dancing, exercising, driving to work; moving home, going on holiday, marching, running away, immigrating, traveling, exploring, attending conferences.[...] From the kicks of a newborn baby to the travels of international business people, mobility is everywhere"*(Cresswell, 2006: 1)

According to mobility theorists, mobility is the result of movement, meaning, power, and represents the way people connect with the networks and the surroundings, in their movements. Furthermore, the concept of mobility extends on a broad spectrum of material and immaterial movements. Grieco is giving a better understanding of this, by stating that :

> *"Mobilities research in its broadest sense concerns not only physical movement, but also potential movement, blocked movement, immobilisation, and forms of dwelling and place-making"*
>
> (Sheller, 2011: 290)

Therefore, studying mobilities in an urban environment, centres not only on the movement of people, but most importantly on understanding the interlinkage between flows, networks, the moving subjects and their environment.

> *"Cities are the places where people meet to exchange ideas, trade or simply relax and enjoy themselves"*
>
> (Gehl, 2010: IX)

Following the words of Jan Gehl, the city's streets, squares and parks are *"the stage and the catalyst"*(ibid.: IX) of the many activities that people perform. However, the planning of the city's public domains can have an immense influence in the way these areas are being used and on the users themselves. To understand these influences, the city needs to be read; the language being the domain: streets, footpaths, squares, plazas, parks etc.(ibid.: IX)

Jan Gehl believes that: *"Everyone should have the right to easily accessible open spaces, just as they have a right to clean water"*(Gehl, 2010: IX) At the start of the 21st century, several new challenges for the urban environment were highlighting the importance of the human dimension in the city. It wasn't long until the vision of achieving lively, safe, sustainable and healthy cities, became an urgent desire. (ibid.: 6)

This investigation site is located in Aalborg City, the fourth biggest city in Denmark and the capital of North Jutland. A city of culture, trade and education, and recognized for its industrial and business development, Aalborg aspires to be an international and global city. Due to its strong business networks, Aalborg is proposed to become a Global City of Knowledge and Industry.(BusinessAalborg and Kommune, n.d.)

To live up to its standards, Aalborg Municipality came with plans of developing its urban environment, focusing especially on its city centre. The new strategies focus on balancing the city life and mobilities, into creating new experiences and improving the quality of living in the city. *'Liv in centrum'*(Life in center), a strategy for development of the city centre, created by Aalborg Municipality back in 2018, presents five main objectives: 1) More city and life quality; 2)More life in the urban space; 3)More nature in the city; 4)Different neighbourhoods; 5) Sustainable traffic options.(Heinisch et al., 2021: 17)

The site under investigation, Budolfi Square, is one of the places targeted in the development strategies. The redevelopment of the site has already been completed and opened in 2019.

1.2 Research question

How does the configuration and semiotic systems within Budolfi Square affect users' mobility, and do these two dimensions affect the accessibility of the place?

It is appealing to investigate the place at Budolfi Square, due to its recent major redeveloping project, as well as being located in the heart of Aalborg. Officially opened in 2019, Budolfi Square transformed from a parking lot surrounded by traffic and avoided by pedestrians, into a public place, created for and *with* the people of Aalborg. Given its recent redevelopment, it is worth examining the performance of the place in relation to its users, while at the same time creating an information archive about the place, the project and the transformation process.

The aim of this thesis is to examine the relations and interactions of the mobile bodies with the physical settings within Budolfi Square. This will be done through

analysing the configuration, the semiotic system, the visible Critical Points of Contact, and looking at the flow patterns. With the Staging Mobilities at its core, this thesis aims to examine the relationship between the mobile bodies and the environment, through how the configuration and semiotics within Budolfi Square affect the users' mobilities. Furthermore, it aims to take the discussion further, onto determining how these physical setting affect the accessibility of the place, from the mobility justice perspective. The scope of this thesis is firstly, to give a better understanding of Budolfi Square as a place and as a redevelopment project. Secondly, based on the outcomes of the analysis, to try and give recommendations guidelines on how to make public place look more accessible. It should be noted that this paper doesn't focus on the physical setting around the square, but only on the elevated platform - the square itself. Also, the thesis doesn't include extended reviews or in-depth analysis of the design and planning of the place.

This thesis is addressed as an additional piece of knowledge that can contribute to get a greater grasping of the field of mobilities, applied in the urban environment. Also, it can contribute to a better understanding of Budolfi Square as a redeveloped place. Beneficiaries of the results include Aalborg's municipality planners, possibly use it in their work on further redeveloping the city, and/or evaluating the performance of the redeveloped area in relation to its users. Other beneficiaries include scholars in the field of mobilities, and others interested in the work at Budolfi Square.

1.3 Project Overview

This section aims to familiarize the reader with the content of this paper, by giving short descriptions of this paper's chapters.

Chapter 2 explains the methods and processes that were used in collecting data and conducting research. It is described how the process was carried out. This includes observations as the main tool, visual ethnography, interviews on site, and translations of presentations and documents about Budolfi. Moreover, a primary conversation, which is added in the Appendix, is mentioned as being the starting point of this project.

Chapter 3 reflects upon the philosophy of science of this thesis, and introduces the reader to the conceptual framework: Staging Mobilities. The chapter aims to familiarize the reader with the nature of the thesis, and helps the reader get an overall understanding of the theme and purpose of the thesis.

Chapter 4 introduces the theories that are applied, in order to familiarize the reader with the theoretical framework and justify for the methods used.

Chapter 5 continues the theoretical foundation by setting the scene of this investigation, and placing the site in the urban context. First, a brief historical overview of the most important events is presented. This to understand the place and the role it play in the city of Aalborg. It is accompanied by historical photos that illustrate how the place changed over the years. Second, the project at Bu-

dolfi is presented, in order to understand the ideas behind it and what the public wanted from the new place.

Chapter 6 starts the analysis with describing the physical settings of the place. An aerial photo of the place is included, in order to better transpose the reader to the place under investigation. Afterwards, the user perspective upon the place is presented. Next are the observation outcomes, consisting of results on how people move and behave in the place. Flows heat map is included. Lastly, a new user mindset is identified.

Chapter 7 continues the analysis with describing the semiotic system at Budolfi and examining the users' interaction with it.

Chapter 8 identifies and analyses the visible Critical Points of Contact and presents how the users engage with them.

Chapter 9 consists of a conclusion and discussion of the analysis results. This answers the research question on how the users' mobility is affected by the environment at Budolfi Square.

Chapter 10 serves as a conclusion and discussion for the research question on whether the physical settings within Budolfi affect the accessibility of the place. The accessibility is approached from the mobility justice perspective. This discus-

sion is facilitated by Chapters 6, 7, and 8.

Chapter 11 reflects upon the analysis and presents the output: a guideline recommendations on how to make public places look more accessible. Furthermore, it reflect upon the work process through

positive criticism.

Chapter 12 contemplates on the alternative scenarios that this thesis could have been done, in the right circumstances. It puts the study into perspective by exploring possibilities for further work.

Methodology 2

This chapter presents the methodological process and tools that were used throughout this investigation, to answer the main problem formulation on *How does the configuration and semiotic system within Budolfi Square affect users' mobility, and do these two dimensions affect the accessibility of the place?*.

The starting point for the theme of this project was a brief conversation with a colleague, who mentioned her experience at Budolfi Square. Shortly after, it was decided that a more formal statement should be taken as evidence, and figure as the starting point statement for this project. The statement was gathered by conducting a semi-structured interview in Microsoft Teams, see appendix C on page 66 for the transcript of the interview.

It should be noted, that a later visit to the investigated site was done unintentionally, in the spare time. The visit was at the end on April, on a sunny day, and after restaurants were given permission to open again. Based on the outcomes of that visit, it was decided that the information an photos gathered then should be included in the analysis, since it proved to be very enriching and seemingly important for this study.

2.1 Observation

The method of observation was decided to be crucial for obtaining the necessary data, to help answer the problem formulation. The observations were performed in three different days during the week, see table. The reason behind doing them at approximately the same hour was not intentional, but due to certain limitations coming from the researcher and the outdoor climate.

Date	Time frame	Observations	Interviews
Tuesday 06/04/2021	11:30-13	13 via maps	0
Wednesday 07/04/2021	11:30-13	25 via maps	4
Thursday 08/04/2021	11-11:20	-	Interview with Chrisann - primary statement
Friday 09/04/2021	11-12	30 via maps	1

Table 2.1 Table presenting the dates and time frames of collecting data, as well as the number of observations and interviews collected in each day.

The purpose of the observations was to get information on how people inhabit the place, how they interact with the surroundings and what they interact with, observe the flows and patterns of movement, if any, see how they move (alone, following others), try and make a meaning of the place etc. The reasons for the observations have been based on the theoretical background, see chapter 4 on page 19, which will help answer the first part of the research question: whether the configuration and semiotic system within the chosen site, affects users' mobilities and in what way.

The way of doing the observations was decided after a first visit to the site. If initially the idea was to split the area into a couple of zones to cover more ground and have observations from different angles, after the first visit it was clear that the strategy must be changed. The place was small enough to be observed from one specific part, see fig. 2.1 on the following page, where the visibility was not obstructed and there were also two benches which made the observation process more comfortable. However, because it was a public space, the two spots were not always available, which led to disruptions in the observation process. Furthermore, the observations were conducted the beginning of April, when the weather was still cold, which limited the amount of hours of being outdoors, and the amount of people that were outside.

Figure 2.1 Budolfi aerial map illustrating the two benches, red dots on the map, used when conducting observations (GeoDanmark, 2020).

The mapping of the site was done following the first visit of the site also. For a better and easier understanding of the place when conducting observations, the major interaction points were noted. The following figure is an illustration of it, where the forest like paths and ramp are noted with letters **a, b, c**, the stairs with **1, 2, 3**, the red dot represents the open bakery, the green dots represent the other closed restaurants/cafes, the disrupted blue square is the elevator with entrance to the underground parking lot, while the disrupted yellow square is Budolfi Church, and the red circled P represents the exit to a parking lot.

Figure 2.2 Edited aerial map of Budolfi Square, used for observations and mapping. Original photo source:(GeoDanmark, 2020).

In order to have a continuity throughout the observations, a couple of set tasks were developed, when conducting observations: 1) mapping trajectories of individuals,

2) taking observation notes, 3) on site interviews, see appendix A on page 64 and appendix B on page 65 for example of templates.

The mapping consisted in tracing the movements and activities of the individuals or groups, from the moment they entered the place, until they left. This was done in order to get a better understanding of how people move in the place, and help identify how and why certain flow patterns were created. Although, these observations were done as accurate as possible, some people were lost among the others, and therefore, their path was left incomplete.

The observation notes were taken with the purpose of capturing people's expressions and their activities in a more detailed manner. Paying attention to users' facial expressions and details in the way they pursued their activities represented a great way to understand how they felt being in Budolfi Square, but also the effect of Budolfi Square had on its users.

In addition to mapping and observation notes, on site interviews were conducted, see appendix B on page 65 for interview template. This because the project evolves around the user at Budolfi Square, which meant that getting their opinions and looking through the user perspective was an important part of the data collection. During the interviews, people were asked about their familiarity with Budolfi Square and their purpose for being there. This was done in order to gather knowledge about whether or not the familiarity influenced they moved and performed activities in that place. The results proved that people who knew the area or lived close, were more comfortable and have positive answers towards the openness of the place, and navigating in the area.

Before starting the process of interviewing users, some boundaries and protective measures had to be taken. When performing the interviews, social distancing was carefully respected and the interviewer wore a face mask. This was done in accordance with the COVID-19 pandemic protective measures, as a way to make sure that the interviewees feel safe and respected. Additionally, the interviewer wore the student card attached in sight, with the aim of looking more professional and hoping that people will be more willing to participate in a short interview. Although the measures were taken, doing interviews proved to be very challenging and felt like invading people's privacy. The main reason for this was that most people were transiting the place, and therefore could not be stopped, while others were either eating or relaxing, and therefore refused to participate. It should be noted that the interviews were not the main source of data, hence the bigger number in observation notes and mappings. This is because the focus is not on people's individual experiences and opinions, but rather on how certain characteristics of the Budolfi Square is affecting the way people move and interact.

In order to give a robust understanding for the collected data, the observations were completed with photos. Therefore, visual ethnography represents an important method in the process.

2.2 Visual Ethnography

"Ethnography is an inductive method where the theory is not something that should be tested in the empirical study, but rather inferred from the empirical study in interplay with more generalizing theories"

(Lange, 2019: 6)

Addressing the quote, the ethnographic aspect was seen to match the purpose of this project, since the aim of this project is not to test the theories chosen. For this thesis, visual ethnography, in the form of photography, is used to *"capture, describe and analyze the movement of people, as they are manifested in urban space"*(ibid.: 4) Its purpose is to get a better understanding of the reality under investigation, since it illustrates only fragments of that reality and it does not seek to provide an absolute truth.

Ethnography is an anthropological method (ibid.: 5), that seeks to *"learn, observe, understand, describe, analyze and communicate about people who co-act with each other in specific situations and certain places"*(Larsen and Meged, 2012: 303-304) seen in (Lange, 2019: 5). The ethnographic process is based on qualitative and context-focused techniques, aiming to develop a *"deep understanding of the group's culture and behavior or the living life of the place which you before the analysis was more or less stranger to"*(ibid.: 5)

Depending on the field of study, the ethnographic process is seen differently. Sociologists focus on *"concrete face-to-face relationships and social interactions"*(ibid.: 5), while geographers use it on *"specific places (squares, shopping centres, tourist attractions, cafes...) or in urban mobile practices (running/cycling/walking....as resident/tourist/commuter....)."*(ibid.: 5)

The way of doing visual ethnography depends very much on the scope, location, rules, regulations etc. of the case under investigation. For this thesis, photography was seen as the best suited way. The visual is what defines the space we encounter and experience, and images are the screenshots that make it able to communicate how people experience the world. Photographs are the visual representations of *"our personal identities, narratives, lifestyles, cultures and societies, as well as with definitions of history, time, space, place, reality and truth"*(Pink, 2013: 1) However, *"the meanings of photographs are contingent and subjective; they depend on who is looking, and when they are looking"*(Lange, 2019: 9), and what are they looking for.

The same photograph can be used in contradictory scenarios, or may have different or changing meanings. (Pink, 2013: 74-75)

Following the steps taken when doing observations, before taking pictures it was important to set some limits and rules. Because the investigated area is a public space, no preliminary special agreements had to be made. However, the privacy of the people photographed had to be respected. During the data collection process, a total of 61 pictures were taken at Budolfi Square, capturing the configuration of the place, the semiotics dimension, as well as people performing acts. The pictures were taken with the researcher's personal phone, which resulted in a decent quality, however the brightness and clarity of the photos were affected, while the clarity of some is off. Additionally, the quality of the photos was affected by the way the pictures were taken. The photos showing the configuration of the place and the semiotic systems were taken freely, without any constraint. The situation changed when people were in the frame; for the researcher it felt like trespassing people's privacy, and not a lot of pictures with users were taken. Being a small enclosed space, it was easy to notice what everybody was doing, especially if someone was taking notes and pictures. This led to the impossibility of staying anonymous and unseen. Furthermore, to fall under the rules of photography in public spaces, the faces of people captured in the photos were blurred, in order to hide their identity.

2.3   Budolfi Square as a case

The aim of the following section is to express the meaning of using the case study as a method and the reasons behind choosing Budolfi Square as the research site for this project.

From the way it is defined by the Dictionary of Sociology, a case of study is a *"detailed examination of a single example of a class of phenomena, a case study cannot provide reliable information about the broader class, but it may be useful in the preliminary stages of an investigation, since it provides hypotheses which may be tested systematically with a larger number of cases"*(Flyvbjerg, 2001: 66) seen in (Vasile, Sabanero, et al., 2020: 9). A further explanation by Flyvbjerg states that the use and the way the analysis of the case study is conducted, shapes the meaning of the definition, and, therefore the definition itself has many misconceptions regarding the limitations expressed.

The decision of using a case study is to understand how the configuration and semiotic system within Budolfi Square affect users' mobility, analysis which will facilitate a discussion about whether these two dimensions affect the accessibility of the place. This generates the relation between the theoretical research and the

empirical study. It is the study of the moving bodies' relation to the transformed area of Budolfi Square. Throughout the project, the focus is on the people using the place, and how they interact with the surroundings.

Budolfi Square is chosen for this investigation due to its size, location and interests for the site. The mapped area of the site, has a manageable ground size, which can be covered by a single person to a more or lesser extent. The layout also make it possible to be divided into parts and section, which can be named in order to make the data collection process easier and more precise. In terms of location, the square is conveniently placed, which gives easy access, as well as an already well developed knowledge of the place. Being closely located made it possible to plan the visit of the site on multiple days. The fact that there was already existing knowledge about the place, to some extent, and that the place was familiar to the researcher, helped making the investigation more confident. This would not have been possible if the investigation was to be carried out in a different city or farther location. Moreover, professional and personal interests and curiosities were ea key factor in choosing the Budolfi Square.

2.4 Translation of material

While in the process of gathering initial data to understand the place under investigation, it was discovered that all the documents related to the history of Budolfi square or its redevelopment project, were in Danish. Therefore, a good amount of time was spent on doing translations from Danish to English. The translations were done using own knowledge, Google Translate and native Danish speakers. The reason why the translations are considered part of the methodology is because not only they represent an important part of the data collection process for the project, but they are also very important and necessary. The lack of information available in English proved a very big struggle in learning about the place. Providing this kind of information for fellow international students and experts, gives the chance for others to learn from this project's practices. Hence, in addition to the intended purpose of this project, the translation of the documents makes this project also an archive for information related to the history of Budolfi Square and about its redevelopment project.

Philosophy of Science 3

Hansen and Simonsen defines philosophy of science as being engaged in reflecting upon the approaches, one uses to obtain the knowledge about the world, produced by science. (Hansen and Simonsen, 2004: 11. Own translation) Hence, philosophy of science can be understood as 'the glasses' through which one sees the world. Transposing this into the case of this project, the world consists of the configuration and semiotic system within Budolfi Square. The purpose of this chapter is therefore a reflection upon the methods and approaches used to gather knowledge to determine how the configuration and semiotic system within Budolfi Square affect users' mobility, and whether the accessibility of the place is affected by these two dimensions. Additionally, the conceptual framework of this project, *Staging mobilities*, will be presented lastly. This in order to make the transition towards the theoretical framework of the project.

3.1 Phenomenology

> *"Phenomenology is about how the reality stands forwards to the human mind."*
>
> (Lassen, 2019: 14)

The phenomenological approach was chosen in accordance with the predominant method used in this case study, which is observations. Smith describes phenomenology greatly, by stating that it is *"the study of 'phenomena'"*(Smith, 2013) seen in (Vasile, Nielsen, et al., 2020: 14), translated into looking at the way things appear, the way they appear in our experiences, or the way we get to experience things and the meanings they have in our experiences. Phenomenology examines the cognitive processes in the everyday life (Delanty and Strydom, 2003) seen in (Vasile, Nielsen, et al., 2020: 14), and to add to this statement, Lassen argues that *"phenomenology evolves around human experience and their perception of the world in which they live "*(Lassen, 2019)seen in (Vasile, Nielsen, et al., 2020: 14)

To interpret the world, one must observe it first, and to do so, there are three basic rules the observer must comply with:

1. **Rule of brackets**.*"Personal prejudices and before-knowledge have to be put*

aside"(Lassen, 2019: 15) The rule urges the researcher to delimit all personal before-knowledge, in order to avoid biased results. Another way it to make it clear for the reader, to know how it affected the research process.

2. **Rule of descriptions**. The rule is about bringing putting the descriptions of experiences first, and as detailed as possible. (ibid.: 15)

3. **Rule of equalities**. As the title suggests, all experiences and observations must be collected and treated equally, in order to avoid prejudice. (ibid.: 15)

In conducting this thesis, all rules have been applied accordingly. Moreover, the *rule of brackets* was especially important, not only to separate the researcher's opinions regarding the Budolfi Square site when collecting data and doing observations, but also to interpret the observations and interviews. The importance comes from the fact that one's before-knowledge can affect how it views the surroundings and understands the words. For example, in the interviews, people were asked if they think the place looks open or private. Despite the researcher's beliefs, the word "private" came to have a positive meaning, in the way that the majority liked the private feeling of the place, because it was away from traffic noise, and "airy", with not many people. This is likely because the interviews were conducted in rather cold days of April, during the COVID-19 pandemic, when 4 out of 5 restaurants/cafes on the site were closed, and not many people were outside. Had all the restaurants/cafes been open and summertime, opinions might have changed. Therefore, the logical thinking filter had to be applied throughout the analysis and conclusion.

In phenomenology *"the subject observes how objects appear for the subjects"*(Vasile, Nielsen, et al., 2020: 15) Hence, the body is the most important tool in phenomenology, because it exists in the world and it makes sense of the surroundings by experiencing the world.

Considering the reasons mentioned above, phenomenology is a relevant approach to use to study how the mobile bodies inhabit and are affected by their surrounding at Budolfi Square.

3.2   Hermeneutics

Additionally to phenomenology, the hermeneutics have been applied, in the shape of the hermeneutic circle.fig. 3.1. Understanding the hermeneutic philosophy dates as further back as Aristotle's division, dividing philosophy into: theoretical, practical and poetical. The hermeneutic philosophy is interested with the practical division, which Aristotle argues that it is about the *"changeable, temporal issues that 'could be or could not be"*(Babich, 2017: 219)

Furthermore, in the field of practice *"Each part gives sense to the whole and the other way around"*(ibid.: 220) Judging by the meaning of this, hermeneutic philosophy is about understanding each element of the whole individually, in order to understand the whole, and the other way around.
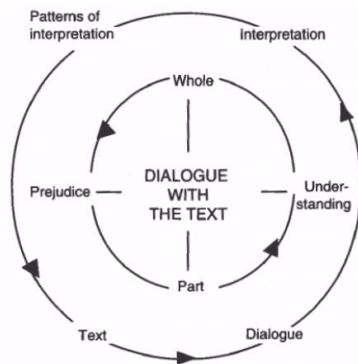

Figure 3.1 Diagram of the hermeneutic circle
(Danermark et al., 1997: 160).

On that account justifies Heidegger's form of the hermeneutic circle. Hans-Georg Gadamer describes the hermeneutic circle as being a universal way of understanding, where the goal is to have a *fusion of horizons*, of subject's 'A' interpretation with subject's 'B' understanding of *the whole*. An example hereof is the decision to look first into the historical, as well as all the documentation about the project of Budolfi Square. This because it was important to understand the aims, vision and reasons (the small parts) of Budolfi Square, in order to understand its current configuration (the whole).

3.3 Staging Mobilities

"it is interaction, not place, that is the essence of the city and city life"

(Jensen, 2013: 10)

This project approaches *Staging Mobilities* analytical perspective as its theoretical understanding and framing. Ole B. Jensen starts describing this approach as a way towards *"a new understanding of the relationship between movement, interaction and their environments"*(ibid.: 7). In Jensen's definition, *Staging Mobilities* is *"a process of creating lived mobility practices and the material preconditions of these"*(ibid.: 8)

> *"Mobilities do not 'just happen' or simply 'take place'. Mobilities are carefully and meticulously designed, planned, and 'staged' (from above). However, they are equally importantly acted out, performed and lived as people are 'staging themselves'(from below)."*

(ibid.: 7)

Hence, staging mobilities is the process between 'being staged' and 'mobile staging'. For example, traffic signs telling drivers were they are allowed to drive or not, traffic lights urging to stop or cross the street, choosing the mode of transport by your liking or walking in the rhythms of the sidewalk. The notions of 'staging' and the 'the staged' have their inspiration in Ervin Goffman's analyses on social interactions. His concept on 'front stage/back stage' is here applied in order to illustrate a dynamic character of the urban life.(ibid.: 9)

The following model represents the visual understanding of *Staging Mobilities*. The illustration shows how the analysis of the mobile situation is divided into three focus field: the physical settings with material spaces and design; social interactions; and embodied performances. These three particular fields reflect the way the investigation in this project is performed. For example, imagine the person who is using the place under investigation, creating the 'mobilities in situ'. According to the model, this situational practice is staged from above, through the physical settings of the place, such as the design itself, paths, signs, while the person is performing mobilities and staging from below, by the means of choosing how to engage with the surroundings, such as choosing the route to walk, the activities, to pay attention or ignore the other people etc.

Figure 3.2 Diagram illustrating *Staging Mobilities* understanding.(Jensen, 2014: 15).

From this perspective, observing how people *"carry their bodies"*(Jensen, 2014: 82) at a much more detailed level, it is possible to identify user typologies. When observing the social interactions and the users' movements, a more detailed analysis is needed, in order to understand 'the whole' or this project. Therefore, identifying user mindsets is considered. Following the example of Ole B. Jensen work in *Designing Mobilities*, the observations were conducted both from the 'bird's eye view' and 'eye level with the mobile subjects'. Or as Jensen defines them , the 'rive' and the 'ballet' principles.

Getting the bird's-eye view means looking at the site and its details: benches, paths etc. and getting a *"homogeneous understanding of the collective stream of mobile bodies"*(ibid.: 82) In contrast, observing at eye level is about moving with the mobile subjects, noticing gestures, interactions, negotiations happening. Getting such in-depth and detailed knowledge about the mobile subjects, enables identifying user mindsets. From exclusively visual observations in an indoor retail environment, Jensen identifies three typologies: the drifter, the determined and the transitter. The drifter is characterised by a relaxed attitude, unfocused and having a slow pace. It

performs activities such as hanging out, staying, meeting or playing. The second mindset is the determined, characterised by being busy, focused and with a medium pace. Examples of activities are shopping, meeting or wayfinding. The last user mindset, the transitter, is as the name suggest in transit. It is busy, focused, and with a high pace.

Theory 4

The following chapter presents the theoretical background this thesis uses in conducting the investigation. Firstly, semiotics are introduced. They influence the way people move, act and interact with their surroundings, hence their mobility. Hereafter, the notions of being 'mobile with' and the networked self are described. Critical Points of Contact theory is presented, in relation with the flows, since they are influenced by the previous theories. Lastly, accessibility and mobility justice is described.

4.1 Semiotics

"The environment is 'read' as a semiotic system in order to make sense of the situation at hand as well as it shapes and affords particular interpretations and action opportunities to the acting individual"

(Jensen, 2013: 39)

The signifying and interpretive dimension may be considered vital elements of the the material spaces. In traffic, in a shopping centre or in a public place, people move and act the way they do, because of semiotic environments and their ability to read the surroundings.

"Signs mean things. They also do things.[. . .]Often, signs work with matter and directly control movement and behaviour [. . .] They deliver access, something we are granted or denied."

(ibid.: 40)

Therefore, the concept of the mobile semiotics is concerned with *"how signs (in their broadest possible sense) afford, process, and coordinate(or obstruct) the physical circulation and movement of people, vehicles, and goods in more or less codifies systems of infrastructure"*(Jensen, 2014: 46)

"Semiotics is the study of signs and signification in general."(Jensen, 2013: 39) One of the founders of Semiotics is considered to be Charles Sanders Peirce, who sees semiotics as a *"form of logic"*(ibid.: 39) Peirce categorized semiotics into icons, indexes and symbols, which are defined by their resemblance to an object, direct and

existential connection with an object, and respectively, the relation to the object is a matter of social convention.(Jensen, 2013: 40)

For a more comprehensive meaning of the semiotics in the area under investigation, *Geosemiotics* were applied.

> *"Geosemiotics connect the visual signs to their placement in order to comprehend which actions and interactions are afforded and encouraged as well as which are prevented or obstructed"*
>
> (ibid.: 40)

Judging by the quote and the definitions given by Scollon and Scollon, geosemiotics encompass the ability to locate the *"material locations of signs"*(Jensen, 2014: 46). To find the context, the *"indexicality"*(Jensen, 2013: 40), before we can interpret the readings. Taking in consideration the ability of the semiotic systems to *"create mobilities"*(ibid.: 40), based on the statements presented previously, it was considered important to include the semiotic study into the analysis of this project.

4.2 'Mobile withs'

> *"The Street is a stage, and the sense that an audience is watching pervades the gestures and movements of the players on it"*
>
> (Jensen, 2013: 45)

> *"People's subject positions are mediated by their habitual activities in moving about the city"*
>
> (ibid.: 47)

People make sense of their environment as they move in it.(Jensen, 2014: 47) In their movement, people travel in groups, 'mobile with', or alone, 'mobile self'. Ole B. Jensen describes the 'mobile with' as the *"particular interaction dynamics that are created when a 'party of more than one' is on the move"*(ibid.: 47) In Goffman's definition, the 'with' is *"a party of more than one whose members are perceived to be 'together'"*(Jensen, 2013: 52)

On one hand, examples of 'mobile withs' can be people waiting at the bus line, pedestrians and bicyclists waiting at the street lights, passengers in a mean of public transport (plane,train,bus etc.), people in their cars driving on the highway or waiting at street lights, groups walking around in a shopping centre, people in an elevator and on sidewalks, etc. In these examples, the participants are not familiar with each other, and therefore, 'temporary congregations' with unfocused interactions.(ibid.:

55) On the other hand, many of the 'mobile withs' are composed of people acquainted or very familiar with each other, therefore in focused interaction. These meetings can be arranged, like going on a holiday, or coincidental, like meeting a friend on the sidewalk and decide to accompany each other. Additionally, in between the fully planned and coincidental meeting, there can be the 'going on a shopping trip with a friend' or 'a walk'. These kind of 'mobile withs' can have a prior established route or the intention of drifting around, without a specific aim or planned route. (ibid.: 55)

Jensen identifies two kinds of 'mobile withs': 1) *Stretched mobile with*, defined as *"people linked as they move in different settings"*(ibid.: 55), for example people connected through their phones, and 2) *Co-present movile with*, defined as *"people moving together in time-space"*(ibid.: 55), for example people walking together.
At the same time, he argues that the 'mobile with' can often be spontaneous and situational, and therefore, a certain *"negotiation in motion"*(ibid.: 56) occurs. That happens when arguing which mode of transport or route to take, or splitting the away, in order to be more efficient. These arguments, fights and splittings, results in a disruption of the 'mobile withs'.

In combination with semiotics, flows occur and they can be identified in patterns, by mapping them. Mapping them is an illustration of how people move in the area, therefore an illustration of how the physical settings and semiotic systems are affecting the user mobility at Budolfi Square. Additionally, Critical Points of Contact were added because they can give valuable insights and they complete the previous theories.

4.3 Critical Points of Contact

> *"The discussion about CPC is not just an issue of technical efficiency or cool design. Issues of social justice, accessibility, social exclusion and power lie within this conceptual discussion"*
>
> (Jensen and Morelli, 2011: 39)

A Critical Point of Contact (CPC) is a *node*, or a *handshake*(**OBJensen**) between networks. In this sense, the *node* is to be understood as *"a point at which two lines of systems meet or cross: a network node"*(ibid.: 37) In other words, these handshakes represent the interaction between both physical and virtual systems, people and objects. Jensen and Morelli argue that *"the many networks orchestrating and facilitating contemporary everyday life are dependent on the strategic sites where the network meet and establish contact"*(ibid.: 36) Hence, the notion of CPCs can be used as a useful tool to *"deepen out understanding of the actual life within networks"*(ibid.: 36)

Furthermore, Jensen and Morelli have identified three analytical dimension of CPCs.

– Technical:functionality, urban logistics,relation to wider city network

– Social: user groups, public domains, ways of experiencing power, feeling of being 'moved' socially and individually.

– Aesthetic:design codes,art, commercials/ads, signage, symbols. (Jensen and Morelli, 2011: 40)

Initially, identifying any Critical Points of Contact at Budolfi Square, was not taken in consideration. However, during the observations, there was a visible 'hot spot', that clearly disrupted the flows, created mobilities, and mostly it was 'defining' for the place. Additionally, the idea that Budolfi Square is a CPC in itself arose. Therefore, it was decided that the theory should be briefly introduced.

The semiotics, 'mobile withs' and CPCs affect how people move and behave in an environment. Considering that all aspects are part of the configuration of the place, it give relevancy to use them in order to answer the problem formulation.

4.4 Accessibility and Mobility justice

"There seems to be a consensus that there is a crisis of public space that is related to changing patterns of mobility [. . .]"

(Sheller, n.d.[a]: 1)

"Freedom of mobility [. . .] might be understood as pertaining to spatial affordances embedded in socio-spatial context, rather than vested in individual or group motilities ('motility' being the potential for mobility)"

(ibid.: 7)

In the words of Flamm and Kauffmann, motility is focused on *"how an actor builds his [or hers] relationship with space"*(ibid.: 8), while the concept of accessibility is about *"the possibilities [for mobility] afforded by a given territory"*(ibid.: 8)

Sheller examines these concepts, by considering mobility of freedom in relation to the motility of various individuals and groups, and in relation to the accessibility of spaces and their affordances of mobility.(ibid.: 8)

To begin with, Sheller takes the perspective of Orlando Patterson on freedom. He identifies three types of freedoms of mobility.

– Personal Freedom: *"personal mobility freedom is often most easily imagined as the capacity to enter and exit national spaces"*(ibid.: 3) and the 'no constraints' mobility freedom. However, there can be both natural and social constraints.

They vary from physical capacities (abilities, disabilities), terrain (icy/sharp surfaces, steps, uneven surfaces), spatial and temporal (walls, gates, schedules, locks). Additionally, there are social obligations, such as family ties, and mental and attitudinal constraints.(ibid.: 3) Furthermore, Sheller states that *"age, race, ethnicity, religion and nationality may likewise become factors that either enable or delimit forms of personal freedom of mobility"*(ibid.: 4)

– Sovereignal Freedom: is defined as *"the power to restrict the freedom of others or to empower others[...]"*(ibid.: 4) It is less individual, and more relational. By empowering some to be more mobile, while denying mobility privileges to others through the social and built environment, it creates forms of mobility injustice. Examples vary from imprisonment, taxes, charges for movement, blocking the traffic for presidential convoy or allowing cars to park on the side walk. (ibid.: 4-5)

– Civic Freedom: is *"the capacity of adult members of a community to participate in its life and governance[...]"*(ibid.: 5) This implies the ability to access public spaces to assemble and move freely, to allow information to flow without censoring/blocking, freedom of communication, etc. Limitations on civic mobility include privatisation of public spaces, expansion of gated communities, increased surveillance on the streets, etc. (ibid.: 6)

The idea of public space is central when it comes to spaces that allow, enable and encourage mobility. Thus, Sheller argues that public space is an accessible space, where *"no individual has a claim, no one can put down roots, but all can momentarily occupy"*(ibid.: 8). Hence, it becomes a space that enables both personal and civic mobility freedom, while alternating forms of sovereignal mobility freedom, who are continuously exercising their power and actually shaping the public spaces by their own means.

Creating such uneven and unequal access to mobility brings up the questions related to mobility justice discussion.

> *"Mobility justice is an overarching concept of thinking about how power and inequality inform the governance and control of movement, shaping the pattern of unequal mobility and immobility in the circulation of people, resources and information"*
>
> (Sheller, n.d.[b]: 23)

If 'mobility justice' was imagined as being about transportation and urban accessibility (ibid.: 22), recent mobility-related works expand this perspective. Among others, it includes *"exclusions from public space and the 'right to the city' linked to spatial justice"*(ibid.: 23)

Moreover, mobility justice is approached as a 'mobile concept', drawing on the mobile ontology as the new mobilities paradigm, where *movement* is perceived as *"foundational condition of being, space, subjects and power [...]"*(Sheller, n.d.[b]: 24). These concepts go hand-in-hand, which makes it important to understand each concept in relation to the others, to get the whole picture.

Setting the scene 5

A presentation of the investigated site is crucial for getting a comprehensive idea about the study that is conducted in throughout this project. Therefore, this chapter's purpose is to provide that information, by starting out with a historical review of Budolfi Square. This is important in order to understand not only the site in its true meanings, but to get an idea of the importance the place has for the city and for its residents. Continuing, there will be an in-depth description of the physical setting of Budolfi Square. The meaning for this description is to locate and understand the investigated area. Following, an overview of the project of redevelopment is presented, to get the idea of what the involved parties were aiming to achieve with this redevelopment. In the end of the chapter there will be a summary, highlighting the main information .

Budolfi Square is situated in the heart of Aalborg, a city located in the North Jutland part of Denmark. The city of Aalborg is one of the biggest cities in Denmark, with a population estimated of 219.509 inhabitants in 2021 (Kommune, 2021b), and a forecast of growth up to 233.380 inhabitants for 2030 (Kommune, 2021a). Aalborg finds itself being a busy multinational city, with an entire web of business and social networks. Furthermore, Aalborg City is recognized as the North Jutland's most important cultural and commercial centre. (Miljøforvaltningen, 2009: 28)

Historical review of Budolfi Square

Budolfi Square or *Skolegadekvarteret* (The School Street Quarter), as it was known back in the days, has its beginnings in the medieval city of Aalborg; its location and the way it took shape makes it one of the oldest neighbourhoods in Aalborg. It has a rich history and the many changes that it went through give a special character to the place. (ibid.: 8. Own translation) Starting off, Budolfi Church represents an important landmark in the city of Aalborg. Combining the Gothic and baroque styles, the church has been in the same place since the 1000s, becoming a cathedral in the 1554. (ibid.: 8.Own translation)

Ever since the Renaissance period, Aalborg started to grow and expand, and therefore, started adding more streets, connecting the city and so Budolfi Square was formed. Nowadays, after many changes in the configuration of the city, the square

is found in between Algade, Budolfi Plads street and Vingårdsgade, see fig. 5.1 for illustration.
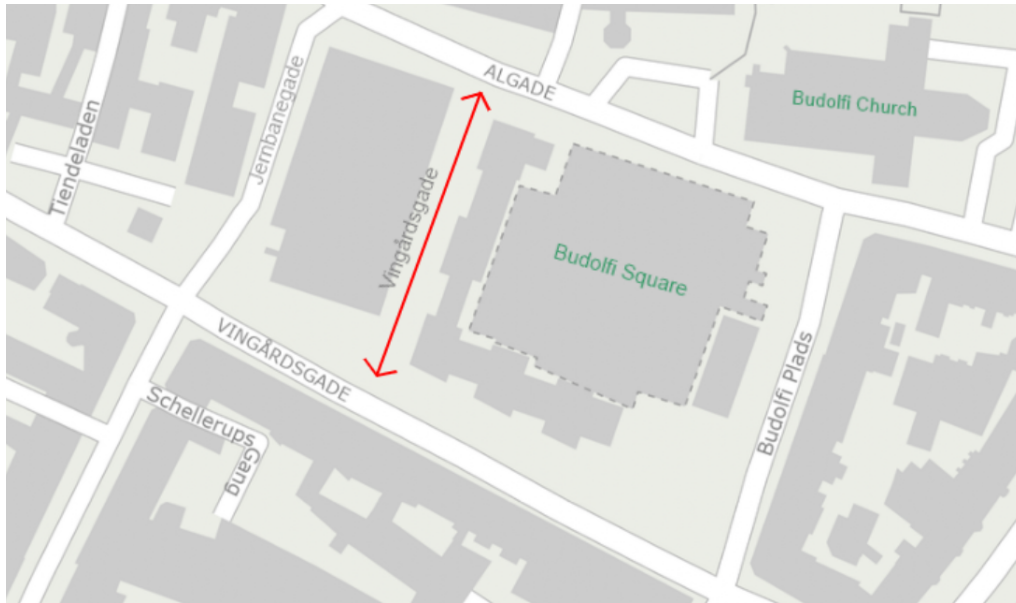

Figure 5.1 Map showcasing the location of Budolfi Square. Missing street names and tags have been added to the original.(GeoDanmark, n.d.).

The area didn't always have the good reputation that it has today. In fact, Skolegadekvarteret, which consisted of Firkanten Kirkegyde, Svingelen, Algade and Skolegade, see fig. 5.2 on the facing page, was seen as a *"slum with a bad reputation"*(Miljøforvaltningen, 2009: 10. Own translation).

The bad reputation got associated with The School District in the 1850s, when the place starts to be recognised as "Aalborg's entertainment district", which was filled with pubs, brothels and games of chance. The district became an obvious problem after the railway to North Jutland gets moved to its current location. People who came from the trains station wanting to to the city, had to go through the district. As a way to solve this, Boulevarden was constructed, in order to redirect people from the "infamous" district. (ibid.: Own translation)
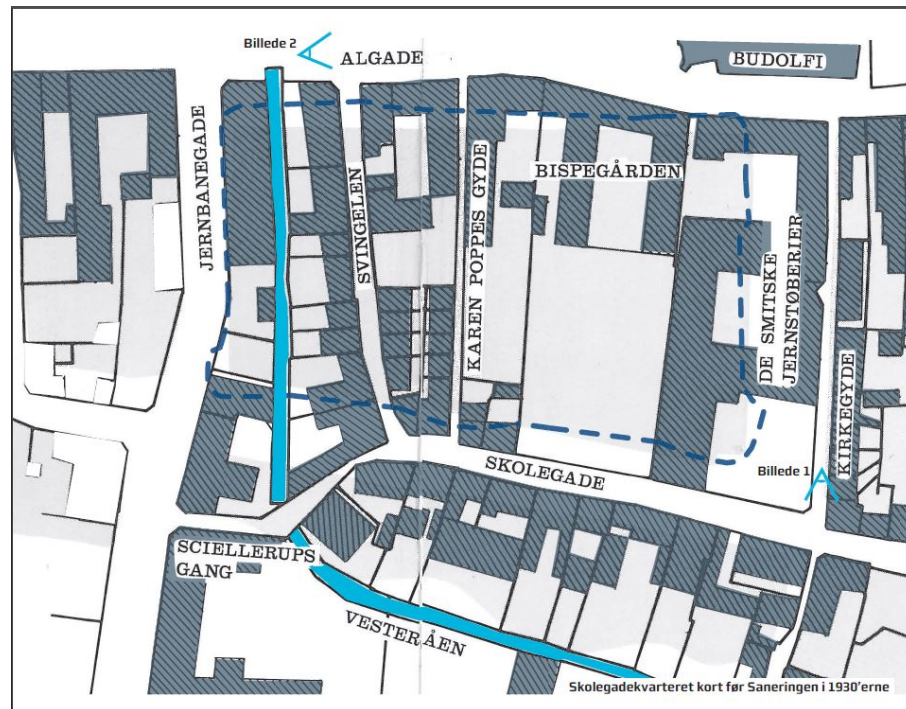
Figure 5.2 1930s map illustrating the Skolegadekvarteret.(Miljøforvaltningen, 2009).

The following section represents a summary of the most important events and changes that Budolfi Square has been through.

– 1930s: The beginning of the '30s marked the beginning of transformation for Budolfi Square. The reconstruction plans envisioned a fresh start for the district, showing the image of a *"light, airy and healthy city with modern houses"*(ibid.: 10.Own translation). The construction of Vestebro, parallel to Boulevarden, was seen as *"a symbol of modern progress"*(ibid.: 10.Own translation); the road's purpose was to accommodate the ever increasing traffic, connecting the city to the bridge over the Fjord. Later on, followed a demolition of 43 buildings within the district, with the same purpose - widening the roads to make space increasing traffic. Skolegade, see fig. 5.2, became *Vingårdsgade*, and even so, the place was still seen as infamous and unhygienic. Hence, it was decided that the place should be transformed into a large open area, suitable for markets and events.(ibid.: 10.Own translation)

Borgmesterens intensioner bag saneringen af bydelen: "I ste-
det for de gamle, usunde og tæt sammenpakkede rønner, der
ikke alene er i vejen for trafikken, men også tager synet fra
byens skønneste bygningsværker, skal der nu skabes en smuk
og festlig plads."
Aalborgbogen 1989

Området efter Saneringen I 1930'erne

Figure 5.3 Photo illustrating Budolfi Church area in 1930. Caption: *"The mayor's intentions behind the redevelopment of the district: "Instead of the old, unhealthy and tightly packed runes that not only get in the way of traffic, but also take the view from the city's most beautiful buildings, a beautiful and festive space must now be created"*(Miljøforvaltningen, 2009: 11.Own translation).

– 1940s/WW2: After taking the decision of creating a large open space, they tried to expand the eastern wing of the church by 14m. However, the construction failed, and with the start of The Second World War, Budolfi Plads Square was filled with shelters and covered in soil. (Miljøforvaltningen, 2009: 10. Own translation)

– 1960s: It was now the time to completely eliminate everything associated with Skolegadekvarteret, and hopefully all the bad reputation with it. Budolfi Square was rebuilt to accommodate a dense crowd and to highlight the medieval style of Buodlfi Church. Budolfi House, Denmark's first Kvickly market (which introduced a new shopping store concept: food market, manufactory, hardware, car service and an additional fuel tank with self-service) , Danske Bank and Vingårds House were built, see fig. 5.4 on the facing page. However, these constructions were very much in contrast with the surroundings, because they had the functionalist/modernist expression. Furthermore, the need for parking lots increases, as well as the need for a bigger retail area.(ibid.)

Figure 5.4 Photo illustrating the making of supermarket Kvickly, with remaining of Svingelen in the background. (Miljøforvaltningen, 2009: 13).

– 1988: The shopping area needs to be extended even further, which results in closing the car service and fuel tank.

– 1990: Proposals for remodeling and adding peripheral buildings are brought up. The authorities need to wait for termination of the lease before starting anything.

At the evaluation done in 2009 by Aalborg Municipality, it was said that after many changes (presented previously), Budolfi Square area has a good combination of commercial and residential. It holds many cultural institutions, such as: The Student House, Wolfsen Gallery, the Historical Museum, City Hall and the old Courthouse. The heavy traffic in the area was concluded to have a positive aspect, giving a lively feel during the day. The parking lot was one of the major most used in Aalborg Centre. Looking at the pedestrian level, it was recognized that traffic was prioritized, and the square with the parking lot was a barrier for the people, who were avoiding it. The medieval character traces were decided to be worthy of preservation.

Budolfi Project Overview

The new Budolfi area represents a total of 13,800 m^2.The transformation process of Budolfi started in 2015, with a design period lasting until 2018, until the place was finally inaugurated in 2019.(SLA, n.d.) The parties involved in this project were SLA,

byMUNCH, Kjaer & Richter, NCC, ÅF Lighting and Baslev Consulting Engineers A / S. (Aalborg Kommune, n.d.; SLA, n.d.)

The redevelopment plans had a start in 2010, when an initial debate was held by Aalborg Municipality, in order to discuss the site's potentials. A second debate, together with a questionnaire, followed in the spring of 2015, for the public. It was based on the proposal from the 2010 debate inputs. Stakeholders and all interested parties, could express their opinion regarding the proposal. The reason behind it being the involvement of the citizens in the transformation process, since they will be the ones to benefit from the area.(Aalborg Kommune, n.d.) The data collected was summarized into a report, which will be used in this project to get a greater understanding process the Budolfi project went through. It will also help analyse the end product, by looking at the users' opinions.

> *"As a new layer to the city's history, the square has been transformed into an attractive, elevated urban space with good opportunities for lingering in the sun or having a cup of coffee among lush plant beds and large trees"*
>
> (SLA, n.d.)

The main idea behind the proposal was to *"transform an otherwise gray urban space into a green urban space based on the overall terrain fall on the site"*(Aalborg Kommune, 2015: 6. Own translation) Besides the green public space, it will be used for housing and retail. This promises to give different activity opportunities throughout the year. Furthermore, an elevation of the space was proposed, in order to accommodate the parking lot that will be moved underground. At the same time, the elevation would help separate the busy street from the new space. More trees and vegetation are planted to *"help form a sound barrier against the traffic noise from the surrounding roads"*(ibid.: 8. Own translation) The following figure illustrates the proposal for the new Budolfi Square.

Figure 5.5 Proposal for the new Budolfi Square transformation. (Aalborg Kommune, 2015: 7).

People expressed that the square should be at street level. There were firm affirmations that the history of the place should be preserved and promoted and Budolfi Plads should become car-free with a multi-level underground parking lot. Furthermore, the place should be a large space with many seating options and opportunities for markets.

Architect Christian Lomborg, addressed the following in regard to the transformation: "

1. *Keep the space clear of unnecessary construction.*
2. *Do not allow the space to be occupied by unauthorized and space-consuming art installations, etc.*
3. *Avoid making the space exclusively a green territory.*

"(ibid.: 14. Own translation)

Criticism regarding the plans were also expressed. People said about the elevation that it will look like an artificial concrete deck, the new buildings would not have relativity to the city, and that people should be able to drive to the church. Moreover, the need for more retail in the city centre was questioned, stating that there are enough restaurants in the area and that it is better for the existing one not to have more competition.

"It is important to become a "quiet place" with life, but not a place for concerts, so it is tolerable for guests and neighbours. Concerts belong in parks and by the harbour"

(Aalborg Kommune, 2015: 23. Own translation)

"Lots of nature - but a place of tranquility and coziness. That we are missing in the city centre."

(ibid.: 28. Own translation)

"Like a combination of shops/buildings and existing architecture. But for God's sake an open and welcoming area that can be used for recreation! The horror scenario is a block a la Kennedy Arkaden"

(ibid.: 29. Own translation)

Many different opinions were expressed. However, at the end of the debate and questionnaire, some keywords and main ideas were identified:

– greenery, tranquility, oasis, breathing space, coziness and relaxation

– the water element (lake, fountain)

– many seating options, tables, sun loungers

– make a park for children/area for family life

– bring culture and types of art into the space

– only few people wished for a shopping area

– it was important for people to have the "indoor outdoor space"; covered areas and shelters, so that the space can be used all year round.

The appearance of Budolfi Square went through significant changes throughout the years. The following chapter is an in-depth analysis of the physical settings of Budolfi Square, with configuration, semiotics, critical points of contact and user perspective. This is done in order to identify what makes Budolfi Square, what the place offers to its users, and how they move in the place.

The configuration of Budolfi Square 6

In order to make the reading of the physical setting easier, the aerial map of the square used for observations, was added again. As illustrated, the square has multiple ways of access and exits, located on Algade, Budolfi Plads street, and Vingårdsgade.

Figure 6.1 Aerial map of Budolfi Square used for observations.(GeoDanmark, 2020).

As presented in the chapter 5 on page 29, the place has an elevation , in order to accommodate the underground parking. The users can access the square either by taking the stairs, the ramp/paths or the elevator (which is also connecting to the underground parking).

The 'main' stairs, fig. 6.2 on the following page, face direction of Budolfi Church. The stairs are easily spotted because of their size, the fact that they are made out of white concrete and they are in open sight. The steps are wide enough and not to tall, so it makes it comfortable to climb; a hand rail is placed in the middle for assistance. The other two stairs are steeper and more hidden, fig. 6.3 on the next page One is place on the corner of the square, being made in zig-zag and without any handrail, while the last one is placed in between the elevator and one of the restaurants out there.

Figure 6.2 The main stairs captured when accessing the square from Budolfi Church.

Figure 6.3 Stairs number 2 on the map, captured when exiting the square.

The ramp and forest like paths are also divided. The "forest path" are placed on each side of the main stairs, facing Budolfi Church. The paths are made in a winding style, with lots of light poles along the way. The ramp is placed at the opposite side, having a slightly different look. It is made out of rusty metal, with handrails and it has steps incorporated as well.

Figure 6.4 Forest path b.

Figure 6.5 Forest path a, illustrating the abundance of light poles.

Figure 6.6 Friends with baby stroller using the path.

Figure 6.7 Exiting the square via the ramp.

Figure 6.8 Incorporated stairs into the ramp for faster access.

As it looks at present, the place is enclosed by the residential blocks, in the shape of a 'U', with eateries at ground level. As illustrated in the aerial map, a part of the block hide the parking lot and the buildings next to the square. An access point under the blocks (market with circled P) was made to give access for catering and other forms of delivery in the area (as noted during the observations).

Figure 6.9 View towards the parking lot next to Budolfi Square.

The block also protect the square from Vingårdsgade street, where cars are allowed to drive. The position of Aktuel restaurant looks like it's completing this 'enclosure' system of the square.

Figure 6.10 View towards Algade street and Budolfi Church, from the square.

Figure 6.11 View towards Vingårdsgade, from the square.

Facing the church, the view is not obstructed by any buildings, creating the feel of an open space, with great view of the historical buildings. Preservation of historical traces and keeping the area open was repeatedly mentioned during the debates. To be noted is that Algade was made car-free, therefore, there is not traffic noise or disturbances that could affect people using the square. Because of this layout, the user can have different views depending on where it stands. For example, the place looks closed if the users is coming from the Budolfi Church side, and it looks open, with a lot of vegetation if the user is coming from the ramp.

The pavement of the square is made out of squared concrete tiles, with winding grooves, which, when it rains collect water, and therefore adding a fun water element. Furthermore, the platform has a dent in the middle that collects the excess water. The square has a very divers layer of vegetation, that includes different types of trees, flower and other plants.

Figure 6.12 Pavement pattern at Budolfi
Square.

Figure 6.13 Photo illustrating the dent in
the platform and the water drainage system.

Regarding seating options, the place has multiple and various types, ranging from
sun lounges to benches with and without backrest.

There are four eateries in the square: Aktuel, Det Glade Vanvid, Skagen
Fiskerestaurant and Surdejsbageren. By the looks of the eateries and a quick
research about them, the seem to be chosen to 'fit' the design/message of the new
Budolfi Square. This because they seem to be more sophisticated, one of them being
even a *fine dining* restaurant.

Looking at people's wishes from the town meetings, see chapter 5 on page 25, an
important demand was that the place will have shelters and covers, so that people
can use it all year around. While being at the scene, it was noticed that there are
no shelters or any other coverings. Therefore, the place cannot be used when it is
raining or even during hot summer days.

6.1 The user perspective

From the observations and interviews, the following information was collected. Firstly,
user opinion regarding the place will be presented. Secondly, the analysis of how
people moved in and around the place will be explained.

To the question:*Are you familiar with Budolfi Plads?/ Are you aware it is a public
space?*, the interviewees answered Yes. The circumstances of how they came to
know it, were otherwise different. Most of them declared that they lived in the area,

and therefore they knew about it being a public place, another said she found out through social media, although she discovered it late. In the statement, Chrisann discovered it by exploring the area:

right now I think that it is a public space, but initially, when it was not known what the space was, it was very difficult to know what the space was or ... was it a private space? - appendix C on page 66

Regarding the place and its appearance, people were generally happy about it, and gave positive reactions. The majority liked the 'open-closed' appearance of the place; they like the fact that it was a public space, however the buildings made it feel more private and protected from the traffic and noise.

This was reflected also in the answers to the question on whether the place looks more private (for residents) or open (for the public). One interviewee said she doesn't even notice the residents. People declared that the place is 'airy', they like the openness and easy access of the place. Furthermore, they appreciated the historic perspective. They also mentioned that it has good space between benches, and they enjoyed the greenery in the square very much. The ramp and the paths were the most noticed aspect. In the eyes of the user, the ramp is like a fun labyrinth, that guides you up into the square. One participant stated that it is maybe the most integrated spot in Aalborg, because usually the services for handicapped people are so obvious and detached from the design, but not in the case of Budolfi Square and its ramp. Participants also reflected on the fact that you can bring your own food/beverages and enjoy the there.

However, not all interviewees shared the same positive views. Some felt like although there's a good mix between private and open, the place feels closed, in a negative way, and that the feeling of being welcome to spend time in the square depends very much on the company that you have. On the same note, in the statement with Chrisann, see appendix C on page 66, she expressed that it depends very much where you are coming from. If you are entering from Vindgårdsgade, the place can be intimidating and can look private, because of the blocks that surround the square. Moreover, she addressed the awkwardness of being there when there are a lot of people around, and when the restaurants are open. This because it can make the others feel like outsiders.

6.2   Outcomes of the observations

The observations enabled to identify the main routes and activities the users perform in the square, how they moved, identify a possible new type of user, and based on these creating a quick heat-map of the flow movements.

In the interviews, participants were asked what was their purpose of being there at the time of the interview. The results showed that the participants were there either because they were on their way to other appointments, or relaxing. For example, getting quick take away from the open bakery or walking with the baby stroller.

The observations offered a more detailed look into the behaviour and act that people were performing. The majority of people came there for the bakery. Most of them looked like they had a predetermined route to the bakery, others went there on the spot, while some changed their mind by not going in anymore. The following photos illustrates.

Figure 6.14 People at Budolfi Square performing diverse activities.

Figure 6.15 Children playing at Budolfi Square.

Figure 6.16 People going to the square's bakery.

Most of the people observed looked relaxed and apathetic, focused, and determined in their movements. However, there were also exceptions. For example, a middle-aged woman, who looked in a hurry, came up to the square from one of the stairs, and looked very confused about where she was. She tried to go the Parking lot however she turned back, looked around and left when she came from.

Meanwhile, a good amount of people looked curious about the place. They came to the place, some took photos and left, others looked like they were on a walk and took their time to go around, look through restaurants windows, read menus etc. There was even an elderly man with his dog, coming from the ramp, and looking around on a slow walk, exiting through one of the paths. The curiosity may come from the fact that the place is still new. People might be unfamiliar with the area,

new to town or simply haven't heard about the redevelopment, hence the place represent a point of intrigue. Another reason can be the closed restaurant; people can now walk around and take a look, without feeling 'seen' and intimidated. This can be accentuated by the fact that there is no information about the place itself; if it's private or still public, what the square represents etc.

Looking at the routes people took, the square was used for transit or as shortcut (mostly between the parallel roads Algade and Vingårdsgade), and for the services of the bakery: people either had a determined route, coming to the bakery, buying and leaving, or after making a purchase they chose to enjoy the goods on a bench and then leave.

From the observations, people were moving both alone and together. When users were seen to be alone, their route seemed to be determined and focused. They were either transiting, going to the bakery, waiting for a friend or use the space as a waiting area in between activities. These activities were accompanied by the use of the phone.

When the users were together (families, group of friends, couples), they seem to move more relaxed and freely. People were observed to wander around, stop to look at the bakery menu and make decisions before going in, enjoy the food they brought from other places on the sun lounges and benches, and generally look more comfortable in their movements.

Writing down the routes taken by the users enabled to create a heat-map. The heat-map was made by tracing those routes on the map. In this way, it is possible to actually visualise how people moved in the space and see how the configuration of the square has a big influence in the way people move.
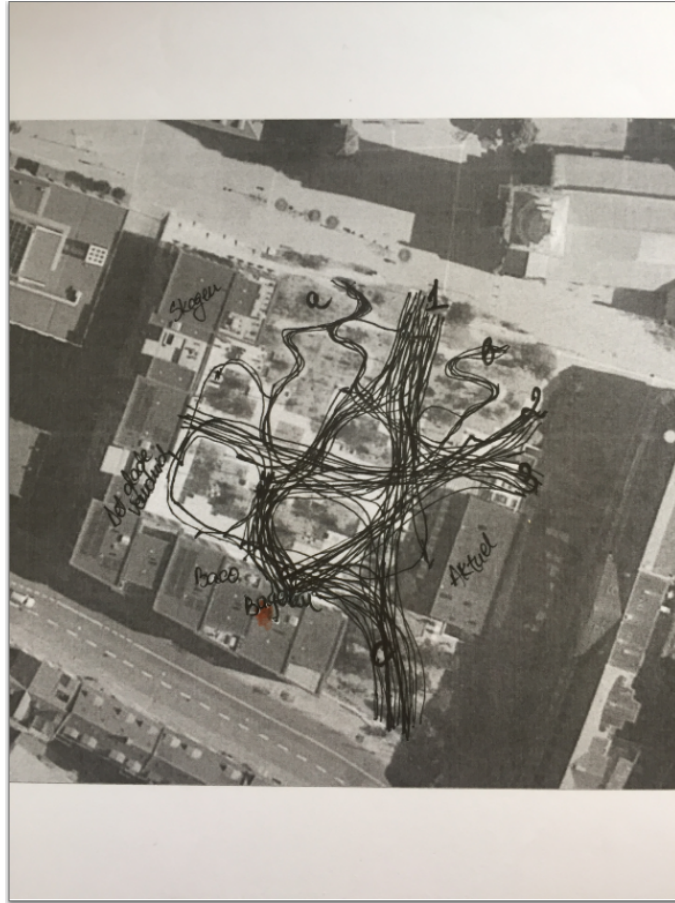
Figure 6.17 Heat map illustration of user flows at Budolfi Square. Own illustration.

It becomes clear from the illustration that the main activity happens between the two main parallel streets, and that the bakery being open had a big impact, creating a hot spot in the square. Therefore, the major routes the flows create are between: the main stairs (1), the bakery, the ramp (c) and the other two stairs (2,3). The paths (a, b) are also marked by mainly people with strollers.

As mentioned in the Methodology, see chapter 2 on page 6, the observations were conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, and it consisted of the dedicated days for doing observations, plus an additional unintentional visit to the site. During the observation days, not only the weather was cloudy and cold, but the COVID restrictions were very strict. This led to not a lot of people being outside and 4 out of 5 eateries to be closed. The bakery was the only one open. which resulted in a lot of activity around it. This can be seen in this photos added previously in this chapter.

The unintentional visit was paid during a sunny, warm day, when the city started to re-open. While there were significantly more people outside, it was noticed that 3 out of 5 eateries were open, and that they were having tables and chairs outside. After comparing the two instances, it was noticed that the place had very different

dynamics, and that these were changed. While during the data collection, the environment at Budolfi seemed more free, public and open; during the visit, the place seemed more private and intimidating. It should be noted this project does not cover any information on the policies and legal boundaries within Budolfi Square. Therefore, privatisation of the public pace and legalities in relation to the restaurants are not known.

The first thing noticed was the fact that the open eateries had extended their space outside, blending in the public space. The restaurants had multiple chairs/couches and tables out, mixing together with the public benches. The following photos illustrate the situation.

Figure 6.18 Customers of Aktuel restaurant.

Figure 6.19 Customers of the bakery, waiting for their order.

This made the large, open space of Budolfi, seem considerably tighter and smaller. While observing the space, the inevitable question of *What will happen when all of the restaurants will be open?* arose. At the time of these observations, only 3 out of 5 restaurants were open, and the space already became smaller and less of an open public space. Hence, the question on how the place will change once they will all open for outdoor dining, remains yet to be answered. Accordingly, the atmosphere of the place was also changed. With the restaurants claiming some of the public space, the environment became more private and controlled. A couple of statements, gathered from interviews in the data collection process, got highlighted here. One interviewee said that that she didn't know if she was allowed to be at Budolfi if she was not a customer there. In the interview with Chrisann, she said she felt awkward

and like an outsider, when the eateries had customers(see appendix C on page 66)
With more restaurants opening outdoors, these feelings can be accentuated, which
can result in limiting the number of people coming to the square as a public place.
Furthermore, the chairs and tables of the restaurants blocked some of the routes,
people were walking on during data collection. This suggest a limitation of the user
mobilities. Additionally, overhearing a couple's conversation, the man refused to sit
on one of the benches, because it was too close to one of the restaurant's tables and
he felt 'weird' sitting next to the customers. This situation may reflect how people
feel using the space as a public place, while being mixed in with customers from the
restaurants.

6.3   A new user mindset

Looking into the user mindsets, all three typologies (the drifter, the determined
and the transitter),described in section 3.3 on page 16, could be easily identified.
As already presented previously, by the way people used Budolfi Square, some were
there to rest, meet, hang out with others, kids were observed playing, some were
in transit, while others were noticed trying to find their way around. However, in
contrast with Jensen's investigation site, this project's investigation took place in an
outdoor public space. Hence, it became clear that there are other mindsets to be
identified. During the observations, one particular type stood out and it might get
referred to as **the consumer**.

The consumer is recognized as a combination between the drifter and the determined.
People associated with the consumer mindset came to Budolfi Square, either with
food brought from other place or made a purchase at the bakery, enjoyed their
refreshments on the spot, and left right after. A reason for this is because the
place at Buolfi is considered comfortable, nice, 'new' and private. In this sense, the
consumer is characterised by having a medium pace, being focused and relaxed. It
performs acts such as hanging out and staying/ resting, while consuming.

Summary

Summarizing the data presented in this chapter, Budolfi Square has certain defining
features, such as: the ramp, the forest paths, the various siting options, the selected
eateries etc. From interviewing the users, the opinions seemed to be split. People
familiar with the place enjoyed the new space created, the privacy that it gives and
the fact that it was hidden away from the city noise. Others showed uncertainty,
asking themselves if they were allowed to be there is they were not customers to
any of the eateries, or their presence depended very much on the company they had.

People were generally curious about the place, while in very few cases people looked confused of where they were. Based on the observations, the square mostly used for transit or shortcut, and for the open bakery. Besides this, the square also figures as a meeting spot, waiting space, and relaxation. Furthermore, depending on whether people were alone or together, they acted differently; when alone, they looked more determined in their route, when together, they looked more comfortable about being in the square. The observations also allowed identifying the movement patterns and form a heat map of the people's flows. Lastly, a new user mindset was identified as the consumer. The typology was seen coming to the square, make a purchase at the bakery and enjoy the refreshments the space, leaving right after.

Semiotics within Budolfi Square 7

The semiotic system and the interaction of the user with it, was also analysed. From the collected data, it was identified that the semiotic system at Budolfi Square consists of apartment advertisements and information about the eateries (menus, signs guiding people towards the bakery and other information related). Additionally, there were a couple of traffic signs next to the ramp, informing about the car-free area on Budolfi Plads street and further. There was also a sign in front of the main stairs, informing people about the corona restrictions and how to behave in accordance.

Figure 7.1 Information related to the restaurant Det Glade Vanvid.

Figure 7.2 Advertisements for apartments at Budolfi Square.

Figure 7.3 Menu for BACO cafe.

Figure 7.4 Informative sign about COVID-19 regulations, spotted at the main stairs. Own translation: *Respect the social distancing regulations. Keep distance to each other. We take care of each other.*

Figure 7.5 Traffic signs at the access point to the square from the near parking lot.

Figure 7.6 Traffic signs announcing the car-free Budolfi Plads street.

The bakery had the most sign in the place. They had panels guiding up people towards the bakery, at every entrance to the square, and a big menu panel in the middle of the square (corresponding with the entrance to the bakery).

Figure 7.7 Accessing the square through the ramp.

Figure 7.8 Accessing the square through stairs 3.

Figure 7.9 Accessing the square through the main stairs.

From the observations, it became obvious that the users are indeed affected by the way the signs were placed. Many stopped to take a look at the menu in their way, either to make decisions or from curiosity. From there some went into the bakery, while others continued their stroll. It was also noticed that some even changed their

direction to the signs, to look at it. Nonetheless, it was clear that the big menu panel was interrupting to a greater or lesser extent, the flows within the square.

Figure 7.10 Woman spotted looking at the apartment ads at Budolfi Plads complex.

Figure 7.11 Friends with baby strollers captured looking at the bakery menu before going into the bakery.

Furthermore, it can be argued that, because the guidance signs towards the bakery were placed at every entrance to the square, people were attracted by it. In this case, people were not invited to the square as the public individual to enjoy the new public space, but they were attracted to it from a retail purpose.

7.1 Summary

Concerning semiotics, two types of semiotic were identified, the informative and regulative. The place had few signs; as a public domain, this is an indication of a more relaxed environment. The semiotic dimension of the square consists in few traffic signs and mostly, signs with information related to the eateries (menus, programs etc.) The latter, had a very noticeable affect of people's flows. It was also notices that there was not information about the square itself, regarding guidance or historical information about the place, since it has an important place in the city's history.

Critical points of contact 8

The combination between the physical environment and the semiotic system creates or disrupts the dynamics of flows. The Critical Points of Contact(CPC) were not considered for a deep investigation. However, important interactions between these flows of people and their surroundings were observed on a technical, social and aesthetic level, and made CPCs become visible. As a result, it was decided that a brief analysis of the identified CPCs is necessary in giving a holistic understanding of this project.

To begin with, the first obvious CPC was the open bakery. In analysis from chapter 7 on page 45 it was deduced that the bakery was in fact a hot-spot in the square, and it affected the flows of people in a great way. Applying the theory of Critical Points of Contact uncovers a deeper understanding of the role the bakery has in the square's networks. The presence of the bakery created movements and interactions in the square.

There were multiple occasions where people would queue up in from on the entrance of the bakery, because there was a limited number of people allowed inside. People were observed interacting with each other on what it looked like asking if they were sitting in queue. Others were stopping by the benches in front of the bakery to put their mask on. There were also a few cases where people changed their mind, either because the queue was too long or other reasons. Another reasons why the bakery is considered a CPC is because it created congestion and collisions. The bakery seemed to have two entrances, which resulted in people using them both for entrance and exit. This led to people bumping into each other. A reason for this happening might be the lack of information and guidance of how the doors should be used. It is visible in the following photo that the space between the bakery and the benches is not very big. It was observed on one occasion that a family of 3 adults were enjoying their coffee right outside the bakery, which amplified the congestion.

Figure 8.1 Bakery menu billboard.

Figure 8.2 Woman captured waiting to enter the bakery, due to limited number of customers allowed inside.

Together with the bakery itself, the big menu billboard can be included. As already mentioned in chapter 7 on page 45, people's flows were disrupted or created by the presence of this sign. Since the access ways, such as the stairs, were analysed, another possible CPC was identified as the elevator. Although no problems were observed and the focus was not on it, the elevator represents a possible CPC in case of malfunction. It will exclude certain people from gaining access to the underground parking lot and the square.

Figure 8.3 Photo illustrating the elevator and access to the underground parking lot.

Figure 8.4 Photo illustrating the elevator seen from the square.

After understanding the square and its components, it can be considered a CPC of its own, since it can be analysed from all three dimensions explained by Jensen and Morelli, see section 4.3 on page 21. It can be argued that Budolfi Square is a node in the wider city network of Aalborg. It is a public place where the web meets, establish contact, and interact with the environment (from design codes to signs and symbols) It was discovered that the place is used as a waiting point between appointment, a meeting spot, a nice shortcut between lines or a place to relax, together or alone. Furthermore, the place allows discussions related to issues on mobility/ social justice and accessibility. These will be discussed later on, in concluding chapter chapter 10 on page 54.

8.1 Summary

The visible Critical Points of Contact within Budolfi Square are the open bakery, through the ability of creating a hot-spot, create and interrupt users' mobilities, and its billboard menu. A possible CPC was identified to be the elevator, that connects the square to the street and the underground parking. This is in case of the elevator malfunctioning. Lastly, the square itself was identified to be a CPC, because it was proved to be a node in the wider city network.

Users' mobility within Budolfi Square 9

The following chapters serve as conclusions, where the findings presented throughout analysis will be discussed, while answering the problem formulation of this project: How does the configuration and semiotic system within Budolfi Square affect users' mobility, and do these two dimensions affect the accessibility of the place?

This chapter wraps around the conclusion and discussion for the physical settings and semiotics' effect on users' mobility within Budolfi Square. This way, it becomes possible to discuss the latter question on the way they affect the accessibility of the place.

Based on the analysis of the collected data, it has been concluded that the users' mobility is directly affected by the configuration and semiotics within Budolfi Square. It was observed that the place has the ability to draw people in, but also to intimidate others. Furthermore, the physical settings of Budolfi Square makes it so, that it depend very much where the users come from towards the square, who are these users and what is their purpose of being in the square.

The place at Budolfi Square is seen as a 'open-closed' space. A public place, hidden from traffic noise, half closed by residential and retail blocks, with well-incorporated and attractive systems, such as the ramp for disabled people, the 'forest paths' and lots of greenery. While on one hand, these examples of characteristics encourage people to perform mobilities at Budolfi Square, on the other hand, there are also aspects that obstruct it. For example, the place can look private and closed from certain angles, like coming from Vingårdsgade street, or when the eateries located there have customers, other people can feel like outsiders and awkward.

There are characteristics of the place that attract people and make them enjoy spending time at Budolfi Square. For instance, people declared that the space is open and 'airy', it has lots of nice greenery and a very well incorporated design. The ramp for disabled people and the 'forest paths' seemed to be the defining aspect of the place.The way the access points to and from the square are planned, affect the way people move. The place is located in between two parallel streets, that have a heavy transit. This leads to people using the square as a shortcut in between those streets. The number of eateries that are open affect the dynamics of the place.

Comparing the data collected with the observations done during the visit, it became clear that the place was changed. More eateries opened up with outdoor sitting, which was occupying some of the public space. Therefore, the place gained a more private atmosphere. This affected users' mobilities by blocking or obstructing some walking routes around the place. At the same time, it limited the users' mobility freedom and created some social constraints.

The effects on the users' mobility of the configuration and semiotics were seen especially in the way people used and moved in the space, and in the flow patterns created. People use the place as a shortcut, a meeting point, a space to wait in between other activities, for the bakery, or for relaxing. Their mobilities were also affected by whether they were alone of together. People spotted 'mobile with' seemed more relaxed and comfortable in their acts they performed. Meanwhile, people who were 'mobile self' were more focused and determined, and they didn't spend a lot of time in the square. Those who were sitting alone, were using their mobile phones.

It was concluded that the semiotics affect users' mobility, because of the type of semiotics and their strategic placements, as well as the lack of signs that was noticed in the square. The semiotic system at Budolfi consisted of apartment advertisements for the residential blocks and information about or related to the eateries (billboard menus, signs guiding people to the bakery, etc.) . Furthermore, there was a traffic sign informing about the area being car-free, and a sign telling people how to behave in relation to the COVID-19 restrictions, while they are using the square. The open bakery predominantly affected the users' mobility with its semiotics. Firstly, the big billboard menu placed in the middle of the square, interrupted or created, to a greater and lesser extent, the flows of people. Secondly, the signs guiding people to the bakery, were paced at every access point of the square. It can be argued that this created some of the flows in the square, by attracting people in. In relation to semiotics, it was concluded that there was also a lack of information at Budolfi, that affected people's mobility. There was no information about place, historical, or any general information about it being a public space and inviting people in. When collecting data, people showed interest in having such information available, and it was observed that the lack of it can create confusion and disorientation in some cases. The lack of semiotics, hereof, affect the mobility by how many people use the place and how they are using it.

Additionally, the mobilities of the users are affected by the Critical Points of Contact that were identified. This because they interrupt or create flows. For instance, the square is a CPC, because is acts like a passage between other lines

of systems. Another example is the billboard menu of the bakery. The strategic placement made people stop in their course or even change their route to see the menu. Furthermore, a major CPC was the bakery, who acted as a 'magnet' for the square, but also affected people's mobilities by the congestion it created at its entrance.

The way people moved and used the place, resulted in generating a new typology of a user, which was named *'the consumer'*. This user mindset is characterised by being focused and relaxed. The consumer at Budolfi Square was seen coming with its own refreshments or bought something from the bakery, enjoyed the meal on a bench, and left right after.

In conclusion, the configuration and semiotics within Budolfi Square affect the users' mobility directly, in the way they use the place, the acts they perform in the place, but also who is using the place. Moreover, the Critical Points of Contact visible at Budolfi Square have a major contribution to this process.

Accessibility and Mobility justice of Budolfi Square

10

This chapter serves as a conclusion and discussion for whether the configuration and semiotics of Budolfi Square affect the accessibility of the place, looking through the mobility justice perspective.

The following discussion is facilitated by the chapter 5 on page 25,chapter 6 on page 33,chapter 7 on page 45 and chapter 8 on page 48, where the answers for this question could be deducted from. From the configuration of the place, it was clear that the place is very inclusive, in terms of actual access ways for all categories of people (disabled, elderly, baby strollers, even bikes). This was reflected in the well-integrated use of ramp, paths, big stairs and elevator. However, the accessibility here relates to mobility justice in public spaces.

It was concluded that the configuration and semiotics within Budolfi Square affect to a great extent the accessibility of the place, changing the patterns of mobility. The outcomes here led to further questions related to the use of space and privatisation of public spaces.

From the interviews, it was clear that the opinions regarding how inviting and accessible the place is, were very different. For example, people who were familiar with the place, liked the fact that the place was more private and exclusive. In contrast, people who were not that familiar with the place, didn't know if they are allowed to be there. For example, if they were not customers to the eateries, or residents. Moreover, the way they felt about being in that place depended a lot of the company they had (group of young people, compared to adults). People also expressed the feeling of awkwardness, when there are customers from the eateries, while they were using the place as a public space.

The previous example brings the discussion to another point, which is the number of eateries at Budolfi. It was concluded that the number of eateries affect the accessibility of the place and bring into the discussion the mobility justice.

People are heavy consumers; they want more things, to be better and closer to them. These ideas were already expressed in the debate meetings, where people

expressed multiple times the wish for a retail area. The area at Budolfi has 5 eateries. Conducting the observations, two main questions came up:*What is too much?* and *What is the actual purpose and message of the new Budolfi Square?*

After the COVID restrictions loosened up, 3 out of 5 restaurants at Budolfi opened up, with outdoor dining options. This changed the possibility for certain mobilities. It was noted, that sovereignal freedom of mobility was exercised, which allowed the eateries to use the public space, limiting ,hereof, the use of public space for others. This was limiting the users' personal mobility freedom, as well as putting social constraints. For example, people were questioning the affordances of the place, if they were not customers. Furthermore, the big, open space, became smaller, adding more uneasiness to the place. The question on *What is too much?* came while imagining what will happen, when all the restaurants will be open.

The appearances of the eateries also contribute to affecting the accessibility of the place. It was noted, that the eateries at Budolfi looked like they were chosen to fit the new place. The restaurants look more sophisticated. They were niche restaurant and cafes, like the sourdough bakery or the fine dining restaurant, Det Glade Vanvid. Hence, questioning the message of the place is sending about being a general public place, or is it the retail area targeting certain groups of users.

It was decided that the lack of specific semiotics also affected the accessibility of the place. For example, the place can look private and closed from different angles, and people who are not familiar with this being a public space could feel restricted from using it. Another possibility can be that people don't know about it at all.

In conclusion, the accessibility and mobility justice of the place is affected by the configuration, through the retail planning of the area, as well as the lack of semiotics informing people about the place.

Critical Reflections 11

The following chapter serves as a reflection upon the outcome of this thesis, as well as a reflection upon own work process and giving positive criticism. The chapter starts with a presentation of the outcome, which is recommending a guideline for making public places look more accessible. Afterwards, reflections upon own work are presented, such as how could it be done differently, seasonal changes, the pandemic situation, and other aspects that could have changed the results and outcomes of the thesis. Based on the findings throughout the analysis, a set of recommendations for making public places look more accessible, was created. The ideas were based on the practices used at Budolfi Square, as well as additional suggestions deducted from the conclusion.

The following suggestions were taken from practices used in Budolfi square's configuration. Firstly, the very well incorporated access systems for disabled people and strollers were concluded to be defining for the place. The ramp and the forest like paths were very appreciated by the users, all benefiting from them. Another example here is the elevator that was connecting, not only the underground parking lot to the ground level area, but also to the square. The design of the main stairs was also in such a way that made the climbing almost like a straight walk. Secondly, the place users described the place as being 'airy. Here, they referred to the good distance between the sitting options, greenery and the rest. On the same note, the varied sitting option (sun lounges, benches with and without backrest) is also part of the recommendations, because they allow people more freedom of movement and acting. Lastly, the place was protected by traffic noise and other possible disturbing factors, by the elevation and the the greenery. The users appreciated he quiet space that it created.

Additionally, based on the findings and feedback throughout the investigation, the following suggestion was considered important in making public places look more accessible. Incorporating information about the place, especially in a place like Budolfi: what, why, where. This information would let people know what is the place, where are they and why they are there. For example, regarding Budolfi, this type of information would communicate some historical insights about the square

and it being remodeled and dedicated to the people as a public place. This would help avoid confusion and familiarize people with the new area.

As already mentioned in section 2.3 on page 11, the advantages of choosing Budolfi Square were the location, making it possible for multiple visits, and the familiarity of the place. However, the disadvantages of choosing Budolfi Square for this study, ranged from the fact that it is an outdoor area, without shelters, and the amount of people using the place. Reflecting on seasonal changes, the study was performed in a rather cold and cloudy week. Because it was an open space outdoors, the weather limited the possibility of doing observations for longer time and during different times of the day. Furthermore, because of the cold weather not a lot of people were eager to spend time outside. This affected the number of people being at Budolfi and the activities that they were performing. If the study was to be conducted during a warming period of time, like the day of the visit, this would have probably changed the results of the thesis. For example, more people would be present in the square and performing more various activities. Furthermore, if initially, the idea was to conduct observations during different times of the day and for longer periods of time, the outdoor circumstances changed this approach. It resulted in conducting the study between 11:00 - 13:00, everyday, for a limited amount of time. That time sloths meet the lunch hour, which is somewhat peak hour. The results on the flow heat map can reflect that. If the data collection was done during different times of the day, the results could have shown differences in flows, activities and behaviours, for example.

The study was performed during the COVID-19 pandemic. This implied the presence of certain restrictions and rules to follow. This resulted in the restaurants at Budolfi to be closed, except the bakery, during data collection. Furthermore, collecting interviews proved to be aggravated by this situation. The presence of the pandemic affected consciously or unconsciously the way people interact with each other. Although, social distancing rules were respected by the researcher, people could still feel discomfort about getting in contact with strangers. This worry was also felt by the researcher, which affected the easiness of approaching other people. If the study was conducted 'in normal days', the situation might have been different, and the results changed. For example, people would be more willing to participate in the study.

One of the major challenges and disadvantages of this thesis, was the fact that it was conducted by one person. Since resources were very limited, the amount of data collected and possibilities were also very limited. Because there was only one

person collecting data, certain movements, flows, and interaction could have been missed. Furthermore, it also had an impact on the amount of data collected. For example, with more people, there would be more data gathered and a richer, more detailed findings. Another obstacle in collecting data, represented the reluctance of taking photos.

The data collection process also consisted in gathering information about Budolfi as a place and about the redevelopment project. Because the project is located in Denmark, the first disadvantage here was the lack of information available in English. This led to a lot of time spent on translations. Since the translations were done through methods, such as Google Translate, some information might have been lost or meanings changed. The translations, however, proved to be an important piece of knowledge that can benefit other internationals. When gathering background information about Budolfi Square, a certain lack of variation and updated data was noted. Even with the sources available in Danish, the information was somewhat repetitive and there wasn't a lot of knowledge about the place after completion. This further shows that this thesis can be considered a worthy contribution towards understanding and evaluating the new Budolfi place, from the mobilities perspective.

Regardless of the fact that this investigation could have been done through better adjusted parameters, the results of this exploration can still serve as a way to understand how the users' mobilities are affected by the physical setting of Budolfi Square, and how the physical setting affect the accessibility of the place. The findings are based on valid collected data, which gives reliability of this thesis.

Further work 12

The following chapter contemplates on the possibilities for further work that could derive from the theme of this thesis, if the resources had allowed it. Firstly, it should be noted that this thesis represents only a fracture of what can be a much more extended investigation. It can be seen as a starting point for a study that can offer a greater understanding of the environment that surrounds people's everyday life. Besides the architectural and urban design view, adding the mobilities perspective can portray a robust view upon the urban environments matters.

Secondly, it was mentioned throughout the paper that the parameters this study was conducted were aggravated by the presence of the COVID-19 pandemic, hence, affecting the results to a lesser or greater extent. The suggestion here, would be to take this investigation and run it when the pandemic is over, or at least, when it will not present such a big obstacle.

Thirdly, this study could also be continued, by according a more extended period of time for collecting data. This way, gathering data can be done on different days, time sloths and even seasons. The idea of assembling a group for conducting the study, is important here.

Moreover, idea testing can be performed at the site. For instance, by taking in the suggestions on incorporating signs with information about the place and guidance. Applying this method can reveal insightful data, like seeing and observing the changes in the users' flow patterns, movements, if there are any.

At some point in this investigation, there was mentioned a summary about the views of the users upon the place, and what they wished for the place to have. For an even richer research, this idea can be further developed into, first, gathering data not only from the users and planners, but also from residents and owners of the eateries. Secondly, to compare the views of the users, with the views of the planners and parties involved in redeveloping Budolfi Square. This would give an interesting perspective on the different expectations from the place and the reality. This can contribute to a better understanding of how the place influences the users' mobility, as well as the accessibility mobility justice of the place.

Another extension of this investigation, would bee to introduce the use of tracking technology, such as eye-tracking glasses. This would reveal how the place is experienced by the users, hence, how the different aspects affect the users' mobility. The practice would require the cooperation of the users to wear the glasses from the point they enter the square, the moment they leave it. This way, the investigation would include the perspective of the user in practice, as well as interesting data of where the users are looking (facades, other people), what do they avoid/confront etc.

Lastly, the accessibility and mobility justice discussion can be linked to the theory on privatisation of public spaces. This would connect with the way the eateries observed at Budolfi Square use the public place. A research into policies and regulation would be involved.

The ideas presented above are only some of the many possible paths, that this investigation can be taken on and further developed. Reflecting upon alternate scenarios can only enrich the work of the researcher, but also the one reading. It is a way to meditate upon future experiences, and an open door to inspire for future works.

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Figure A.1 Aerial map template of Budolfi Square from summer 2020, used when conducting observations.(GeoDanmark, 2020).

Template: Interview B

Interview template

Date _____ Time _____ Zone_____ Respondent no. _____

Are you familiar with Budolfi Plads? *Yes__ No__*

What is your purpose of being here today?

Transit/Shortcut___ Meet-up spot___ Relax__ Other___

Do you feel welcome to walk or spend time here? Yes__ No__

Could you give a few reasons why?

_____
_____
_____

Do you think it looks more private (only for residents) or open (for everyone to be here)?

Open: Could you give a few reasons why you think that?

_____
_____
_____

Private: Do you think signage with directions and information would help it look more accessible?

_____
_____
_____

Do you think there should be signage of that sort, letting people know it is a public space?

_____
_____
_____

If the bakery and shops here, would be placed somewhere else, would you still feel welcome to spend time here?

_____
_____
_____

Do you think walking/ moving around is made clear?

_____
_____

Not: Why is that?

_____
_____
_____

Do you think there is something missing? (signage and information)

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Figure B.1 Site interview template, used to collect data at Budolfi Square. Own preparation.

Transcript - Interview with Chrisann C

C: I am a student, in urban design and I lived in Aalborg for a year and ...yea

D: Yes. Great! So... the first question. Are you familiar with Budolfi Square or Plads? Are you aware that it is a public space ... um in any sense?

C: Okay... Yes, right now I think that it is a public space, but initially, when it was not known what the space was, it was very difficult to know what the space was or ... was it a private space? I did not know, because there was a structure there, which I came to know that it was a café on the top, so ... and if you access the space from the road that's next to Rema, it was a bit unclear to what the space was... and only if you walk from the church side, I think, then you come to know that oh yea! This is a nice public space because it's quite modern (inaudible) from that street next to the church over there. Yea... (inaudible sound)

D: Yea... How did you find out about it? About the ... about being a public space?

C: Ummm...I think it was more of walking form the other side and then I saw a ... like when I took the street from the Studenthouse to that Budolfi church, then I wen ahead and then I saw kind of people sitting around on the stairs and they were going up and down. But also, that um... I think what affected was also that these streets were under construction at that time, so it was a bit unsure what was already done, where you could go, but that's when I saw the people there...and once when there were hardly few people on a week. There was me and my roommate, we explored the place ... we said: "okay, let's find out what this is!" and that's how I think for me it was to discover the place.

D: Yea... Do you know... do you think that if they had some direction umm signage or information signs, around it ... that would tell you "hey! This is a public space. You can sit here or...umm... about the place itself what it is or something like that, you would be, you would know about it ... like...faster... or you would be more drawn to it from the beginning?

C: Mmmm.

D: As you said from the Rema side, it doesn't really look like you can be there, so if they have some sign there saying that in this way you can go ... here.

C: Ummm...I think maybe that could help.

D: Mhm.

C: I think that to know that that is like a public space, I think also like the ... the materials used for those two streets; I think they completed them later on. The one that from the side of Rema there's a street that goes up and the other street is from Budolfi, so the two ones they meet. And now if you see they are kind of grey colour I think ... so now I feel that that matches, and if people take those areas, then thy can lead into that . . . that space.

D: Yea.

C:. . . over there, but um (inaudible sound) initially that space looks like, more like a . . . when there are no people it's like very empty, very grey . . .

D: Yea. . . mmm . . .

C: . . . I would say, but um. . . I had, I've been there when the café was open and that really looked like a public space at that point of time, I would say that.

D:Yea. . . Next question. What were your first thoughts or feeling about the space when you were there. . . walking and moving around.

C:Mhmm . . . Okay, I liked it I think, and it was more nice to see the different type of plans that they actually used in that whole area. It was interesting to see umm. . . the different levels and the different like ... they have some like . . . kind of mountains kind of things. So, it's kind of nice to have that area and then when it's not that hot it was good to sit on those stairs that were there, so it was kind of . . . overall I think it's a nice space, but unclear . . . I would say.

D:Yea. . . Did you feel welcome to walk or spend time there? And could you give me a few reasons why is that?

C:Okay. When. . . when there were a lot of people there it was quite awkward to go over there, because I first didn't know what the place was initially, and the other one. . . in the other was when the café was completely like. . . you know a lively place people were like associated with that café and the space was kind of theirs . . . you know. So even if you were like a public . . . like just being there it was a bit awkward to be there because it more looked like it was their own function and then you were like an outsider. But umm. . . on some Sunday mornings when there was nobody there, I think was kind of shut or something, there would be like people with . . . just sitting around, just like relaxing or something. So, I think . . . that when I think it was a nice space moreover . . .

D:Mmmm yes. So based on your experience there could you give your opinion on the way it looks. . . does it look more private, for the residents or cafes there, or does it look more open , for everyone to be there . . . either, whether you're a customer or resident, or not.

C:Okay. If you go from the Rema side... from the street that's there, I think that it

looks kind of a... a bit more like a private space, or an outdoor space for something else ... but you're from, walking from the budolfi um the church side and . . . um... from the street, and you can see the whole openness of the place, I think it's much more inviting. It looks like more like a public space actually.

D: Yea. So, it depends on which side you are coming from basically.

C: Yea

D:Yea, okay. In that way, do you think signage with direction, information about the place would help it look more accessible and ... do you think there should be um this kind of signage there?

C: Mmmmm... I think it could, it would really help especially from the street side, because it's not that clear, I think . . . and maybe I feel like as a design like I can comment on it saying maybe they use all those plants on towards the street it's because . . . just maybe to reduce noise or something, towards the greenspace, but I think it also cuts your vision from that side, so it doesn't become very inviting . . . I would say.

D: Yea, I understand. So now also . . . based on your walking and moving around... Do you think it was made clear how to walk around there, how to move around? and why?

C: No (laugh) I think I just explored it on what I found interesting in that space and that's it I think.

D: mm so if you were coming from the Budolfi side you wouldn't really know . . . where you would end up if you took the stairs in front or left, or the path on the right.

C: No, I think I wouldn't have known like It also looks like, if you're coming from the other side and going through the space, that has the square and then again you can just go straight out from the same street. You know that the. . . the street that, from Student House to that whole street (inaudible) So I think is just like a pocket that you would go, but um eventually when there was nobody or something then you can see that it goes under that building and then you get like a (inaudible) So you're not sure whether you can actually go from that side or not, and even the staircase on the other side it's a bit of like a zig-zag , a ramp that goes up . . . and. . . I would say that if you have a time like, if you're on a nice, sweet walk you would take that, but if you just wanna like go and fast I don't think you would pick that area there.

D: So you would . . . for example signs in there showing directions where you end up if you take this path would be helpful in that way, in making it more clear? As. . . for example someone that doesn't know the city for example.

C: Yea, I think it would be nice. Because then you know like a . . . like you can directly go from the public space you can just move out from the other side, or if

you can straight then you can get on the main boulevard actually, so . . . and if you go from the back or something then I think there's another exist somewhere . . . I'm not that clear, but you can come to know like where you can go. Like it's kind of shortcuts that place holds actually.

D: Mmmm I see, and now the last question . . . Do you think there is something missing in the area, in terms of also signage and information that should be there and it's not?

C: Okay... I don't know, I think it should be like more of some, I don't know some more trees or something, like you know like more affordances that people could be there, because there it was like really really hot summers and I think it became too hot in that space. Like um yea ... and only the café was (inaudible) and all that area was kind of very nice space, I think.

D: And what about in terms of information panels or as we discussed earlier like the direction signs . . . is there something missing.

C: I don't know if there is something like a . . . there is something? I don't know.

D: No, no, there is not, no.

C: . . . (inaudible) what the plans is, like this area is this, like a location plan, like what they have (inaudible) I don't think that they have that.

D: No, when I was there yesterday, they only have um advertisements for the bakery and that's it, and they have some traffic signs of cars and scooters are not allowed here... on the street next to it, not for the Budolfi Plads specifically, so there is no directions or information about why they did it like that, about . . . maybe even Budolfi or where do you go from there, or . . . you know.

C: I think that would be nice . . . like if I am like a first-time person like that exploring the city or something like that. . . it is a nice space I would say, and um ... then maybe they should be these information panels or something. The way you can read about ... because I know that that place actually has a bit of history. . . like um I don't know it was something else before and they built this on top of it . . . . And I only knew that because somebody mentioned to me that Budolfi was this kind of a place before. . . and um ... it actually has some historic stuff I know that . . .

D: Yea

C:. . . I don't know what it is, but um . . . and then they said that to remove that stigma out of that area they actually did this space over there. Now, that is not clear I would say. . . and this I have read on somebody's information about that area or something, that's it. But it's not highlighted what the space is about or the historic context of that space . . . and like I think the Budolfi church has some (inaudible) that tells you about the church or something, there is one or two next to the door, I think . . . but this one doesn't have anything so . . . it could be nice to

have highlight the significance of the space.

D: Yes, that is very nice ... So that was the short interview. Thank you very much for participating!