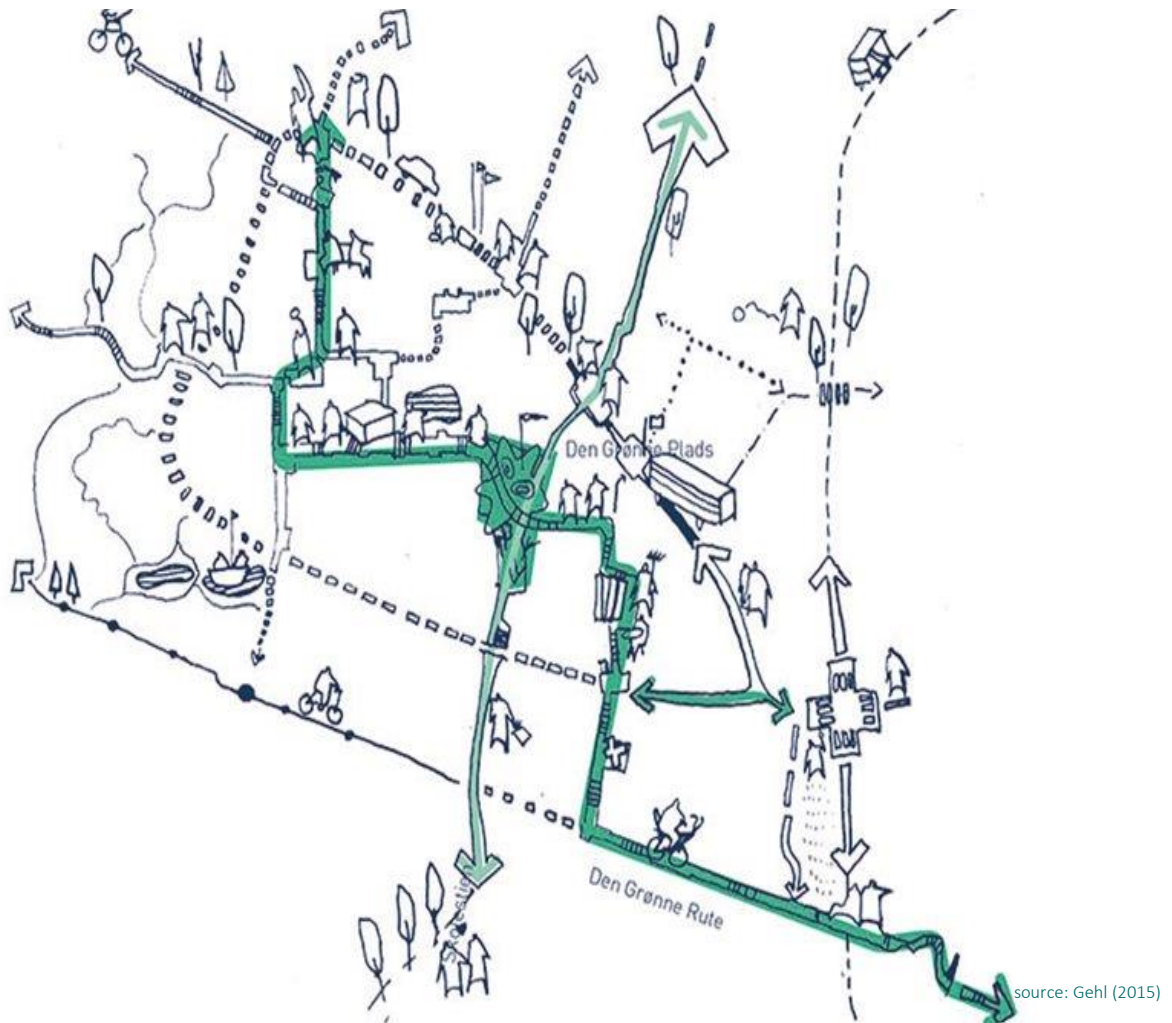


Re-assembling the Splintered City



The role of place-making in promoting planning for diversity for a livable neighbourhood and an inclusive city

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Synopsis:

This master thesis investigates the role of place-making public spaces in promoting planning for diversity and reassembling the splintered city. It is a case study research that looks at the project Den Grønne Rute taking place at the neighborhood Trekanten in the city of Holstebro aiming at better integrating the last-mentioned neighborhood in the city. With this thesis, I investigate therefore the different aspects of the splintering that has caused the disconnection between Trekanten and the city, while trying to incorporate not only the perspective of the expert planners but also that of the public. The analysis extends to look at the design as well as the process of Den Grønne Rute in order to evaluate the extent to which this project can meet the goal of better integrating Trekanten in the city and which will further support the discussion around design vs process in relation to planning for diversity in redressing the splintering urbanism.

With this thesis, I aim to add a new perspective to the splintering urbanism as well as planning for diversity and to advance place-making as an approach to promote the latter and redress the former.

Keywords:

The splintering urbanism, infrastructure, place-making, planning for diversity, Den Grønne Rute, Trekanten, Holstebro

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Reading instructions

Throughout the Master Thesis I have applied the Harvard referencing style as source of reference. This approach follows the formula: author(s) surname / the institution (s)' name, and the year of publication as follow (Surname, Year). For example: (Gehl, 2010). When using various sources from the same author and the same year, the sources will be differentiated with letters. For example: (Sandercock, 2000a), (Sandercock, 2000b). The figures, graphs and tables are numbered according to the chapter they appear in.

I have however relied on many danish words and abbreviations while redacting this Master Thesis. Except for names, all danish words are author's own translation and come as follow: the danish word e.g 'Landsbyggefonden', followed by the translation (The Rural Development Fund).

Moreover, the abbreviations employed are: SDGs Sustainable Development Goals; BSH ('Boligselskabet Holstebro' (the housing organization Holstebro)); DGR (Den Grønne Rute); SHMP (Social Housing Master Plan(s)).

Finally, expect for the one photo credit Ole Mortensen Fotograf at the section 6.1.1; d. Skolestien, all the other photos are either from google or author's own photos.

Abstract

This master thesis takes its starting point from an ongoing project “Den Grønne Rute” a network of recreational rooms that is to be implemented throughout a former vulnerable neighborhood namely Trekanten in Holstebro city. In fact, the project aims at better integrating Trekanten in the city and which initiated reflections upon the relation between the (dis)connection and the integration in relation to urban planning and city management. Also, the extent to which this project considers diversity and especially that Holstebro is a growing multicultural city. With this thesis I explore first if Trekanten is accordingly splintered from Holstebro city, and if planning for diversity by engaging people in the process via place-making approaches can help redress the disconnection between the neighborhood and the city. My research question is: How can place-making “Den Grønne Rute” in Trekanten promote planning for diversity in order to reassemble Holstebro, the splintered city? At a starting point I set my theoretical and conceptual framework which will help analyzing the relationship between the splintering urbanism concept in practice, and the role of involving the community in the process via place-making approaches in for inclusive process. It then presents a field study examining how Trekanten is detached from the city and to what extent can DGR project help overcome the splintering?

In order to answer my research question, I adopted a mix-methods approach that overcomes the weakness of using one method, and I have therefore conducted two semi-structured interviews: one with an urban planner and another with a social planner, I have arranged a focus group with four members of the project team and I have as well conducted a survey (google form) which has helped me get the perspective of the public on the issues regarding the (dis)connection of the neighborhood and the expectation from DGR project. Contrarily to prior assumptions, results have showed that not only Trekanten is splintered from the city, this latter is also disconnected from Trekanten and hence Holstebro is a splintered city. Moreover, results have revealed the Trekanten’s inner-splintering and shed the light on different dimensions of splintering between the city and the neighborhood.

Even though the design of the project Den Grønne Rute seemed to incorporate the diverse ages and groups of people, its process lacks a deep understanding of the relevance of differences and diversity in promoting inclusiveness and cohesion in the city. Knowing that on the one hand, the majority of the answers revealed a socio-cultural and psychological splintering, and on the other hand, place-making as collaborative approach in designing public spaces is itself an expression of diversity as it brings differences into play, I recommend to the project team to reconsider diversity within the process and especially that they seem to plan for people and not with people. Indeed, I suggest to project DGR more than a destination, but essentially an experience to remember and tell the good stories about, especially that the splintering is also rooted in prejudices. Only by bringing people together in re-imagining the place, can Trekanten reassembles with Holstebro and vis versa. Finally, the aim with this thesis, is to add a new perspective to the splintering urbanism as well as planning for diversity and to advance place-making as an approach to promote the latter and redress the former.

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1. Introduction

Urban planning, since its emergence in the late 19th century in the US, has had the concern of making cities better places to live. The quality of life (infrastructure, services, accessibility and security) continues to be the indicator of a good city to live in or to move to. Recently in 2015, the UN emphasized the importance and necessity of urban planning in creating (and managing) livable cities. Indeed, one of the 17 SDGs goals is to “*make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable*” (SDG11 in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, 2015) and which summarizes the goals of planning cities today and for the future. Accordingly, urban planning concerns itself not only with the forms and shapes of the city, but also with how people use space and infrastructure in the city (reside, move, work, interact and spend free time). Nevertheless, as argued by Graham and Marvin (2001), “*the question of how interlinked infrastructures are involved in the social production and reconfiguration of urban space and experiences of urban life tend to be ignored*” (Graham, & Marvin, 2001, p.30). Notwithstanding urban planning has been accused for failing some cities and communities and resulting in what Graham and Marvin (2001) referred to by the ‘splintering urbanism’ and has even produced uneven socio-spatial opportunities which become more visible in the time of globalization (with flows of migrations, refugees, goods and information). With non-stop growing multicultural societies, making cities and human settlements livable places for everyone and thus inclusive has become a pillar in today’s urban planning and gave birth to the movement of planning for (or in the time of) diversity. Beside the importance of infrastructures and services, people and planners started to pay more attention to the livability and diversity in cities. Holstebro city, which is situated in the Vest Jutland of Denmark (see fig 1.1) has welcomed immigrants since the 60s. Nevertheless, the group of immigrants and their descendants has increased from 1% in 1980 to 9% in 2018 (Knudsen and Beckman, 2019). Because of its growing multicultural society, Holstebro municipality has been implementing strategies for integration to ensure new comers’ transition towards integration in the Danish society.



Figure 1.1 Holstebro city, Denmark (google map)

However, in the last six years, more specifically after the Syrian civil war in 2015 when a great number of Syrian refugees landed in Holstebro, the new comers gathered where most other immigrants already live, namely in a neighborhood known for Trekanten (see fig 1.2) in the city. This latter has been for ten years (2009-2019) listed as vulnerable residential area. Beside its high proportion of non-westerns inhabitants, the high number of people out of school and/or job marked, Trekanten is also known for a high rate of criminality (Dahmani, 2021). Even though it is no longer vulnerable, since it was removed from the list in December 2019, the municipality together with the housing organizations which are running the residential area Trekanten,

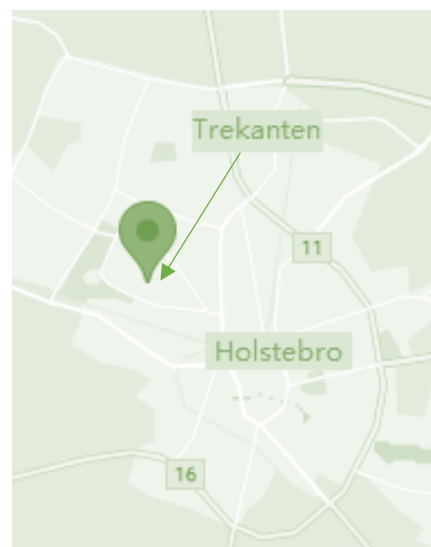


Figure 1.2 The neighborhood Trekanten in Holstebro city (google map)

are still acting in accordance with the national strategy for integration “*One Denmark without Parallel Societies: No Ghettos in 2030*” (Regeringen, 2018) and have elaborated new development plans in order to deal with the implications of Trekanten being for ten years listed vulnerable neighbourhood. Beside the never-ending urban regeneration, the neighbourhood has been witnessing, new urban development projects are currently (2021) taking place, not only to conform with the national strategy but also in order to resolve the resulted issues of its stigmatization and somehow isolation. The recent intervention the housing organizations together with the municipality are implementing in Trekanten is in fact “Den Grønne Rute” (the green route) project (fig n), a network of recreational rooms that aims at better integrating the neighbourhood in the city. But in the context of a multicultural city like in the case of Holstebro, how and to what extent can such a project promote planning for diversity?

Even though no common answer has been provided to the question how (and if) we can plan for diversity, the inspiring notion raised by Healey (1997) that planning is about “*managing our co-existence in shared space*” (Healey, 1997, p. 3 in Sandercock, 2000, p.13) stresses the fact that our cities are based on the idea of sharing (transport, roads, schools, supermarkets, green spaces etc.). Since people are embedded in such shared spaces with others, who are in many ways different one from another, they are required to learn how to live together and manage their co-existence (Sandercock, 2000). Planners have therefore a crucial role in designing spaces and cities that give a room for differences to co-exist. But before moving to explore how to plan for diversity, it is necessary to understand the origin of this movement in planning and which was born as reaction “*to the urban landscape created by segregation, urban renewal [and] massive housing projects*”

(Fainstein, 2005, p.3). Planning for diversity came as a critique to the socio-spatial inequalities and exclusion (like segregation and ghettoization etc.) which according to urban scholars, refer to classification and stigmatization of “*the positionality of groups in the city and the extent to which they occupy separate sites in the city*” (Harding and Blokland, 2014, p.131). Immigration flows to European (and American) cities has been the essential cause behind such socio-spatial classifications and the different manifestations of fragmentations and inequalities in cities. Nevertheless, European countries have not only come to accept that they are immigrant countries, but are also investing in research and studies about the growing issues and potentials of segregation and polarization (splintering) in their cities as a result of migration and in the context of globalization (Harding and Blokland, 2014). Denmark, no exception, is facing the same issues and politicians together with planners have been (especially) in the last twenty years developing strategies and plans to deal with the resulting socio-spatial issues with immigrants, segregation and the ghettoization of some residential areas. Taking again the example of Trekanten; the residential area has been undergoing not only urban generation and housing renovation since 2005, but also social development by implementing social housing master plans since 2013. The housing organizations have been working hand to hand with the municipality of Holstebro and ‘Landsbyggefonden’ (The Rural Development Fund) in order to develop Trekanten and better integrate the (vulnerable) community living there.

1.1 Problem statement

Contrarily to prior experiences in urban developing the neighborhood Trekanten, with their latest project “Den Grønne Rute”, the housing organizations have been paying special and unique attention to the public participation and the community involvement in planning and conceptualizing “Den Grønne Rute”. Planners, designers and process experts have been hired to ensure inclusive planning process that meets the most-possible inputs and hopes of the community living there, giving them the opportunity to contribute to place-making Den Grønne Rute and hence co-developing their neighbourhood. The project’s team is notably investing in participation and communication in order to avoid any potential conflict with the residents.

That being the case, the project seems to be an opportunity for the neighbourhood managers (the housing organizations) and inhabitants to rebuild trust. Especially after various past conflicts, not only over the demolition of some blocks that has resulted in forced evictions and displacement of some families and thus dissatisfaction, but also the last disagreement with some young inhabitants

over urban developing the green area where they were used to play and hang out (Dahmani, 2021). Nevertheless, a recent research (Dahmani, 2021) showed that the development of this last-mentioned area was in fact needed in order to proceed with Den Grønne Rute's project. Moreover, the green area was not only the place where most children used to play and spend free time in connection with nature, but also where some young deal with drugs. The urban development of the green area into housing, despite how unfair it seemed from children and youngsters' perspective, turned to be the solution the housing organizations came up with in order to stop drug dealing in the area and foster the implementation of Den Grønne Rute throughout the neighbourhood (ibid).

As Trekanten is claimed to have a bad image which has resulted in its isolation from the city, the objective with the ongoing project is to build a new identity that will help reconnecting Trekanten to the rest of the city and hence assuring a sense of cohesion. Knowing that Holstebro municipality is a partner in the project since Den Grønne Rute also includes 'Skolestien' (the school path, see fig 4) that goes through Trekanten and which is municipality's infrastructure. And that at the same time, it is known for its culture to diversity as brand and driver for any project or development plan, this research investigates how place-making Den Grønne Rute can promote planning for diversity (and the culture of differences) in the city Holstebro. But as some planners and other different actors who are involved in the project seem to pay more attention to the involvement of Trekanten's inhabitants (and not investing in city involvement), and as I am essentially inspired by Forester's progressive planner notion that anticipates misinformation which limits the effective participation of certain groups, I investigate the possibility of involving not only public from Trekanten at a neighborhood level, but from Holstebro and hence at a city level. Because involving mainly -if not only- Trekanten's inhabitants does not seem to help meet the goal of new identity to connect the neighborhood to the rest of the city. Even if involving the inhabitants will strengthen their relationship with the housing organizations and boost their satisfaction, not including the public from the rest of the city, might come in the way of ending the presumed isolation of the former vulnerable neighborhood.

Nonetheless, stating that Trekanten is like an "isolated island" (Schou and Holzendorff, 2021, personal communication) in the city of Holstebro and that the project aims at connecting Trekanten to the rest of the city, has initiated a hypothesis about whether and to what extent Trekanten is actually incoherent with the city and if Holstebro is accordingly splintered. My motivation for conducting this research is, despite how commonly known among research and academia, no research (until today, June 2021) has been conducted on the subject of splintering urbanism and its relation to planning for diversity in the Danish context and more specifically in the case of Holstebro city.

2. Research Questions

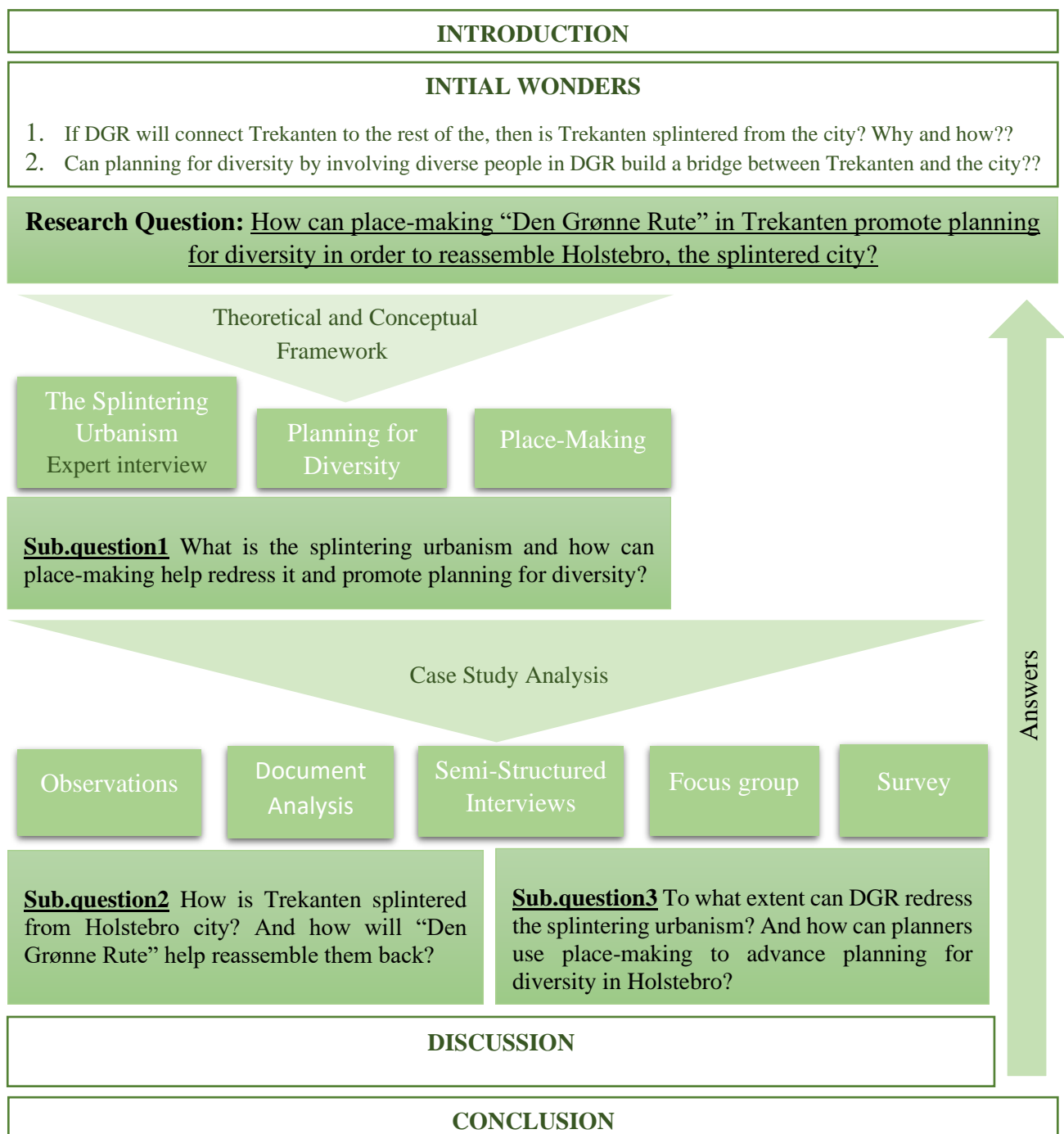
Assuming that Den Grønne Rute will ensure Trekanten's connection to the rest of the city made me question how and why Trekanten is accordingly disconnected? If Holstebro is then a splintered city? How can this project actually build a bridge between Trekanten and the rest of the city? Furthermore, does planning for diversity support Trekanten's connection to the rest of the city? Commencing from those initial wonders, the following research question was established: **How can place-making "Den Grønne Rute" in Trekanten promote planning for diversity in order to reassemble Holstebro, the splintered city?** In order to answer this research question, I suggested three sub. questions:

1. What is the splintering urbanism and how can place-making help redress it and promote planning for diversity?
2. How is Trekanten splintered from Holstebro city? And how will "Den Grønne Rute" help reassemble them back?
3. To what extent can DGR redress the splintering urbanism? And how can planners use place-making to advance planning for diversity in Holstebro?

That being the case, this paper investigates at a first step the splintering urbanism and on a second step the correlations between place-making and planning for diversity aiming at overcoming specific aspects of the splintering urbanism. In doing so, a theoretical and conceptual framework has been established to gain knowledge about the pre-defined concepts and theories and which will later serve informing the analysis. Through the case study analysis, the paper presents the collected data; it first outlines how and why Trekanten is disconnected from the city in order to verify if Holstebro is indeed a splintered city and secondly analyses the design and process of the ongoing project in order to explore how it will ensure and enhance the connection between Trekanten and the city. At a further step, I discuss the link between place-making and planning for diversity in redressing the splintering that Holstebro and Trekanten might be experienced. Finally, it discusses the role of the planner and place-making public spaces in promoting planning for diversity and reassembling the splintered city. In short, this research aims at (1) Understanding the splintering urbanism in a Danish context and building a link between place-making and planning for diversity as a potential to overcome some aspect of the splintering urbanism, (2) Exploring how and why Trekanten is disconnected from the city as well as how can Den Grønne Rute end its isolation, and (3) Discussing the role, the potential

and limitations of place-making public spaces in prompting planning for diversity, enhancing the interaction between people and hence building the bridge between the neighbourhood and the city, as well as the role of the planner in that. The following figure illustrating the research design simplifies how the research has been conducted and organized and how each sub. questions has been answered, starting from the initial wonder and the problem I am aiming at uncovering, the theories from which the analysis is shaped as well as the methods used to attain the answers.

2.1 Research Design



2.2 Scientific Approach

My research undertakes the theme of the complex city structure and that of power in planning, I have therefore considered a mixed philosophy of a critical (social) constructivism and critical pragmatism.

2.2.1 Critical Constructivism

As a starting point, my ontological stand assumes that assumptions give meanings to reality. Indeed, *“one cannot observe the world without some prior assumptions”* (Farthing, 2016, p.17). Those assumptions, not only represent claims about the physical world, but also produce perceptions in the people’s mind and which influence their understanding of the world and hence their interactions with it and with each other (ibid). As the knowledge produced within the field of urban planning is rather socially constructed and does not rely on observations (ibid), I admit that the knowledge produced within this research is not value-free and which also supports my choice of the post-modernist theory of planning for diversity. Ontologically, in (social) critical constructivism, the socio-historic dynamics influence the shaping an understanding of the project (or subject) under inquiry. Epistemologically, the critical constructivism serves at exploring how the context influence the production of knowledge surrounding the research (Manning, 2021). And specially when analyzing the outcomes of the project Den Grønne Rute which the housing organizations are currently implementing in the former vulnerable neighborhood Trekanten in Holstebro city. That being the case, before the in-depth analysis of the case study, I set the contextualization of the study (Chap.5). Notwithstanding, as knowledge from some group of people is privileged over that of others, adopting a critical constructivism stand will not help advance innovative ways of thinking but also expose the dominant produced narrative knowledge (ibid) Here, comes critical constructivism to question such dominant forms of knowledge (production) and investigate other *“epistemologies so as to include previously excluded and marginalized knowledge”* (ibid) in contributing to (the shaping of) understanding the society and the city. That being said, my interest lies in questioning the promotion and the aim of the project Den Grønne Rute by evaluating not only the design (outcome) but also the process, and which justifies my use of a critical pragmatic stand as well.

2.2.2 Critical Pragmatism

Generally, critical theorists tend *“to create social change through the identification and explication of those with less power”* (Bohman, 2013; Brewer & Miller, 2003; Corradetti, 2011 in Hsu, n.d). According to Wagenaar (2011), the substantial task of a planner is to protect the right of marginalized or excluded groups in contributing to the decision-making process (Wagenaar, 2011 in Hsu, n.d.),

and which supports my hypothesis of not limiting the involvement to stakeholders and inhabitants in Trekanten, but rather extend participation to the rest of the city. Furthermore, the critical pragmatism ontological stance advances the truth as temporal, depending on its context, and hence never definitely true (Hsu, n.d.). The epistemic contextualism relies on a critical pragmatic methodology in order to reassess the claims of the knowledge. Critical pragmatism works hence “*towards prescribing contextual improvement and not knowledge*” (Hsu, n.d.). That being said, my research aims at improving the context in which the project is taking place by giving opportunity to all-interested (people or institutions) to contributing to place-making Den Grønne Rute.

Yet, my research is essentially derived from an empathy with the community living in Trekanten who has commonly been stigmatized for living out there and at the same time from the hope to do something about it by involving more people in the project. Even though the neighborhood came out of the ghetto list in December 2019, its stigmatization and that of the people living out there did not come to an end. Therefore, the housing organizations together with Holstebro municipality are implementing the physical plan Den Grønne Rute aiming to reconnect Trekanten to the city and better integrate it as well as its community. Assuming the project to reconnect Trekanten to the city has raised questions about the complexity of the city (structure) and whether Holstebro is accordingly having splintering urbanism issues. Moreover, and inspired essentially by Forester, I believe in a co-constructed and co-generative planning practice that attends not only the outcome but also the process (Forester, 2012). Therefore, I also evaluate the process of planning Den Grønne Rute in order to uncover the level to which people were involved. In fact, the potential and limitation of their participation will be framed by place-making theory that implies community involvement in planning public spaces. With a progressive and a critical pragmatic frame, as well as an overall feeling of suspicion of the rationale behind the project and its implications on both the neighborhood and the city, this research questions indeed both the process and the outcome of the project.

Finally, a critical pragmatic stand advances multiple and progressive forms of knowledge and values ‘*initial opinion and considered judgment [which] might help us [planners] to listen in a more critical and less credulous way, helping us to learn from and through ambiguity, to learn about interests and values, and to learn sensitively and perceptively as emotions like fear and anger bring new issues into view*’ (Hoch, 2007 in Forester, 2012). Such a philosophy comes also to support and justify my mix-methods approach in collecting data. Indeed, with a critical pragmatic stand I care about the public-opinion about the project, both people who live in Trekanten and others who do not in order to give them opportunity to make their voices heard and therefore the use of the survey.

2.3 Ethical Concerns and Motivation

However, conducting research on such a neighbourhood and its vulnerable community brings about ethical considerations. My position as a researcher needs therefore to be clarified; I come from Tunisia and I have been living in Denmark for only three years. As an immigrant in Denmark, I have had personal experience with the issue under investigation and I have witnessed social exclusion, stigmatization and forced evictions because of sudden urban development projects that the residents did not learn enough about. Moreover, I have also experienced being personally socially excluded and not being welcomed in some arrangements not necessarily because I lived in Trekanten but essentially because I am different in many ways. I am simply not of a Danish ethnic origin; I am Tunisian Muslim with a darker skin color and which brings about a different sensibility toward the residents of Trekanten (since I lived there once). My positionality and the issues discussed are therefore close to the heart and reflect accordingly my second motivation for conducting this research by emphasizing planning for diversity in multicultural cities. More importantly, as a planner to be in this Danish context and living in the city of Holstebro, it becomes particularly relevant to learn the decision-making mechanism within the social housing sector in Denmark and its implications on the communities, urban dynamics and the city structure. Finally, I am equally interested in the city management and the planning tools for integrating vulnerable neighborhoods and communities and to learn more about the regulations that target them as well as their socio-spatial situations.

My hope with this research is to promote and advocate for a progressive planner's attitude towards a thoroughgoing and comprehensive planning process for cohesive societies and inclusive cities, and thus less splintering.

3. Theoretical and conceptual framework

The following chapter aims at answering the sub. question1: What is the splintering urbanism and how can place-making help redress it and promote planning for diversity? As the research topic is complex and based on a triangulation of three theories (the splintering urbanism, planning for diversity and place-making), this chapter limits the scope of the analysis and the conclusion that can be derived from it. It is therefore focused on a number of concepts that are key in understanding the theories and their state of the art at the first place. This chapter is divided in two main blocks: the first one examines the splintering urbanism and how infrastructure and the urban life (or the city) are intertwined, while the second focus on the role of public spaces and place-making in favoring planning for diversity. It starts by introducing the splintering urbanism in a broader sense and focuses furthermore on infrastructures in particular. Nevertheless, analyzing infrastructure networks implies an awareness of their social impact and dimension. This chapter emphasizes therefore the mobilities and the socio-spatial implications resulting from the (uneven) infrastructure distribution. It further stresses the relevance of accessibility and connectivity in ensuring a sense of cohesion in the city. Along, it brings together different bodies of literature around diversity and multiculturalism and the crucial role public spaces in managing differences and promoting sociability in the city. Finally, it introduces place-making as an opportunity for promoting diversity in the city and overcoming some aspects of the splintering urbanism. The purpose of this chapter is to support the development of a theoretical and conceptual framework of splintering urbanism, planning for diversity and place-making that will help inform and shape the analysis later on.

3.1 The splintering urbanism: Infrastructures are veins of the city

Issues of ‘splintering urbanism’ with regard to urban planning and city practices were first brought to light by geographers Stephen Graham and Simon Marvin’s thesis entitled “*Splintering Urbanism: Networked Infrastructures, Technological Mobilities and the Urban Condition*” first published June 14th 2001. Using infrastructure as key element in their analysis, the authors invented the term ‘splintering urbanism’ to refer to the different manifestations of fragmentations cities can witness. Splintering urbanism is a pioneering analytical geography that covers the network(ed) society and which has inspired many researches and empirical studies on issues of urban infrastructure, mobility, mobilities, and socio-spatial inequalities.

In their theoretical synthesis of ‘splintering urbanism’, Steve Graham and Simon Marvin (2001) refuse to “*privilege cities over infrastructure, or infrastructure over cities*” (Graham and Marvin, 2001, p.179). They advocate however for the idea that “*infrastructure and cities are seamlessly coproduced, and co-evolve, together within the contemporary society*” (ibid). According to them, the urban is intertwined with infrastructure and that studying cities implies awareness of the infrastructural network(s). They clarify that “*much of the urban is infrastructure [and] that most infrastructure [...] constitutes the very physical and socio-technical fabric of cities*” (ibid). Barney Warf (2003), in his review of Graham and Marvin’s thesis, argues that the infrastructural networks serve as “*time space compression of urbanity by shuttling people, goods, water, energy, waste, and information within and among cities*” (Warf, 2003, p. 246). Accordingly, infrastructure represents “the veins and arteries” that make urban (spaces) happen and work. Cities are hence “infrastructural constructions”. Professor Ole B. Jensen confirms and states that “*cities are big social technical artifacts [where] there [are] tons of complexities [...] cities and infrastructures are inseparable. You can't have cities without an infrastructure*” (Jensen, 2021). But even though it has been argued that “*infrastructure networks retain powerful images of stability*” (Graham and Marvin, 2001, p.182), they have been accused of being “precarious achievements” (ibid; Warf, 2003). Especially that they can cause disconnection and dysfunction.

At the same time cities are believed to be “*staging posts in the perpetual flux of infrastructurally mediated flow, movement and exchange*” (Graham and Marvin, 2001, p.8). This constant movement (flux) of humans and goods is established and maintained “*through many superimposed, contested and interconnecting infrastructural ‘landscapes’*” (ibid), which “*provide the mediators between nature, culture and the production of the city*” (ibid). Infrastructures are therefore fundamentally “*integrators of urban spaces*” and are “*believed to bind cities [...] into functioning geographical [spaces] to add cohesion to territories*. Steve Graham and Simon Marvin describe infrastructure as “jigsaw pieces” that not only contiguously cover and constitute the tissue of cities, but also “*help to define the [city] identity and development of [the localities]*” (ibid). “*The socio-cultural change (among others) in cities is closely bound up with changing practices and potentials for mediating exchange over distance through the construction and use of [...] infrastructures*” (Graham and Marvin, 2001, p.10) that give opportunity for social dynamics to happen by bringing the urban into move and exchange. It is indeed through infrastructure that spaces are bound together in cities (and cities bound into regions and regions into states). It is hence around and through Infrastructures that cities take shape, people move and settle, public institutions and private actors maintain and expand

their influence. Moreover, it has been argued that infrastructures not only ensure and help create a working urban environment, they also add a sense of cohesion to the (place or) city. Accordingly, infrastructures define not only the physical but also the “*social dynamics [...] within and between urban spaces*” (ibid, p .11). In fact, infrastructures underpin the urban functions since it commonly represents favorable environment for investments in urban development projects like housing, services and activities and which all represent an indicator for good urban conditions and functions. Jensen stressed, in that respect, that “*thinking infrastructurally is not something for engineers only. It's just as much a question of sociology [and] anthropology [...] The city is the combination of the built environment, the infrastructures, the technologies, and then the social, the cultural [and] all the ways in which we make community*” (Jensen, 2021). He further clarified how infrastructures are “*deeply intertwined into the cultural fabric of the city*” (ibid). Nevertheless, they can also restrict the urban dynamics and establish urban-spatial and or socio-spatial divisions, hence urban dysfunction.

3.2 Mobilities and social inequalities

The movement of people, goods, (water, electricity) and information is ensured by infrastructures. This latter is however not always evenly distributed, and which explains for example the limited access for leisure, employment or even (affordable) housing for a group of people in comparison to another. Planning for cars (highways) while -until today- not everyone can afford a car shows for example how infrastructure constructions are uneven and which can result in providing exclusive access for (better) employment, services and housing to a specific group while marginalizing and excluding another's opportunities. Infrastructures, while ensuring the mobility of people, goods, information among many others, are also accused for limiting the mobility of some others. On this matter, Steve Graham and Simon Marvin (2001) argue that “*the construction of spaces of mobility and flow for some, always involves the construction of barriers for others. Experiences of infrastructure [and mobility] are therefore highly contingent*” (Graham and Marvin, 2001, p.11). For a mother walking a stroller, a kid walking his bike (learning to bike), a person using a rollator walker or sitting in a wheelchair, taking the stairs in a building or crossing the road are not equally seamless to use, but barriers instead. Urban infrastructures are therefore socially biased, and reflect the “*struggles for social, economic [...] and political power to benefit from connecting [...] distant times and places*” (ibid). Nevertheless, connecting places remains according to Urry (2007) an “exceptional human achievement” (Urry, 2007, p. 20), that derives essentially from a need (and a will) to connect and which not only shape forms of infrastructures (paths, roads, bridges, etc.) but also social relations

(ibid). Banks in public spaces and bus stations reflect indeed how ‘bridge-able’ are in initiating social contact. Infrastructures not only influence but also determine the socio-urban mobilities and which *“are closely bound up within wider socio-technical, political and cultural complexes which have contingent effects in different places”* (Graham and Marvin, 2001, p.11). For example, the mobility paradigm in planning emphasizes how fast one can move in space in order to get to his/her destination. But by designing infrastructures to save time, planning for mobility not only ignores the potential exclusion of some groups from the urban experience but also limits their access to some destinations.

3.3 Access and connectivity for healthy and inclusive cities

In order to reduce the conditioned use of (some) infrastructures, planners advocated for greater access and hence better movement of people, and which requires *“producing new territorial configurations, by harnessing the [urban and] social process in a new geography of places and connecting flows* (Swyngedouw, 1993 p.306 in Graham and Marvin, 2001, p.11). Connecting (flows of) people with places in order to ensure better access(ibility) to their destinations turns to be more significant than planning for how far one can go in a given amount of time. In fact, what is the purpose of spending more time on the move, if one can save time and energy and still gets to the destination? Especially that the longer time people spend on transportation or mobility, the less interaction people experience with each other. But why does social interaction even matter?

It has in fact been proven that people who do not interact with others and do not take part in community or outdoor activities are in 60 % higher risk of developing a “prediabetes” condition which with time turns into diabetes. Social interaction has also proven to be helpful in overcoming stress by maintaining lower rate of tension and sadness. They help develop higher confidence, compassion, and strong communication skills. After all, people with more social interactions tend to be happier than those with less or no interactions (Mubeen, 2020). Nevertheless, in order for social interactions to happen, favorable and encouraging conditions need to take place. Knowing that (planning) cities is not only about their technical structure but also about (managing the movement of) people and their *“caring about connections with other people and [with] their neighborhoods”* (Bowman, 2018 in Malveira and Risager, 2020), opportunities for meeting, walking, playing and sharing time and space, are equally important in planning. However, the growing urban and infrastructural development which cities across the world are witnessing- has caused disconnection between places and which has resulted in social rupture. According to Cohen (1996), even though cities across the world began to develop infrastructures in order to *“display spaces [...] that are*

powerfully connected to other 'valued' spaces across the urban landscape [...] there is often a palpable and increasing sense of local disconnection in such places from physically close, but socially and economically distant, places and people" (Cohen 1996 in Graham and Marvin, 2001, p.15). With the mobilities and social dynamics result of the uneven development of infrastructures, even the alongside spaces (and cities) happen to be detached (Graham and Healey, 1999 in Graham and Marvin 2001). It is therefore the role of the planner to anticipate such disconnection that will result in a dysfunction of the urban environment. Planners should ensure the establishment of connection between places (e.g., new vs old neighborhood, a residential district to an educational district) not to cause the emergence of severed, excluded or stigmatized places and hence a splintered urban environment. On the one hand, McLoughlin (1969) argued that planning should serve at leading and harmonizing *"the activity of individuals and groups in such a way as to minimize the bad effect that may arise, and to promote better 'performance' of the physical environment"* (McLoughlin, 1969 p.56 in Allmendinger 2017, p.173). The good functioning of the city is accordingly relying on planning the activity and movement of people in and around the urban environment. On the other hand, it was argued that with their complex networks, infrastructures *"work to bring heterogeneous places, people, buildings and urban elements into dynamic relationships and exchange which would not otherwise be possible"* (Graham and Marvin, 2001, p.11). The exchange and the interaction of people via networks of infrastructures construct to Healey (2007) the urban and not only give meaning and quality to places, but also bound them (Healey, 2007 in *ibid*). Besides facilitating the flow of people (goods and information), planning infrastructures turns to be key in building social relations, sense of community and a city in short. Indeed, *"the more diluted and scattered the exchange opportunities, the more the city begins to lose the very thing which makes it a city: a concentration of exchange opportunities. What makes a city efficient and an exciting place to be is this diversity and density of potential exchanges"* (Engwicht 1999, in Efroymson, Rahman and Shama, 2009, p.4).

3.4 Public spaces: an opportunity for sociability and diversity

The idea of the socio-technical relations and how physical environments encourage (or limit) social interactions is not new. Many researches have covered this matter and clarified how to generate and promote social interactions through the design, architecture and the planning of spaces for public life. Indeed, cities are, according to Engwicht (1999), created and evolve *"to maximize exchange opportunities"* (Engwicht, 1999 in Efroymson, Rahman and Shama, 2009, p. 2). Opportunities for people and groups to interact and exchange (thoughts, cultures, goods etc.) animate life in spaces and

construct the urban dimension of cities. In her famous book *“The death and life of great American cities”* (1961), Jane Jacobs advocates this notion and affirms the importance of social life and activities between buildings and the streets around the houses in contributing to the quality and the experience of (places in the) city. She argues that casual public contact and people’s mobilities, especially on a neighborhood’s scale constitute the very urban dimension and represent key factors in knitting the spaces in the city and building communities. That being the case, social interactions in outdoor and at public spaces contribute to forming a *“public identity of people, a web of public respect, trust, and [place] satisfaction”* (Namin, Najafpour and Lamit, 2013, p.282). While referring to the history of urbanism, Jensen clarified how this former and the civic society are about *“the coexistence of difference. The fact that you can be in a space with someone not like you [...] without [...] having a fight. So that the DNA of cities is the relatively peaceful co-existence of strangers of people who are different [or] socially differentiated”* (Jensen, 2021). He concluded that public spaces are *“defining feature of cities [where people] are able to live together with people who are not like [them, because we “cannot have a city where everybody is alike [like] a bunch of robots (ibid).*

Moreover, well-designed urban public spaces provide according to Layne (2009) a feeling of a safe urban environment that encourages people to interact and engage in societal and cultural exchange. Being at the core of social life, public spaces boost connections and relationships between the different individuals and groups and which improves the community wellbeing (Lane 2009 in Namin, Najafpour and Lamit, 2013). Furthermore, accessible and safe urban spaces increase different groups’ tolerance (Whyte, 1980 in Rad and Ngah, 2013) and which leads to more sociability and creates hence a working public space. One should not therefore *“underestimate the value of public spaces [in] bringing people together* (Jensen, 2021). Although, sociability in public spaces relies on people's will and desire to interact, other elements can inspire and encourage people to engage in community. Knowing that a sense of social belonging encourages communication and chit-chat conversations and promotes accordingly social interactions, an overall feeling of security, comfort and belonging are therefore essential features for successful and active public spaces.

However, in multicultural (cities or) neighborhoods, with individuals or groups who are different in many ways (class, gender, age, culture, religion, ethnicity, and sexual preferences) and who have different experience and expectations from the urban environment, social interactions may confront with a feeling of a ‘fear of the other’ (Sandercock, 2000) and which prevents and revokes sociability. Similar *“situations in which the xenophobia [...] within [individuals,] communities and neighborhoods finds its expression [...] through the planning”* (ibid, p.16) process and its resulting

built environment represent a threat to social cohesion and interactions. Because of such “deep-seated fears, aversions, or anxieties” (ibid, p.16) of some people and neighborhoods, constructive responding to such challenges in cities with diversity becomes a planning and city management challenge. With the emergence of the (politics of difference in) multicultural societies, protecting the right to difference and the right to a voice in decisions making that affect different groups of people has become more challenging for the planning practice and gave birth to struggles and disputes in planning processes. Notwithstanding *“each of these struggles and their associated claims has an impact on, and in [...] the built environment”* (ibid, p.15). However, as long as social relations are embedded and laden by power dynamics, *“so will be the social divisions and any associated stereotypes, that are produced through social interaction[s]”* (Fincher and Jacobs, 1998 in Harris and Thomas, 2004, p.475). It is therefore argued that when social diversity becomes *“an outcome of systematic and persistent inequalities”* (Harris and Thomas, 2004, p.475) essentially serving political objectives, providing equal opportunities for socially diverse individuals and groups becomes difficult for planners. On this matter, Malik (2003) stresses the danger of (planning) politics *“slipping into a moral relativism which refuses to question aspects of social diversity which are themselves unjust or discriminatory”* (Malik, 2003 in Harris and Thomas, 2004, p.476).

Notwithstanding, *“the concept of difference is now central to the way in which urban societies are understood”* (Sandercock, 2000b, p.7), new politics of difference have re-shaped both the perception of cities and the planning processes and which have accordingly resulted in the changing structure of the urban environment and cities around the world. Nevertheless, managing the *“differences [in cities] has become an increasing challenge”* (ibid, p.7). Especially in western countries where planners, who did not question the modernist one-public interest paradigm that advances ‘one law for all’ as neutral and unbiased planning framework, start to face *“cultural practices that are incommensurable with their own values”* (Sandercock, 2000, p.16) and their planning system. It has therefore been argued that some planning systems are failing the increasing cultural diversity in cities. And as long as values and norms of the dominant culture are reflected in plans and conceptualizing the planning codes, legislation, and urban planning and design practices, planners have no room to develop tools to respond to the new reality of multicultural cities. That being the case, the planner’s role is commonly limited to ‘design’ the space which has been created through political action (Forester, 1982). Planners are hence ill-prepared *“to analyze urban issues from a multicultural perspective or to design participatory processes that bring racial and ethnic groups into the planning process”* (Ameyaw, 2000, p. 105 in Sandercock, 2000, p.14). Nevertheless, an understanding of diversity that considers

social differences as component of the post-modern society and driver for social interactions (Jackson, 1989 in Harris and Thomas, 2004) fosters the acceptance of multiculturalism and open window for change and progress in planning. No matter how diverse they are, people has become central to planning research and professions practices. Planning cities for people (at a human scale) has gained great success the last century (Gehl 2010, 2011).

But what if our cities and places are built with people?

3.5 Place-making for connectivity, sociability and diversity

A well-known ‘people-centered’ approach to planning and designing spaces in cities is indeed ‘place-making’. The literature on this latter concept has been growing rapidly in the human sciences academia (Friedmann, 2010) the last two decades. Although the term “place-making” started being used in the mid-1990s, the concept (idea) is however not new. Some of the reasoning and thinking behind placemaking was first brought to light in the 1960s, more specifically when “*Jane Jacobs and William H. Whyte introduced groundbreaking ideas about designing cities for people, not [(just)] cars and shopping centers*” (Project for Public Spaces). They both argued for the importance of vibrant social life in public or meeting spaces and encouraged people to take ownership of the streets. Inspired essentially by them, Gehl continues to advocate for the necessity of creating “cities for people” (Gehl, 2010) and the value of the social interactions at a human scale like in “the life between buildings” (Gehl, 2011). They defended people’s right to the city by criticizing planning for cars and heavy highways infrastructure that, according to them, hit the urban dimension of places, neighborhoods and cities as it cuts down the everyday social interactions. Instead, they promoted livability, sociability and diversity in places and inspired researches and partitioners to plan for walkability and soft mobility and to promote sustainability. Whereas improving the quality of spaces that comprise the gathering places within a community (be it streets, sidewalks, parks, buildings, and other public spaces) at a neighborhood, city, or even at a regional level, is the final aim with place-making plans, placemaking has community-based participation at its core (What is Placemaking?, 2021). It inspires greater interaction between people as it engages them in collective reimagination of public spaces to be at the heart of their community and everyday life. Placemaking is accordingly not just about creating or upgrading a space, it is more a process of engaging people in conceiving places (ibid) that generate safe and vital public destinations and which motivate people to develop a feeling of belonging and stake in their communities (like the famous idea of eyes on the street). Since it refers to the collaborative process by which people strengthen the connection first between each other and

then to the places they (plan to) share, placemaking capitalizes on the community's inputs, inspiration and potential for collective creation of good public spaces that promote people's well-being (health, happiness, comfort, safety and security) (ibid).

Beside integrating the physical (urban and environmental) identity, place-making also emphasizes the cultural and social identities that define a place (neighborhood or city) and which (either limit or) support its evolution. By paying particular attention to the social and cultural importance of place (be it a street, a public space or a residential area), place-making turns to be more than just urban design approach to beautify the place, it promotes indeed collaborative and creative patterns of space use that bring social and cultural differences of places into consideration. It is therefore of a great relevance to engage the community at earlier stages of the project planning in order to gather the different forces that will support the project on a long term (Perrault et al., 2020).

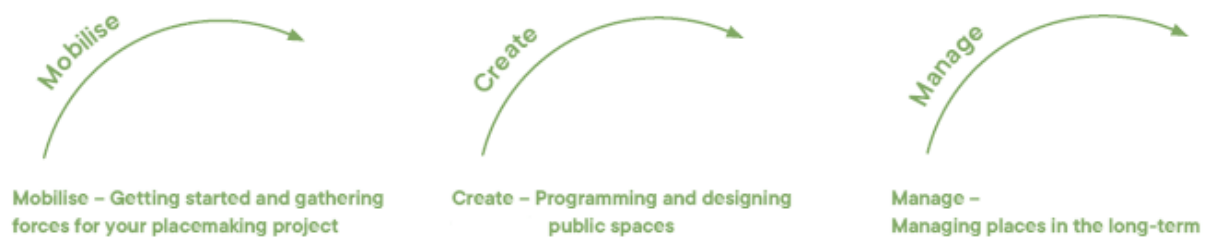


Figure 3.1 the three phase of place making (Perrault et al., 2022, p.15)

The process is centered around observing, listening to, and consulting the different people (young, adult, older or with disabilities) who live, work, or simply use the space subject to place-making. By engaging them in the process, practitioners understand better the various needs and aspirations not only for that space but for the community as well, who together create a common vision for that place. The vision evolves into a strategy then into a plan that will result in lifting and improving (the use of that) place and which brings benefits not only to the place itself (its image) but also to the people who use that place (social cohesion and better life style).

Therefore, it was argued that interactions are key concept in place-making projects. They are important essentially because the focus shifts from a project (design and outcome) to a process-focused approach that requires continuous adaptation with the evolving or the unexpected conditions. Such conditions include according to (Perrault et al., 2020) “*the needs of a population, macro and*

micro trends (economic, societal, demographic), or framework conditions such as political, economic, or regulatory” (Perrault et al., 2020, p.16). That being said, let's also not forget that the population is not a stereotype, but diverse instead, and so are their expectations and need from a public space or place-making project. The authors of the “Handbook: Placemaking in the Nordics” (ibid), clarified in that regard how the implementation of “placemaking as an iterative process means evolving in a framework where not everything is set, or decided from the very beginning. Instead, processes and methods will be continuously evolving to accommodate new insights” (ibid). It can therefrom be argued that place-making is unlike design thinking, its goal is not limited to improve the outcome, “but rather to build a learning process that drives change” (ibid).

In the end let’s not forget that “well-designed urban public spaces should aim to address the needs of city dwellers to rebalance their lives, offering a refuge from the hustle and bustle or a place in which they can develop through learning and new experiences. People need to connect with their environment [and with each other] and feel a sense of belonging, to feel good being there, therein lies the good life” (Ryan, 2006 in Efroymson, Rahman and Shama, 2009, p.39).

4. Methodology

With this chapter, I present the approach and methods I adopted in conducting this research. First the fundamental use of a case study which is the subject of this research and which illustrates the rationalities and expectations from the project Den Grønne Rute in its specific context: Trekanten a former vulnerable neighbourhood in Holstebro city. Further, it describes the way I conducted the analysis adopting a mix-methods and ethnographic approach (observations, document analysis, semi-structured interviews, focus group and survey) in order to enable the double-layered analysis (1. the neighborhood and 2. ‘Den Grønne Rute’ which is a network of public spaces crossing the last-mentioned neighborhood). This chapter concludes with the validity and reliability of the findings.

4.1 Methods

The analysis of the case study is the result of a: (1) spatial urban analysis (based on observations), (2) documents analysis, (3) interviews and focus groups analysis and (4) survey analysis. Whereas this latter was ensured by a google form (see appendix n) directed online to people living in the city of Holstebro (be it in Trekanten or not), the focus group (see appendix n for interview guide) were conducted with four members of the project steering group and two semi-structured interviews; one with the project manager of the SHMP who is a partner in the project and the second with an architect from Team Plan at Holstebro municipality.

The analysis will serve to answer the sub. question2: “How is Trekanten splintered? And how can “Den Grønne Rute” reassemble it to the rest of the city?” Focusing on the first part of the question (How is Trekanten splintered?) presupposes investigating aspects of the splintering urbanism between the neighborhood Trekanten and its connections to the rest of the city and which implies, on the one hand, a qualitative spatial and urban analysis. This latter will serve at understanding the role of infrastructure and the urban composition in (r)evoking a sense of spatial coherence and will essentially look at the spatial characteristic of Trekanten and its surroundings (infrastructures, housing typology, landscape, services or facilities and attractions etc.). Since the aim is to analyze the connectivity and accessibility of Trekanten, it is important to clarify that the analysis of the infrastructural facilities will be limited to the various thoroughfares (avenue, road, street, path, rail, tunnel, bridge etc.) and to the street lighting. Nevertheless, the survey, on the other hand, will verify the qualitative data quantitatively. Moving to the second part of the question (how can “Den Grønne Rute” reassemble it (Trekanten) to the rest of the city?), the answer will be provided by analyzing

first a list of relevant documents about the project and second the focus group held with the project steering group and the semi structured interviews with two project partners. Besides the above-said, taking part in the formal and informal meeting about the preparation and progress of the project Den Grønne Rute has deepen my understanding of the projects and its objectives. The daily observations, walking along Trekanten and engaging in the process have advanced the exploration of how can “Den Grønne Rute” can reassemble the neighborhood Trekanten to the rest of Holstebro city. Although essentially based on a mixed methods approach, this research also has an ethnographic dimension. Ethnographic researches in planning studies are not limited to the interviews and observations, they also include “*participation in various formal and informal meetings in the [project] process*” (Forester 1993, p.188 in Farthing 2016). Moreover, according to Farthing (2016) “*ethnographic research is useful when there is an interest in a detailed and fine-grained understanding of a social context*” (Greener 2011 in Farthing 2016). Since I am also interested in the social manifestations of splintering urbanism, participating in the different meetings with the project steering group and stakeholders, has supported my understanding of the social context of my research. In closing, the table 4.1 below summarizes the system of methods adopted in this research as well as the list of documents, the interviews partners and the number of participants in the survey.

Methods	Analysis details			
Observations	1. Walk and talk through the neighborhood Trekanten observing the roads, the accessibility, the inner paths, the housing structures, the green spaces, the activities, amenities and the economic activity (urban spatial-analysis) 2. Taking part in formal and informal meetings with different stakeholders			
Document Analysis	1. Trekanten analysis		2. DGR analysis	
	a. ‘HOLSTEBRO, En sammenhængende by’ (Gehl, 2015b) b. ‘TREKANTEN Stukturplan for en levende bydel’ (Gehl, 2015b) c. Draft of the municipal plan (Holstebro kommune, 2021) d. ‘Ansøgning til Landsbyggefonden’ ((Holstebro kommune et al, 2019) e. ‘Strategi for beboerprocess’ (GETTO, 2020) f. Press release g. Holstebro onsdag (14 April 2021)			
Semi-Structured Interviews	2 participants			
	Social planner Anja Klok Schou: The project manager of the SHMP at the Housing Organizations in Trekanten		Urban planner Yelena Kostova an architect-planner from Team Plan at Teknik og Miljø Holstebro Municipality	
Focus group	4 participants (members of the steering group of DGR project)			
	Anders Vestergaard: The Director of the Housing Organization NordVestBo	Michael Sand Pedersen: The Project leader for DGR	Trine Blicher Folmer: Architect/process planner and founder of Getto	Kristine Holzendorff: The Project coordinator of DGR
Online Survey (google form)	56 participants			

Table 4.1 Systems of methods used in the research

4.2 Limitations, Validity and Reliability

It is nevertheless of a great relevance to clarify that the use of the Danish language was fundamental in conducting this research. My advanced level in speaking and reading the Danish language has helped me ensure an appropriate redaction of the interview guide and survey as well as a proper translation of all the communicated data in Danish. But any interest in conducting similar research in similar context, will require a good knowledge of the Danish language, the Danish planning system as well as the unique Danish social housing sector. However, and since I am not a native Dane, I had some difficulties understanding the different Danish dialects some of the interviewees use. And in order to avoid that the translation influences the interpretation of the findings, I had to verify the translation with a Danish friend who has also assisted the transcription of the interviews. The precious help of a Danish friend was therefore welcomed and this research is therefore considered reliable. The reliability and the validity are indeed key elements for a credible research, as the quality of the findings depends on those elements (Farthing, 2016). It is therefore important to be aware of the limitations. Again, there was a language barrier because despite my good understanding of the Danish language, I am not a native Dane and that has influenced my capacity to understand the humoristic aspect of the spoken language during the interviews. Furthermore, translating the provided documents from Danish to English might have resulted in failing some specific meaning and critical details could therefore have been overlooked and which might affect the reliability of the research.

In terms of validity, all the handed documents are officially approved and are counted as primary source both at the housing organizations (managers of the project) and at the municipality of Holstebro (partner at the project). Whereas the participants in the focus group are members of the project steering group, the interviewees are partner in the project and hence key actors in the project subject of investigation. The participants in the online survey either were living or currently live in Holstebro and who are involved in the daily urban life. Everyone (the interviews partners on the one hand and survey participants on the other) were asked a similar set of questions. The findings are hence considered valid. Finally, starting the analysis by reviewing the official documents before hearing the opinions of the interview partners, made the research more valid as I first relied on the official sources and which has allowed to support the claims made by the interview partners. That being the case, this research is considered credible.

5. Contextualization and Case presentation

5.1 Holstebro

Holstebro municipality (see fig.1) is located in the west of Jutland in Denmark. Its territory covers an area of 801.55 km², and its population counts 58,699 inhabitants (until 1st March 2021). Holstebro municipality is in fact the only West Coast municipality with constant annual population growth since 2012 and its main town is Holstebro city. Like many municipalities in Denmark, Holstebro has welcomed migrants since the late 60s. The first wave of migrants was the guest workers from Southeast and central Europe who came to Denmark around 1967, and who by the beginning of 1970s started to bring their families to Denmark (Holstebro) and which constituted the second wave of migrants.



Figure 5.1 Holstebro municipality West Jutland DK (google map)

In the 1980s Holstebro (and Denmark more generally) started to welcome refugees from the Middle East and then in the 90s refugees from Africa. Refugees continued to land in Holstebro and specifically during 2015 and until 2020 from Syria. Since their arrival in Holstebro, guest workers, immigrants and refugees have been sent to live in apartments or 'rækkehuse' (terraced-houses) all over Holstebro. Nevertheless, the largest concentration of the immigrant community continues to live until today (June 2021) in the neighborhood Trekanten near Holstebro city center.

5.2 Trekanten

Trekanten is a residential area comprising currently almost 4.500 residents from 35 different nationalities (2020), and which makes it the most multicultural neighborhood in Holstebro. It is located at one and a half km northwest of the center of Holstebro city (see fig.2 below) and is encompassed by two small bypass that frame it in a triangular shape and hence the name 'Trekanten' (the triangle, see fig.5.3 below).



Figure 5.2 Trekanten location in Holstebro (google map)

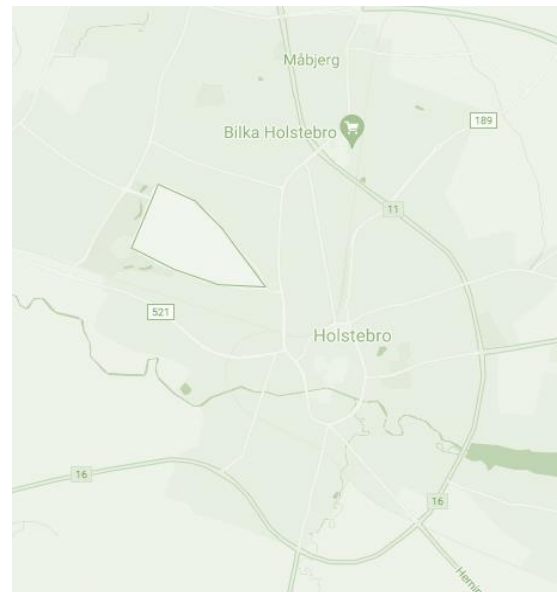


Figure 5.3 Trekanten the form (google map)

Trekanten was first developed in the 1960s and continues undergoing urban development until today (June 2021). Its surroundings are very rich of youth institutions e.g., kindergartens, primary schools, high schools and a leisure center. About the green and/or the recreational spaces, Trekanten is surrounded by two parks and two large artificial lakes that offering everyone the opportunity to enjoy the landscape and the nature. Each apartment-block has its private green space, grill-place and playing ground. And even though the primarily function of the apartments or terraced houses is family-dwellings, the housing organizations (Lejerbo, NordVestBO, BSH) offer pensioners residence, cooperative housing and student residences as well (Dahmani, 2021).

Since 2015, Trekanten has been a substantial and intensive urban development projects. Nevertheless, those projects have resulted in tearing down several apartment-blocks in order to convert them either into 'rækkehuse' or into senior housing in response with the national strategy for managing the vulnerable (or ghetto) neighborhood in Denmark. In fact, Trekanten was, from December 2009 and until December 2019 classified as a vulnerable neighborhood. And even if it came out of the list, Trekanten continues to have a problem with its image as it is not considered to be an inviting place to visit (ibid). And despite the important physical improvement and socio-economic development the area has been witnessing, Trekanten is still suffering from some serious social issues (drugs and crime) which justifies the non-residents' aversion towards it on the one hand, and the implementation of a new Social Housing Master Plan and other physical (urban) plans like the development of new housings and 'Den Grønne Route' which is the case of this study.

6. Analysis and Results

In accordance with sub. question 2: How is Trekanten splintered from Holstebro city? And how will “Den Grønne Rute” help reassemble them back? the analysis is divided into two sections. It first looks at Trekanten; not only at its structure but also to its surroundings in order to verify the (dis)connection. As a result of the daily observations, an urban-spatial analysis of the neighborhood and its infrastructure was developed. Whereas such analysis only reflects the visual aspects of the splintering, the results from the qualitative analysis of the documents (see appendices 5;6;7;8;9;10), the color-coded interviews (see appendices 1.1;2.1;2.2;3.1 n) and the results from the survey (see appendix 5) will advance the understanding of Trekanten’s disconnection by revealing the inapparent (socially constructed) splintering aspects. At a second step, the analysis will focus on DGR relying on documents’ analysis (see chap.4), as well as the steering group’s, planners’ and survey participants’ narratives about the project, its process and aim. It is however important to clarify that the analysis of DGR project will look at first the design of the route and its role on a city and a neighborhood level, second at the planning process and thirdly at its relation to planning for diversity. It is now to the urban-spatial analysis of Trekanten that we turn

6.1 Trekanten: socio-spatially splintered

6.1.1 Urban spatial analysis

a. Trekanten’s network, infrastructure and accessibility

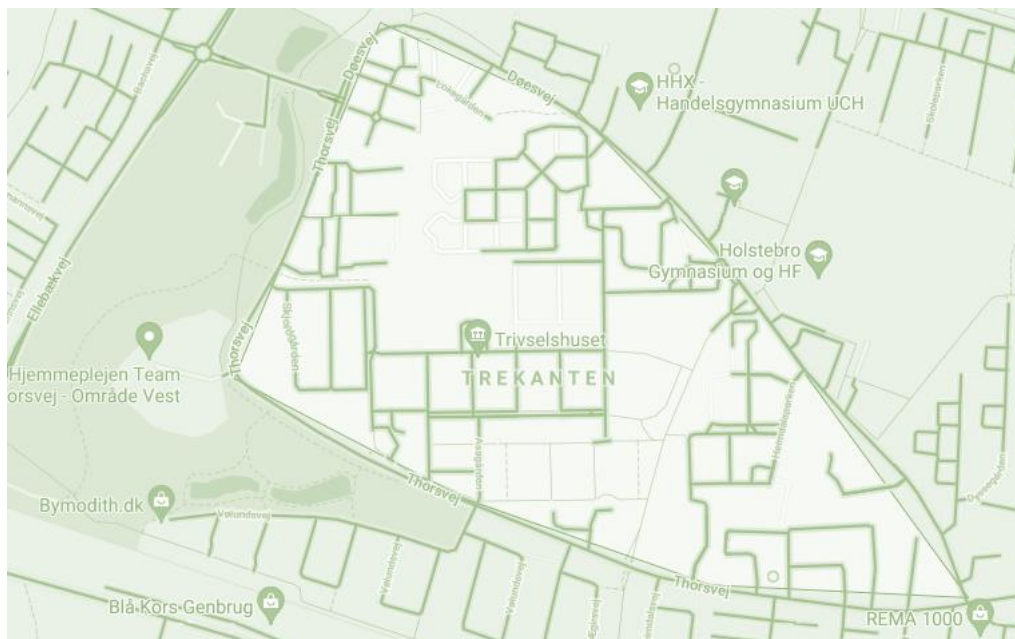


Figure 6.1 Trekanten’s network, infrastructures and accessibility (google map)

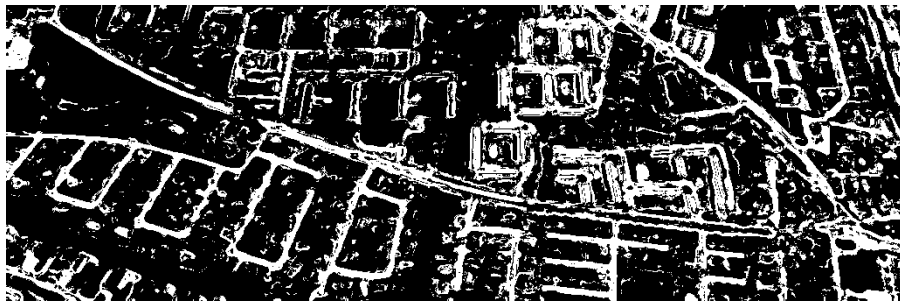
b. Thorsvej

Thorsvej

Satellite Photo



Figure Ground



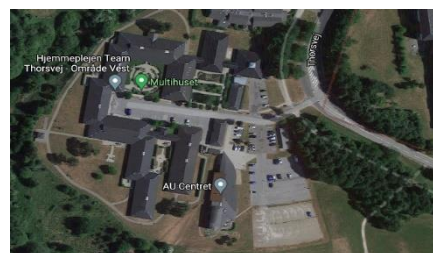
Streetscape(s)



**Housing
Typology**



**Spatial
Features**



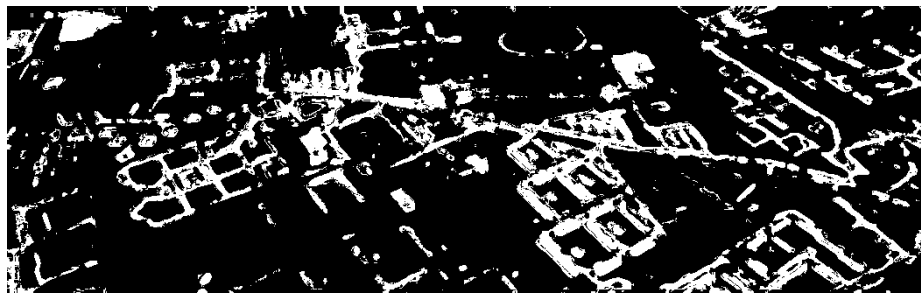
c. Doesvej

Døesvej

Satellite Photo



Figure Ground



Streetscape(s)



**Housing
Typology**



**Spatial
Features**



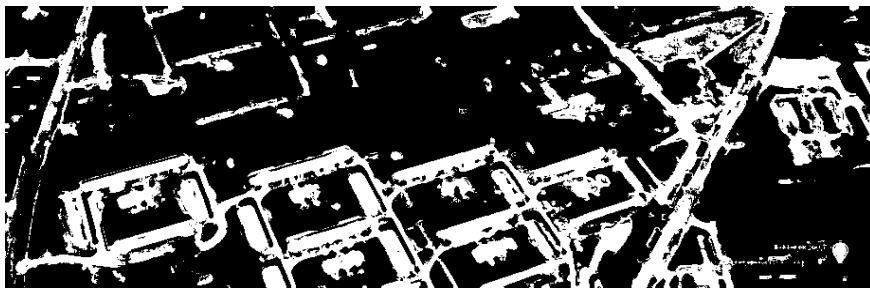
d. Skolestien

Skolestien

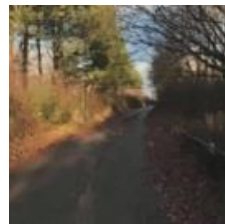
Satellite Photo



Figure Ground



Streetscape(s)



Housing Typology



Photo credit Ole Mortensen Fotograf

6.1.2 Trekanten: ‘the missing puzzle’

The document ‘*Holstebro, En sammenhængende by*’ (‘Holstebro, A coherent city’) (Gehl Architects, 2015a), presents an analysis of the city's overall challenges and potentials as well as the strategy for the city development. Nevertheless, at its closing pages, the document tackles the neighborhood Trekanten, and considers it as one of the challenges the city (development) of Holstebro faces. It indicates that “*Trekanten should be integrated in the city*” (Gehl Architects, 2015a, p.46), and that developing Holstebro implies integrating Trekanten “*physically, socially and demographically in the rest of Holstebro*” (ibid, p.46). Even though the authors admit that Trekanten “*is challenged on many of these levels*” (ibid, p.46), they underline that its “*short distance to the [city] center also means that the area is important for the overall understanding of the city*” (ibid, p.46). In fact, Trekanten is only 1.5 km from the city center. That being the case, the authors recommended to bind Trekanten better together with the city center as well as with the surroundings. They clarify that in order to do so, “*the city must strengthen the existing qualities, cultivate the existing networks and develop the current identity*” (ibid, 2015b, p.8) through a network of recreational routes and outdoor activities.

Focusing their analysis on the challenges the neighborhood has in relation to the rest of Holstebro, the structural plan for Trekanten stresses that those challenges are indeed intertwined with the city’s overall infrastructural challenges (ibid). That being said, they defined the infrastructure as the primary challenge Holstebro city is facing as it is dominated by car traffic and “*which creates poor conditions for pedestrians and cyclists*” (ibid, p.8). In that regard, they suggest that Holstebro city center should “*connect better with the surrounding housing [areas] through a reprogramming of the infrastructure design [and which] will strengthen [not only] the identity of the entire Holstebro [but also that] of Trekanten*” (ibid, p.8).

The draft of the Municipal Plan (Holstebro kommune, 2021) and which will first be published June, 15 2021, points that Trekanten is subject to one of the biggest urban development axes Holstebro is witnessing. And that the aim with master planning, local planning or the various projects’ initiatives, is “*to transform Trekanten from an isolated neighborhood, surrounded by roads as physical barrier to the rest of the city, to an integrated neighborhood that works together with its surroundings*” (Holstebro kommune, 2021, para.3). The draft also refers to Trekanten’s structural plan and stresses again that Trekanten should “*open up [...] in relation to the rest of the city and create better connections both internally in the area as well as better connections to the surrounding city*” (ibid, para.3). In that respect, the municipality is working together with the housing organizations in order

“to create a better social connection between local residents in Trekanten and the rest of the city” (ibid). The structural plan for Trekanten focuses therefore *“not only on the physical transformations in the [residential] area, but also [on] the social changes that occur when new frameworks are created for people living in the area and guests from outside”* (ibid, para3).

On top of the above-mentioned documents, the report “Ansøgning til Landsbyggefonden, januar 2019” (Application to Rural Development Fund, January 2019) the housing organizations have drafted together with the municipality and in collaboration with Gehl architects, also underlines the extent to which Trekanten is disconnected from the rest of the city. At its introduction, the document starts as follow: *“the residential area Trekanten is a missing puzzle piece in Holstebro network”* (BSH et al., 2019, p.3). It further clarifies how *“the area closes around itself, and is experienced as an island in the city, causing people not to come into the area unless they have a [purpose]”* (ibid, p.3). The rapport also highlights that the area is *“characterized by a relatively high concentration of non-ethnic Danes”* (ibid, p.3), a low-grade educational level as well as weak incomes and health standards. It further highlights the partnership between the housing organizations and the municipality and which also aims at *“ensur[ing] that Trekanten is incorporated in the city of Holstebro, and better integrated into the [...] city structure and people's movements through the city”* (BSH et al., 2019, p.3). In order to meet their goal (integrating Trekanten in the city), the partners have developed a strategy for *“a holistic [and] coherent [connection plan] for the entire Trekanten, to strengthen and develop the area [...] socially, physically, and economically”* (ibid, p.3). After positioning the neighborhood as ‘the missing puzzle’ in the city, the report introduces Trekanten as pivotal in the city dynamics and indicates that *“the residential area's central location and proximity to schools, other residential areas and the city center make it an important place for the whole city. It would be to the delight of both the locals and the rest of the city if Trekanten becomes an inviting connection for all. Den Grønne Rute is [thus] a way to integrate Trekanten into the city”* (ibid, p.3).

The members of the steering group of DGR project agreed with the above-mentioned facts and especially that Trekanten is indeed disconnected from the city. They stressed however the role that the infrastructure is playing in isolating Trekanten. The process consultant for DGR project stated for example that *“the role of the infrastructure is important in order to tie together and open up the area [...]. It is about making the area accessible to others [because] with Døesvej and Thorsvej, the infrastructure seems closing. It closes around the area [which is] actually cutting people off from getting in there”* (Folmer et al., 2021). She explained how people simply take the roads around the area and that is what they expect to dissolve with DGR. And she indicated that the infrastructure

should serve at making both the city and the neighborhood better functioning as well as to provide “*room for everyone*”. The infrastructure should be in favor of people’s daily movement to help them get around easily, because as she put it, people usually prefer “*to take a shortcut if it does not work natural to [go] through*” (ibid). In this regard, the architect-planner from Holstebro municipality also indicated that “*Thorsvej and Døesvej form a wall around Trekanten and [which] sends a signal that it is not very inviting to cross the road and enter [Trekanten]*” (Kostova, 2021). She agreed to a large extent that Trekanten is disconnected from the city structure and stated that “*it can also be seen from the aerial photo. It looks like a drop in the middle of the city [which] is surrounded by a wall of roads [where] it is easy to drive [up to] 70 km/h*” (ibid). For the project coordinator, Trekanten “*is a bit like a city within a city [or] like an island*” (Folmer et al., 2021). At the same way Kostova described it, Holzendorff also mentioned how Trekanten “*looks like an island if you look at an aerial photo map. There is [like] a heavy cloud down over Trekanten*” (ibid). And which is due to the foreign work force that came to Holstebro in the 60s and 70s that has caused intensive cheap apartment building projects in the area for cheap rent too and which has “*helped to keep prices down*” (ibid).

The director of the housing organization NordVestBo focused on the other hand on the lightning (electricity) around the area and said that “*if you think about how, it is out there [(in Trekanten)] today and how it [was] in the past, then just that with lightning, does extremely much*” (ibid). He explained that the infrastructure has even made Trekanten splintered inside itself and stated that “*there was not really a connection between [the areas inside Trekanten, because] the path that is to connect them is simply missing*” (ibid). He indicated how complicated are the small paths inside the area and which are also “*not really visible in the dark*” (ibid). He understands therefore why people do not walk through the area and especially in the dark because according to him, they could definitely get lost in Trekanten. Building on that, the project leader explained how people “*are afraid of getting lost [because of the complex] path systems. Each department has previously had its own path system [and] there has not been a natural connection throughout*” (ibid). This latter is indeed what they are trying to implement with DGR by employing “*the same pavement and the same street lights all the way through, so [one] can see that there is a route all the way through the area that [s/he] can relate to [and which] was not there before*” (ibid). Likewise, Kostova emphasized the fact that Trekanten is splintered from inside. She clarified that the current structure of the neighborhood is divided into separate apartment-blocks which their private playground and grill space and which has, according to her, prevented people from gathering and has hence limited the intern mobility in Trekanten. She asserted that Trekanten is before all splintered internally (Kostova, 2021).

Vestergaard stressed however that the isolation or disconnection of Trekanten is not only because of the physical infrastructure and the massive multi-floor buildings, but also because of the social indicators. He stated that Trekanten is “*a very dense district [and] the only place in Holstebro where there are such massive multistorey buildings*” (Folmer et al., 2021), and clarified that whereas similar departments around the city are developed into smaller blocks for a maximum of 200-300 leases, in Trekanten, they have over 2000 leases. He further emphasized the social aspect and pointed to the fact that Trekanten is the only place in Holstebro Municipality which is classified at the social class 5 and which is the worst social classification. He explained that it is again not only the physical “*but also, the social divides in it. [...] It is here that the [vulnerable people with] the lowest incomes [and those who] have the most socially disadvantaged [situations live]. And there is just one narrative that clings [and] which is hard to break down [or] to solve*” (ibid). Because according to him, it also “lies in the fact that they (the housing organizations in Trekanten) have the cheapest rents in public in the city. He clarified that if one does not have high incomes, s/he will look for the cheapest place to stay and which is in Trekanten. Then he pointed that in Trekanten also live “*a relatively high proportion of other ethnic origins [...] which is clearly higher than [the average in] the whole of Holstebro [...]. And much of it may also lie in the fact that [...] people with other ethnic backgrounds [also] have more children than the Danish families generally do. [And] about 85% of our 5-room homes are actually located out in Trekanten. So, if [one] has 3, 4 or 5 children, then [s/he] can almost only get an apartment out here [...]. Therefore, it is also difficult to make a natural placement around the city if the homes that are in demand are only found here*” (ibid), and which explains the concentration of immigrants and refugees in Trekanten.

On top of that the process adviser pointed to the fact that Trekanten does not have any store-life like “*workplaces where some also come from outside [...] in every day because they have their office space or to go to work in Trekanten. It is a pure residential area. Therefore, [one] can say that it seems isolated and closed [...] and it is by virtue of the infrastructure as well*” (ibid). Schou, on the other hand, stated that besides the super market SPAR, the restaurant ‘Kamoun’ and the Valhalla pizzeria, there is no other services or economic activities in the neighborhood and which is playing a major role in the disconnection of Trekanten from the rest of the city. She brought out the fact that the majority of the housing are apartments or terraced houses for rent. And she explained that “*at some point, when [people] get a full-time job and have enough money [they] will have to move out of the area to get a house [...]. So, the people we help to get job and education, at some point when they have [enough] money, they [buy a house and] then move outside. So, [many of the villas neighboring*

Trekanten are now owned by] *people who have been living here for rent and they moved there because now they have [...] their own house, to have [some privacy and] a garden where the children can play* (Schou, 2021). Kostova also stressed the lack of stores and shops in Trekanten and said that she has suggested at several meetings with the housing organization to start a shop concept like “*a larger store [with] some small niche stores [where one can] open a small restaurant or a small shop*” (Kostova, 2021). Accordingly, everyone agrees on the fact that no matter how nearby, Trekanten is secluded physically urbanely and socio-economically.

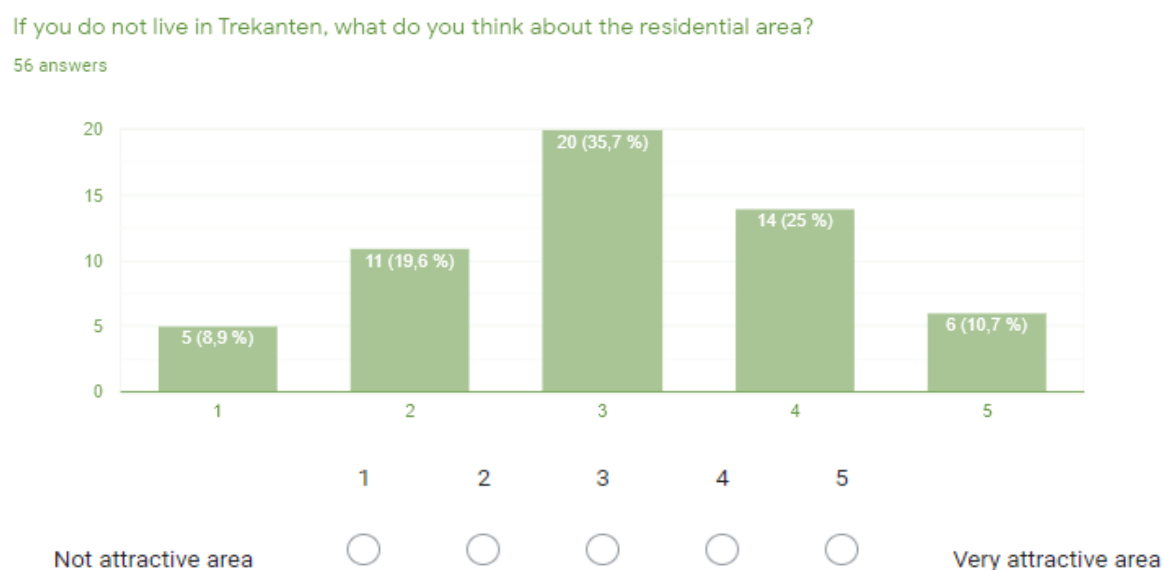
Nonetheless, the project manager of the SHMP thinks that not only is Trekanten isolated from the rest of the city, the city is also disconnected from the neighborhood; because people from outside think that Trekanten is a place for the immigrants and that they do not have a reason to come over. She stated that when she goes to the city, to the library or to the outdoor swimming pool, she always meets people from Trekanten. However, people from outside do not have any motivation to come to Trekanten. She gave the example of Trivselshuset (the leisure house) in the middle of Trekanten and explained how “*a lot of the people are not aware of all the offers [and opportunities] that are in all of Holstebro, [and that is] because we didn't tell them. We didn't inform them. When [they] come into this house [they only find] are you in a violent relationship? Do you have problems with your children? Do you have alcoholic problems? Do you have this problem? Do you have that problem?*” (Schou, 2021). Therefore, people who come to Trivselshuset think that Trekanten is a place for the vulnerable people or for the immigrants, and hence no interest to visit it.

About the role the ghetto law has played in isolating Trekanten, Schou narrated that “*I was living here in 2004 and we weren't talking about being a ghetto. It was just an area with apartments where [one] could live cheap*” (ibid). She explained how the neighborhood is disconnected also because of “*a narrative [...] a story [and] a way of speaking of the problems [and] addressing the young people with ethnic backgrounds. [There are] always talk[s] about them as being a problem, as being filling too much, being too much and making too much [problems]*” (ibid). Likewise, Holzendorff stated that Trekanten “*has bad prejudices and rumors [because of] a very ingrained tale [from] people who do not come here [and who] still think that this is [only for immigrants], because they are not enlightened. It is very much [about] ignorance. [People] only hear the bad [things which are] only 5% of what's actually going on here*” (Folmer et al., 2021).

Accordingly, Schou concluded that the disconnection is therefore not only physical, but also moral. And especially with the ghetto law as a “*new way of defining the social problems*” (Schou, 2021) that

made Trekanten a stigmatized neighborhood (ibid). According to Vestergaard, the ghetto law has indeed affected the area negatively and especially in relation to the reputation which Trekanten has today. He stressed that living in Trekanten is very stigmatizing. And at the same time, Folmer indicated that people who live in Trekanten “*also feel stigmatized as not good people or not good residents [because where they live] is not a good residential area. [That] is not very cool for the people who live there, that others think they live in a bad place*” (Folmer et al., 2021). Nevertheless, they all believe that the stigmatization “*is not something that goes away from one day to the next*” (ibid). As example, Folmer referred to Horsens city that as she put it “*was plagued by vandalism and crime for many years [...] and it took them approx. 10 years to turn Horsens from being a terrible city in Jutland to being a really good place where some [nice] things happen*” (ibid).

The analysis of the answers of the survey support to a large extent what came before. Indeed, after asking the participants about their opinion about the residential area Trekanten and to give it a number from 1 to 5 (1: not attractive; 5: very attractive), these (as shown below in graph 6.a) are the answers I received. Indeed, almost 30% of the respondents do not think that Trekanten is an attractive place.



Graph 6.a The answers to the question: what do you think about Trekanten? from the google form

Even if those answers reflect somehow that there is an issue regarding Trekanten and which made people consider it as not or less attractive, that do not reveal the reason(s) behind that. A following question was therefore needed in order to understand why do they think so. In fig 6.b below, I share some of the answers that show why do some people think that Trekanten is not or less attractive area.

Why do you think that?

50 answers

Too much crime

Mostly because of the image the place has

It is not natural for me to move in the triangle, missing something to look for there, shops, culture offers

It is being identified with ghetto. Other than that, I think it's a super nice area.

It's an okay place, but sometimes too much turmoil.

Too much Islamabad over the area.

If I were to move into an apartment I would not mind living there. The apartments are fine. But there is too much block construction in one place, so I would rather live on the outskirts. For example, the nozzle yard or Ringparken. Appreciate the green and Trivselshuset. I have no problem with foreigners, am more insecure with the mentally ill and addicts.

One should make restrictions on how many people with other ethnic backgrounds may live in an area - if one made a rule that the proportion of residents in Asegården must be a maximum of 40%, it would ensure a much better integration.

Too many blocks

One only hears the negative stories out there from, could be good with the positive angle instead.

A picture of an area with many problems, sad housing selection and a low-income families, as well as unsafe area

There are no houses and I do not want to live in an apartment

too insecure, dirty, by becoming a ghetto

Figure 6.b The answers to the question: why do you think that? from the google form

In sum, the answers are in perfect line with the qualitative analysis. Indeed, the majority refer to the problem of the image, lack of attractions, feeling of insecurity and the overall structure of the neighborhood. Nevertheless, what seems to be interesting in those answers is the expression of the cultural and psychological barriers between the people living in Trekanten and those who do not. Especially when referring to Trekanten by a ghetto or becoming a ghetto, Islamabad and 'turmoil'.

One of the other reasons of conducting the survey was also to verify if DGR is the kind of change, the residents and the citizens more generally expect in order to better integrate Trekanten in the city,

so that to get their perspective about the urban development. Surprisingly, people did not only suggest physical changes like walking paths, café or parc, but also highlighted the importance of telling and sharing the good stories that are happening out and stressed the role of the media in that (see fig 6.c)

If the Triangle is not an attractive residential area, what do you suggest to make it more attractive visit or live there?
39 answers

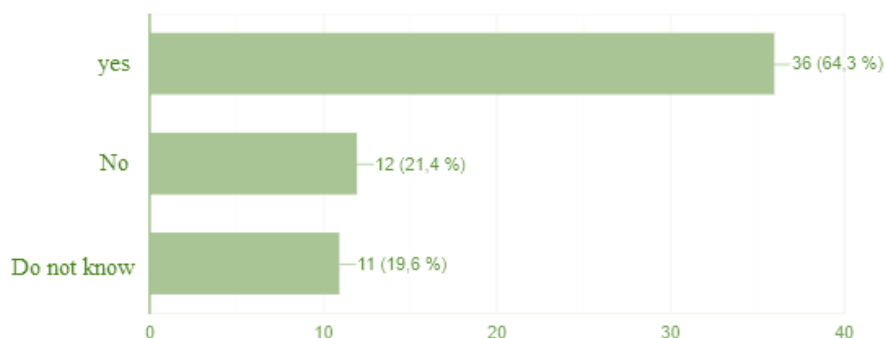
Tell the good stories
Several terraced houses and possibly new street names instead of names from the Nordic myths
Less crime
Cheaper rental of apartments
Information, activities in the area,
Less crime, teach young people not to throw their things in the middle of the bike path
more focus on the triangle on a positive perspective
Caffè or park
Local police, premises for the young people, "road party" once a year
More space needs to be created in the area. It's too closed and narrow. The area is dense and yet very divided. The paths do not lead together and many of the areas are gloomy.
Less negative coverage in the media and more positive coverage instead
Ghettos are probably never attractive, so get people with other ethnic backgrounds distributed to all areas so they can be better integrated

Figure 6.c The answers to the question: If Trekanten is not an attractive area, what do you suggest to make it more attractive to visit or live there? from the google form

Despite the distinctive qualitative answers that show the extent to which Trekanten is disconnected from the city, it was still relevant for me to ask the question. Not only to get quantitative answers that back the qualitative analysis but also to initiate reflections among the participants who had to give their opinion about whether a part of the city is split from the overall city structure. The following graph 6.d shows that almost 65% of the respondents confirm that Trekanten is indeed split.

Do you think the Triangle is split from the rest of the city?

56 answers

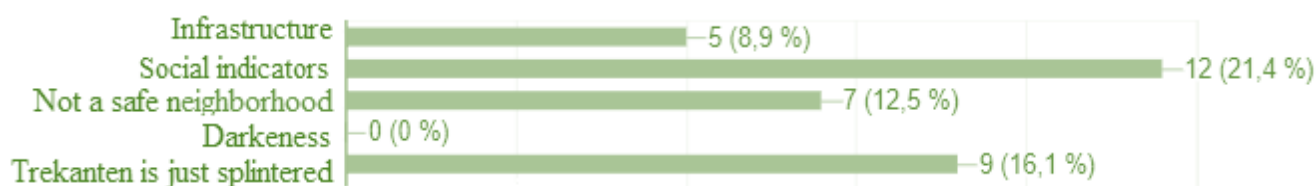


Graph 6.d The answers to the question: Do you think Trekanten is split from the rest of the city? from the google form

What is more interesting is the answers I received on the question that follows this former. In fact, the majority of the answers stressed the role of the social indicators in causing disconnection between Trekanten and the rest of the city. Another high proportion of answers was focused on the security at the neighborhood and choosing ‘Not a safe neighborhood’ for an answer. Surprisingly, the respondents did not consider the infrastructure as a major cause for the disconnection or splintering between the city and Trekanten. The graph 6.e below gives a picture of the most common answers.

Why do you think that?

56 answers



Graph 6.e The most common answers to the question: Why do you think that? from the google form

Even though the majority agreed that Trekanten is disconnected from the city, it is of equal importance to consider the more that 20% who do not think so. In that regard, a surprising and unique answer was received wherein a respondent stated “*it is more the city that is split from Trekanten*”.

In sum not only Trekanten is splintered from the city, the analysis has shown that also Holstebro is disconnected from Trekanten and that is essentially because of this latter’s stigmatization and image.

In order to deal with the above in-depth illustrated issues of stigmatization and disconnection Trekanten is subjected to, the housing organizations have been since 2015 working on the project DGR in collaboration with Holstebro municipality and Gehl consultancy, aiming at integrate the area.

6.2 Den Grønne Rute

6.2.1 Design

According to the application for funding, DGR aims at “*provid[ing] Trekanten with a cohesive recreational path connection with a central urban space in the middle. [It] is a strategic, physical and sensory approach to enhance the experience, quality of life, security and cohesiveness of Trekanten*” (BSH et al., 2019, p.3).

The project is conceived as a system of recreational paths through the neighborhood seeking to unite “*a number of urban strategic initiatives in one go*” (ibid, p.4) and it is therefore considered as an ambitious project for Trekanten. The same document presents the vision of the project first at two levels: (a) the strategic level for an inviting and safe route and (see fig 9) and (b) the sensory level for a unique experience of the route (see fig 10), and secondly from two perspectives indicating Den Grønne Rute’s role at the level of: (c) the city (see fig 11) and (d) the neighborhood (see fig 12).

a. Den Grønne Rute, the strategic level: an inviting and safe route

6 strategies to create an inviting and safe route	
1. Assemble Trekanten’s sub-areas	a common urban space course that, as a backbone in the area, creates the coherence and identity that is lacking today
2. Welcoming and inviting	inviting entrance to Trekanten, so it becomes natural to walk and bike through the area
3. Better orientation and wayfinding	it should be easy to find your way through marker color, urban space element and pavement
4. More security	lighting and more eyes on the route because shielding planting are removed and other front yard added. More ownership for the route.
5. More life along the route	by gathering destinations along the route and programming the large open green areas with meeting places, new activities and soft edge zones / front gardens
6. A large city life heart in the middle	a central urban space at the intersection between Den Grønne Rute and Skolstien. An urban space with a focus on play and learning

Table 6.a Den Grønne Rute: the strategic level, BSH et al. 2019, p.4, reproduced and translated by the author

b. Den Grønne Rute, the sensory level: a unique experience of the route

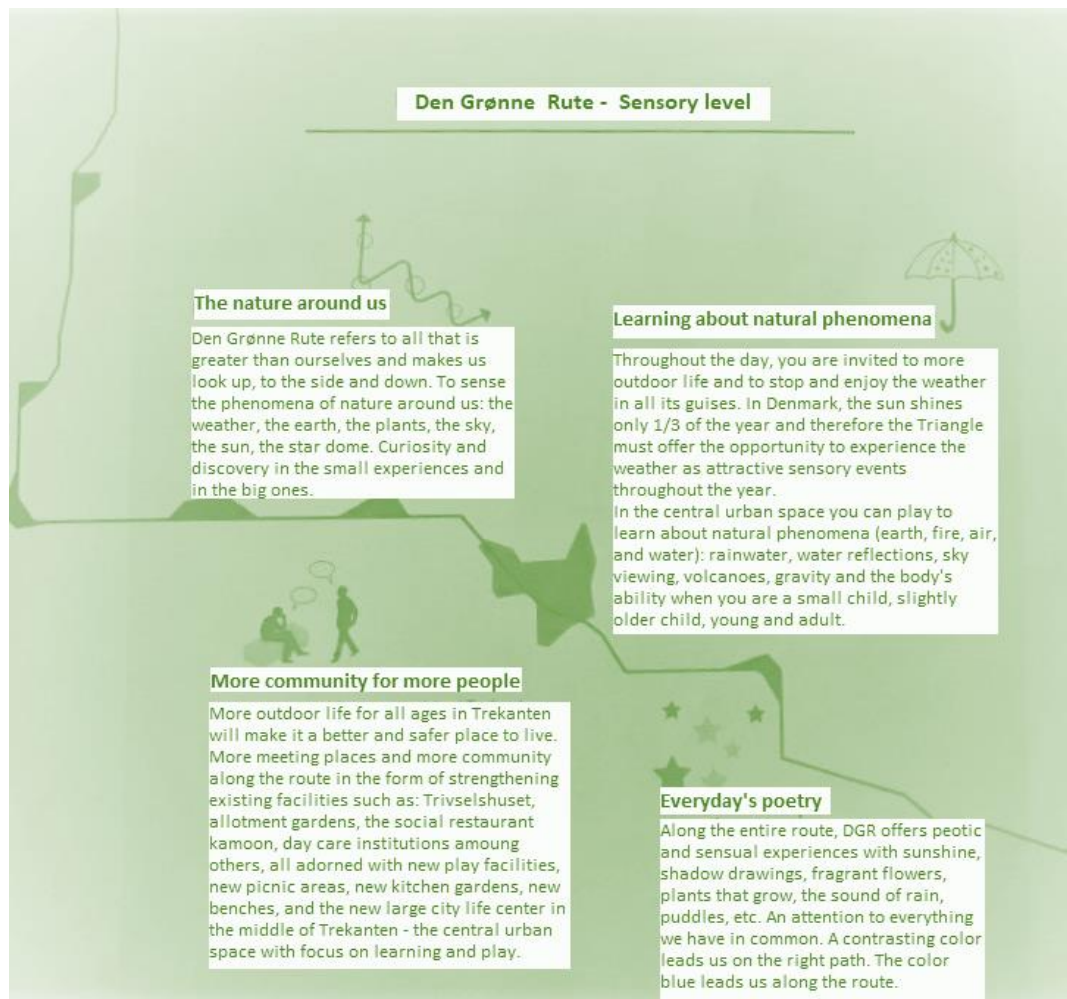


Figure 6.b Den Grønne Rute, sensory level (BSH et al. 2019, p.5, reproduced and translated by the author)

c. The role of DGR at a city level

At this section of the report, the relevance of DGR at the city level was highlighted. It starts by referring to the city infrastructure as a challenge both for Holstebro city and for Trekanten. Reprioritizing the pedestrians and cyclists over the cars (the dominant mode of transport) and upgrading the pedestrian and cyclist networks is therefore required in order to better connect the housing areas (like Trekanten) with the city center. Therefore, the authors recommended not only to strengthen the existing routes but also to plan new ones. One of these routes is indeed DGR through Trekanten. They argued that the “*establishment of this route will benefit both the residents of Trekanten [and those of the city and will therefore] strengthen the overall coherence of the city*” (ibid, p.6). That being said, they presented a number of recommendations for the city (center and the surrounding residential areas) as shown in the fig.11 below.

Recommendations for the whole Holstebro

1. Densify and gather the urban life around the center core: Trekanten gets developed and densified as well
2. Slow down and enhance the arrival experience (to the city): The infrastructure around Trekanten get to change as well
3. Create a coherent green and recreational network: Trekanten gets a distinctive activity route as well
4. Strengthen the links between the center and the residential areas: Trekanten becomes better connected to the city center as well

Table 6.c Recommendation for whole Holstebro (BSH et al. 2019, p.6, reproduced and translated by the author)

They further illustrated their recommendations on the following map (see fig.12 below) and clarified that “one of the main strategies for Holstebro city is to: Create a cohesive pedestrian and bicycle network [where] DGR in Trekanten plays an important role” (ibid, p.7).

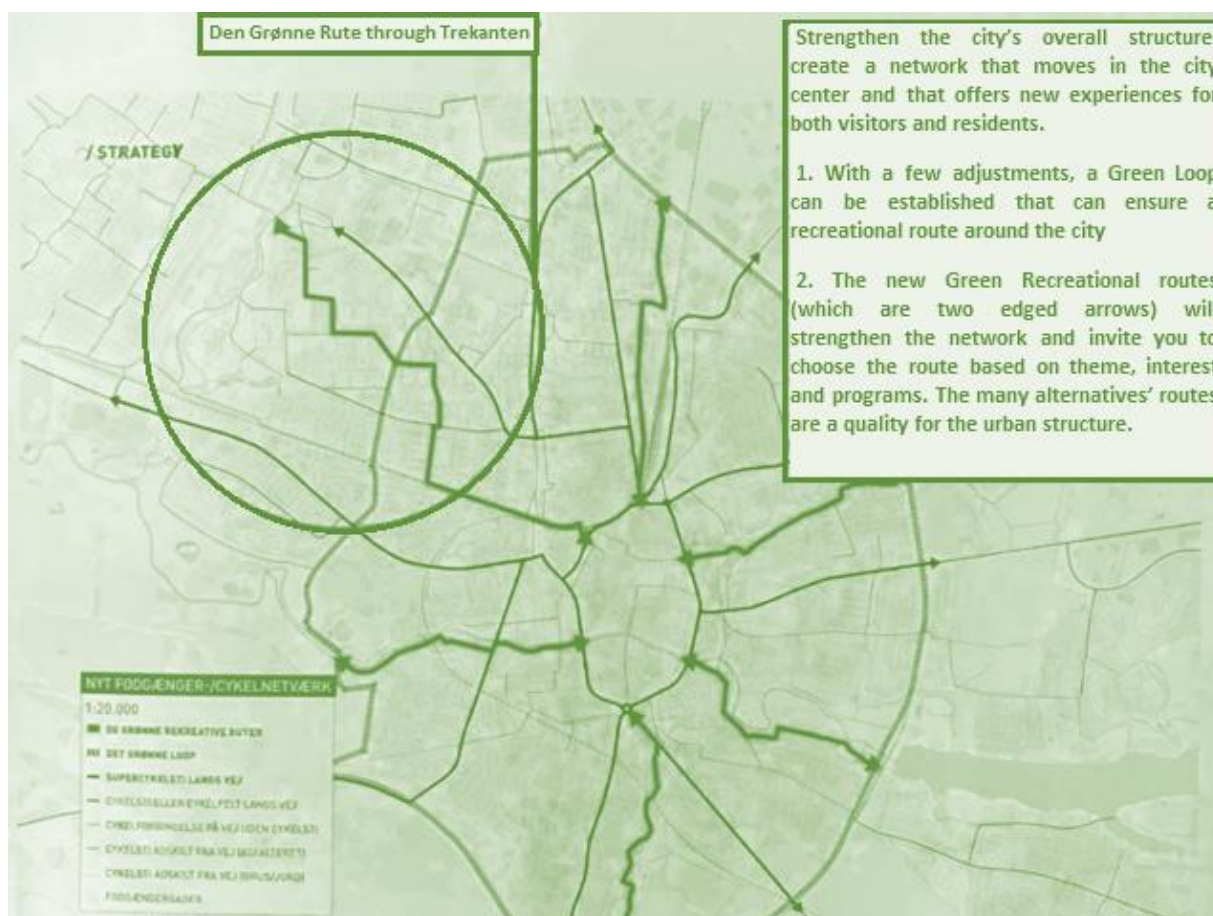


Figure 6.6 Recreational route experiences (BSH et al. 2019, p.7, reproduced and translated by the author)

d. The role of DGR at a neighborhood level

However, the application for funding the project DGR starts by referring to the structural plan of Trekanten as a simple yet a major move in the form of a network of paths that -at the same time- gathers and sheds the light on the potentials of the area. The establishment of DGR is therefore considered as “a strategic and physical move to increase the experiences, quality of life, security and cohesion in the public housing area Trekanten” (BSH et al. 2019, p.8). The project is accordingly a cohesive plan that will give residents and visitors as well, access to the area (either pedestrians or cyclists) and is expected to activate the outdoor life and help “create ownership of the area with private front gardens” (ibid, p.9). The role of DGR in Trekanten is furthermore outlined and illustrated in five interventions as follow in the fig.13 as follow.






The main points	1. <u>Unlock</u> Unlock the area on the outside The new network unlocks movement across roads so that Trekanten is integrated into the rest of the city	
	2. <u>Tie together</u> Tie the area together inside Relationships are created with the surrounding areas thanks to a cohesive path system	
	3. <u>Gather destinations</u> Gather the different destinations Initiatives, activities and new programs are gathered along the ‘movement-lanes’ and new common destinations are added	
	4. <u>Strengthen the identity</u> Strengthen the identity of the public spaces The public spaces are identified by a green route that leads people to an activity-rich meeting place where everyone is welcome	
	5. <u>Make room for new initiatives</u> Create space for new initiatives and communities The new structure should be the framework that brings together and enables new types of initiatives and communities throughout the area	

Table 6.d The main points for the structural plan (BSH et al. 2019, p.7, reproduced and translated by the author)

Even though the project manager of the SHMP agreed that opening Trekanten requires creating places that motivates people to come visit the neighborhood like DGR, she stressed that DGR is only *“one way to go through the area”* (Schou, 2021) and hence open it up. And she pointed that Trekanten needs more than just a recreational path to be better integrated in the city.

Kostova from Holstebro municipality, pointed on the other hand to the fact that DGR is in fact created to reassemble Trekanten internally. She stated that DGR *“is an activity route that makes people who live in Trekanten meet and use it. [...] but it has some potential on its stretch. ‘Den Grønne Hjerter’ [which] is located on the green route and it is located on skolestien [at the same time] is a potential place where others from the city can get to Trekanten”* (Kostova, 2021). She further explained that in order for Trekanten to open up, it should be perceived as a *“target place to get to, [visit] and use time there. [People] must have some goal to get to [Trekanten]”* (ibid).

e. The central Plaza: learning, senses and movement

‘Det Grønne Hjerter’ is the central plaza of DGR and it will be developed at the crossroads between DGR and skolestien (see fig 6.e). This public space is expected to have *“great potential for creating a new gathering place [as it] can become a destination for the whole city [and it will] provide security along skolestien* (BSH et al., 2019, p.8).

Holzendorff stated that the central plaza aims to create *“a multifunctional place where [people] can [meet and] do different [activities as it offers large and small]*

meeting places. What is actually also quite important [is that] it crosses the school path” (Folmer et al., 2021). And she also believes that the central plaza *“can create some new encounters, new insights or new discoveries when you get to these places”* (ibid). As an urban space, the central plaza will give space for play and learning for children of all ages and will also help *“arouse children's curiosity [where they] can play to learn about natural phenomena such as the [rain and] water path, the reflection of the sun, and challenge the body's ability* (BSH et al, p.14).

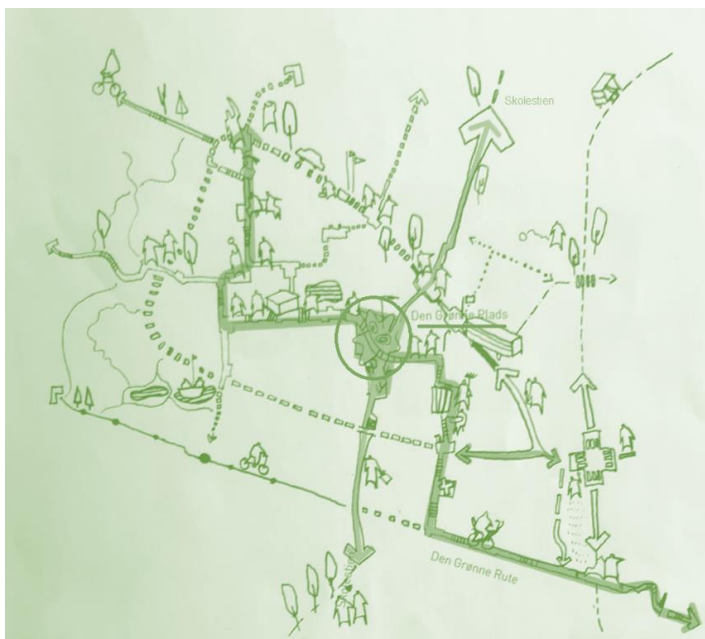


Figure 6.e The central plaza at the crossroads DGR and Skolestien (BSH et al. 2019, p.9)

The process consultant stressed the importance of the public space and meeting places in a residential area like Trekanten where one *“can sit with [his] neighbor and be a little more intimate. These [spaces] are important [and] must also be seen as some destinations [and attractions] in the area”* (Folmer et al., 2021). Holzenorff added that even though one does not live in Trekanten, s/he will still *“get there maybe because there is this meeting place that is very special or because there is another kind of attraction that does not just exist elsewhere”* (ibid).

Nevertheless, creating functional public spaces is according to Folmer *“challenged today by the fact that many people sit at their home [...] and that these public spaces are [sometimes] difficult to reach. They can also come to stand empty and thus can [create a feeling of] insecurity [when] having some large empty spaces that are not really being used”* (ibid). Planning public places requires according to her to conceptualize them *“as a destination both in relation to the function and to the location [and that] it is good to put them also at an infrastructure [which are] about gathering people and not about spreading them”* (ibid). Kostova completely agreed and clarified that the public spaces can also be considered infrastructure *“because urban space involves a lot of features that make people want to use [it]”* (Kostova, 2021). Infrastructure, beside facilitating getting from A to B, should according to her also provide an experience, like when walking through a park and stated that *“infrastructure is not just paths and roads but also [include] urban spaces”* (ibid). In terms of design (see fig6.7 below), the plaza will consist of a large surface of concrete tiles with playing areas for all ages. A seating line at the margin all the way around and essentially around the playing areas will be established, as well as some covered areas. Those latter will, according to the application for funding, make it possible to use the space in all kinds of weather. Together with the projected learning pavilion, those covered areas can be used for teaching, kindergarten's packed lunch, birthday parties and mother group's etc. (BSH et al. 2019, p.19).

Notwithstanding, Schou stressed that *“the meeting place itself doesn't do. [It has to be some] activities there [...] to make something to meet about”* (Schou, 2021). Kostova also highlighted that the central plaza as a public space, or DGR as a recreational path cannot gather people if they do not offer some activities and which can motivate people to come take DGR. She gave the example of students and learning and stated that the activities *“can be part of a study program. Something with physics learning, gravity of water, something with stars [or] weather phenomena, [where schools] can use DGR as a place to study”* (Kostova, 2021). Yet, the challenge for the central plaza is being located at skolestien (see fig6.8 below), and which is according to her and to the rest divides Trekanten into 2 parts and they even refer to it by ‘berlin wall’.



Figure 6.7 The central plaza design (BSH et al. 2019, p.18, reproduced and translated by the author)

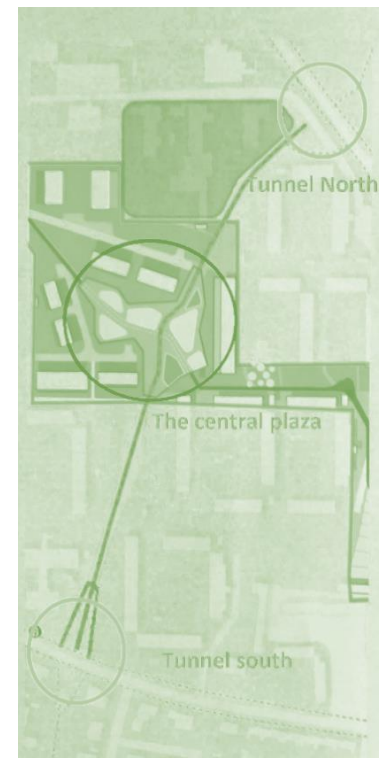


Figure 6.8 Skolestien (BSH et al. 2019, p.22)

f. Skolestien: new identity and more security

Even though (the cost for) renovating skolestien is not included in the application for funding DGR, as it is the municipality's responsibility and DGR is the social housing organizations' initiative, the report goes into details of the under-project of upgrading skolestien and its contribution to DGR as well as its implications on the area. According to the report, skolestien which is over a length of approx. 300 meters through Trekanten, serves as a boundary between two residential departments (Asagården and Heimdalsparken). The path is *"about 3 meters under the ground and which is together with the dense and tall [trees] on both sides of the path, makes skolestien appears extremely closed, dark and unsafe"* (BSH et al., 2019, p.22). The leader of the SHMP also agrees on the fact that the path is unsafe and narrates that some *"years ago [...] they had those clowns in America [...]* And we had some young people [from here] putting on a mask and making a joke with people passing this path, jumping out in front of them and scaring people. So, they thought that the killer clowns were also coming here in Denmark. [Therefore, it is also] known for being unsafe (Schou, 2021).

Renovating skolestien by “*removing the tall and dense planting, but preserving large solitary trees, as well as terrain-regulating selected areas around the path [will make] the appearance of the path [...] change to an open, safe and welcoming path* (BSH et al., 2019, p.22). It was also highlighted in the document that the existing tunnels: tunnel north and tunnel south (see fig 8) will be enhanced with new and distinctive lighting features and which will make the area ‘eye-catching’ and inviting to stay and feel safe around it. Besides, the authors expect “*the distinctive hill facilities around the middle of the skolestien terrain [to] ensure greater openness to the side areas, as well as connection to DGR and the central plaza [also because] the stairs along skolestien will be converted into ramps, thus improving [and ensuring] the accessibility from the areas and [...] for all ages*” (ibid, p.22). In this regard, Vestergaard stated that “*If you try to walk from one end of Trekanten to the other one [...], then you have actually [need to cross] Skolestien [which is] relatively dark. And then you enter the large central area, which was municipal [property] previously, where the big square should be in the middle [...] It was a big giant black hole [over there, where] you could not see your hand when you stretched it out in [the dark]. And then you had [to cross] Asagården, which was not very good in terms of lightning*” (Folmer et al., 2021).

That being said, the recreational rooms and especially the central plaza will not only help reconnecting the neighborhood to the city -by offering new opportunities for people from inside and outside to meet-, but will also re-assemble Trekanten internally since the central plaza will in fact replace the old underused and empty green field at the middle of skolestien that divided Trekanten into two parts. Moreover, the design of the plaza seems to consider the different ages’ needs in a public space and which can motivate the different groups of people to come and use it. And especially with the presence of the private meeting places for each block in Trekanten that has indeed prevented and limited people from gathering and has resulted in a lack of one shared place in Trekanten that welcomes everyone. In that respect, the process consultant expected DGR as well as the plaza to help people better find the way around the area in order to make it possible for outsiders to enter Trekanten. The same applies to the people who live in Trekanten, that they use the route daily to move around in Trekanten and she stated that DGR will help “*activate the area [as it] is a connection and an opening [to make it] easier to find around the area and it must help to create security in the form of lighting, [planting and the] meeting places*” (ibid). Nevertheless, she emphasized the importance of communication process and clarified that recoupling DGR with the existing infrastructure in order to make the neighborhood better functioning with the city structure also requires important work on communication (ibid).

6.2.2 Process

In the ‘Strategy for Holstebro’ (Gehl Architects, 2015a) and the ‘Structural plan for Trekanten’ (Gehl Architects, 2015b) the authors underlined the necessity of intervening and doing physical changes that will make room for new initiatives and opportunities for people to move in and around Trekanten. Indeed, Holstebro municipality, the housing organizations and Gehl Architects have been arranging meetings and workshops since 2015. In this regard, Schou stated that in 2018, the housing organizations knew that they can get funding for the project and it was published in an article in the newspaper. However, the residents did not get informed and she stated “*I met citizens [...] who asked me, what is this [project]? What does this about [because] they [were] curious. [...] I asked them [(the housing organizations)] how do we get the people here involved in this [project]? And they said, no, it's not now. It's not now. It's not now*” (Schou, 2021). Regarding the attention the housing organizations are paying to the involvement process and communication, Schou said that the “*involvement of the citizens [should] start before [...] all the plans [are] ready, because otherwise [people] can't have influence on the[m]. The plan is decided now [and] the route is there. They have decided where it should go, what it is best [and there is no] opportunity to influence that. They [only consulted] their head boards [where they] have decided that this is a good [plan]*” (ibid).

Nonetheless, she emphasized that the involvement in making places requires “*that the citizens also have to show that they want to know [about the project, because in a] democracy, you have to involve yourself to be a part of the involvement [and thus get] invited to meetings [in order] to join [the process]. But if you don't join the meeting, you are not a part of it [and] you are not involved. [Yet] it clashes because we have people out here who, first of all think [they] can't understand what is going on the meeting [and other who] think [that] it is already decided [and they] can't do anything, anyway* (ibid). She further highlighted that the people in Trekanten “*have a history of not being able to be involved*” (ibid). Her opinion recalls indeed what happened during the general assembly of the allotment garden association of the department of Danagården Trekanten (to which I was invited) and where the residents expressed their disappointment from the trajectory of the route. They stressed that they do not want any route to pass by their allotment gardens or apartments. And they were not fun of the idea that other people from outside will cross by their area. They indicated that they are already not happy with the young residents from Asågården who usually come hang out and sit on their bunches at Danagården. In fact, they believe that DGR will only make their area a noisy place where young people from all Holstebro come hang out, party, listen to loud music and mess up their space.

It becomes important to clarify that the majority of the residents in the department of Danagården are either elderly people, people with disabilities or (pre-)pensioners and are hence people with difficulties. In general, they were completely rejecting the idea of a recreational path through their department and suggested to the project coordinator other alternatives to change the trajectory. During that meeting, Holzenborff made it however clear that the course of the route is already decided and that regardless that it is out of question to make changes on the trajectory at this phase of the project, she will return to the steering group and inform them. No matter how much the project coordinator tried to push them toward (re)imagining the place and to propose some ideas for and expectations from the project, the group of residents rejected the idea of a recreational route in the first place.

In that respect, the project manager of SHMP stated that there will be *“of course some people who think- like at the organizations- that this [project] is really exciting and very good, [people who] really want this [neighborhood] to change into something else. [Whereas] other people [will] say: why is this spot going to change? My children are playing football there. I'm very happy for this [place] as it is [...] I do not want the change [especially that] the change [is] because of some other people from the rest of Holstebro [who] think that Trekanten is not a good place to be* (Schou, 2021). And she stressed that despite how *“frustrated people [are] out here, [the housing organizations] invite them to a meeting with [only] Danish speaking [experts] talk[ing] about big visions [and how they] want this [neighborhood] to change [whereas people here] have problems [speaking and understanding danish or] getting enough money to buy furniture to the apartment [and others have mental problems]. But [they] still want them to be involved. [The question is:] Can they be involved? Do they have the resources? On what level do you involve them?* (ibid). She suggested therefore that planners and experts *“have to go to their [(people's)] level, to their starting point [and ask] what is important for you in your daily life? [...] for example, what is important for you in Danagården? What makes it a good life for you? [...] If they had listened just a little bit to the people first, then [...] maybe they could have had this discussion that Kristine [(the project coordinator)] is having now beforehand two years ago. So, they have gotten them involved already in that part of [planning] the route”* (ibid). That being said, Schou stressed that she is quite unsure that the housing organizations *“really want involvement. Because [...] no one has been asked if it should be called Den Grønne Rute. [They] have already decided where it should be [and] the meeting places where to be. [They] have also decided what level people should be involved”* (ibid). Nevertheless, she was aware of how complicated is to involve people in planning and pointed that is also disturbing for planners who have a plan they want to implement but the public does not agree. The director of NordVestBo clarified in

this regard *“that there needs to be an increased attention to the residents out in the area [to help them] create ownership [of DGR]. Because there are a lot of people out there who think it is insane because we're really happy to live here, so why do [we] have to make a path through it all. [...] And then there is the formality [where] the various departments [should] formally approve that we make this path [or any other project in the area]. So, they actually need to be relatively informed about what we do so we can expect them to also approve it subsequently”* (Folmer et al., 2021). Furthermore, he indicated that the involvement is not limited to residents as they have sent out some press releases years before they start the project. And he referred to the project coordinator and clarified that her task is also to involve *“those who do not live in the area both institutions [and] people [living] in Holstebro city”* (ibid). And even though the process consultant agreed that the involvement of the resident and the non-residents should go hand in hand, she stressed that involving the residents should come first. Because, according to her, one of the worst things to happen for a resident is to know from outside that there is a development in his/her area and s/he has not received the information in the first place. However, she indicated that planners *“have to be careful about working with ‘them’ [(the outsiders)] and ‘us’ [(the residents)]* (ibid).

Despite the fact that planners can do very little about that, as the residents can easily get to talk about ‘them’ vs ‘us’, she stated that planners, instead *“have to try to [...] gather them in [one] group”* (ibid).

6.2.3 DGR between the fear of the other and diversity

Nevertheless, according to the leader of the SHMP *“letting people from outside in [Trekanten] for a walk [means that] they [will] also get to see daily life here [which] is both good and bad. There are problems here: there are parents shouting at their children in another language. And if you're Dane and you have never heard Arabic before you would say, oh my God, I'm never taking this walk again”* (Schou, 2021). Then she gave an example of the Somali woman who when they talk, they sound like shouting at each other, but she explains that *“they're not a scolding nor shouting, that is just the way they talk. But a Danish person who has never met Somali person before [will] see the scarfs [and] maybe [it is] their first time, and they have never seen a woman with that before, only in TV. So, their understanding will be: oh, this is the women who the man hits her and where she cannot decide for herself. This is what would go through their mind when they see this woman. And then [if] she is standing with three other women and she is shouting, they would say, oh my God, they really have some problems here [...]. And they will go back to [their city] telling, [...] you know, out in the black ghetto...”* (ibid).

But in order for the project DGR to succeed, Schou emphasized the diversity aspect and said “*you actually need people who want diversity, because this is what they will experience taking this route: the diversity*” (ibid). She also indicated that even though, there will be people who come take the route because they are curious and might like the place, there will be “*other people who would come here [only] to get their prejudices [confirmed]. They hear [...] about the immigrants [...] from the politicians, when they are discussing [issues in relation to] the immigrants. This is [however] a distant way of seeing integration and immigrants. So those people will [...] go for a walk on DGR and maybe they will use it to make this picture understandable, so [that] to support their prejudgments*” (ibid). The project coordinator on the other hand, advocated that Den Grønne Rute will “*help create some attractive encounters [for] different people and perhaps people you have not met before [thanks to the] random meetings*” (Folmer et al., 2021). The director of the Housing Organization NordVestBo also referred to the diversity and explains how DGR “*may help to break down some boundaries. If you meet some of the people who live in an area [which] you have a [bad] idea about [and] you suddenly have an area that can make you meet here, then you somehow get to know each other. And it might help break down some barriers and some [prejudges]. And it is perhaps also a little what we hope that there can be; at least one or two really big good things out in Trekanten*” (ibid).

Even though Folmer stated that planning public spaces for diverse people is a challenging and a difficult task, she indicated that, as planners and project team, they “*want to create areas and public places that are for the many and not for the few*” (ibid). She clarified that different people have different expectations from a public space; Some people want to use the barbecue; others want to camp and children want to play... “*but then there are other places where [one] can sit on a bench as an elderly person and watch the young people play basketball. Then there is room for everyone. [...] The size of the public space also has a significance in relation to how many different groups we can get to gather*” (ibid). Furthermore, Vestergaard emphasized the important role of the playgrounds and the small meeting spaces for the daycare mothers who also need a quiet place to be. Planning spaces for the minorities will according to him motivate them to “*get into the area and use it actively*” (ibid). And he also explained how planners “*can easily make something nice and good and also something that the residents want to use, because it will be nice and cozy to be in. But it takes something extra to attract people who do not live in the area out there to use it. I think [...] one of our main tasks is to find out what it should be*”. Another big task with this project as he put it “*is to establish a sense ownership in the young people [living] in the area. And [...] especially the young people who tend to go around making little [problems] out there [and] who see [the urban development] as if we are*

trying to destroy the free areas they have out there [...]. We are also trying to do something good for them too” (ibid). Folmer added on and stated that DGR “must be for everyone. It will not be some exclusionary areas. And that also needs to be worked on and that is where we need to get them [(people)] into this process” (ibid). She explained that people should have a drive to come to DGR, therefore it should be an experience path when people feel attracted, welcomed and comfortable. And that is according to her “how to ensure that a place becomes for everyone” (ibid).

More generally, Kostova from Holstebro Municipality indicated that in their department, they use culture and diversity in the physical and the functional planning which should according to her promote diversity. She stated that the *“different ethnic groups should be able to meet [in] the new places we create [like] the new urban spaces and buildings. There must be room for the disabled and space for children. There must be room for the elderly and then [we also highlight] the history of the city. [Because] Holstebro is a city and a municipality with a long history, that you convey it by making some art installations [for example] that tell some story” (Kostova, 2021). As for Trekanten, Kostova clarified that they (planners) “know that the young people [...] are easier to get in touch with, as immigrants. [Not only because of the] educational sites north of Trekanten (HHX, Holstebro Gymnasium, Ungdomsskolen), [but also] because they want to help integrate into Danish culture and become more informed about what is happening and what [we] are entitled to” (ibid). And she even talked about herself and said “I myself come from Ukraine. I [first] came to Norway. I did not know much and if I only had some Norwegian friends who could invite me out and enlighten me in their gatherings. This would make it much easier for [me] to seek out information [my]self. [Integration] takes a lot of time and one can give up in the end because it is difficult” (ibid).*

In sum, the analysis showed that re-assembling Trekanten to the rest of the city via DGR seems to be a challenging task for planners. Not only because of the existing infrastructure and the lack of services which are making the neighborhood physically closed on itself and hence urbanely and economically splintered, but also and especially because of the stigmatization and multiculturalism the planners have to work with and which brings to light the socio-cultural splintering in the city. That being the case, the analysis proved that DGR cannot bring the city in Trekanten by design alone, and that communication, integration and diversity-considering need great attention in order for the project to succeed in ensuring cohesion in both Trekanten and the city. Nevertheless, the analysis revealed the great emphasis and reliance that planners and place-makers have put on the central plaza, which is the largest recreational and public space in DGR and by which they hope to open up Trekanten, connect it to the city and to enhance the experience of the place in the neighborhood.

7. Discussion

With this chapter I present my reflections upon the results from the case study and the mix-methods' analysis. The aim is to answer the sub-question 3: To what extent can DGR redress the splintering between Trekanten and Holstebro? And how can planners use place-making to advance planning for diversity in multicultural cities? More specifically with this chapter, I aim at:

1. Interpreting the results in order to verify the (different aspects of the) splintering urbanism between the neighborhood Trekanten and the city of Holstebro,
2. Evaluating the rationalities, outcomes and the process of the project Den Grønne Rute in relation to its aim (better integrating Trekanten in the city) and its promotion as a network of recreational rooms, and which will serve answering the first part of the question: To what extent can DGR redress the splintering between Trekanten and Holstebro? And finally,
3. Discussing the role of the planner and that of place-making in promoting planning for diversity in multicultural cities. And which will answer the second part of the question: How can planners use place-making to advance planning for diversity in Holstebro?

7.1 Trekanten: a detached neighborhood in a splintered city

It becomes clear from the analysis that Trekanten is indeed disconnected from the city. First of all, because of the current infrastructure which is limiting the (natural) access throughout the area. Døesvej and Thorsvej, while ensuring the mobility of some people and goods among others, they at the same time limiting the mobility of some others and preventing them from coming in Trekanten, and which recalls Graham and Marvin's (2001) argument that "*the construction of spaces of mobility and flow for some, always involves the construction of barriers for others*" (Graham and Marvin, p.11). The same applies to skolestien that besides the reputation which is itself a barrier to cross, it is (almost) impossible for a parent with a stroller or a disabled person to get across the path. Moreover, the tunnels at the two extremities of skolestien, makes it indeed not inviting to come through, and which explain the role of infrastructure in physically isolating Trekanten. Likewise, the documents and the planners both put great emphasized on those above-mentioned infrastructure in isolating Trekanten from the city dynamics and which come to support how the infrastructure influence and (might) define the "*social dynamics [...] within and between urban spaces*" (ibid).

While Kostova referred to the roads as walls around Trekanten, Folmer stated that “*with Døesvej and Thorsvej, the infrastructure seems closing. It closes around the area [which is] actually cutting people off from getting in*” (Folmer et al., 2021). However, what seemed to be interesting in this regard is the use of metaphors in order to refer to the splintering between Trekanten and the rest of the city, from the documents, expert planners I interviewed and the survey respondents. I present with the following table some of the metaphors they used to refer to Trekanten’s disconnection.

Metaphors about Trekanten	
Alex Würtz Holstebro Municipality	<i>“An island you drive around and rarely visit”/ “a city within a city”</i>
Anja Klok Schou SHMP	<i>“Isolated island” “[...] telling, [...] you know, out in the black ghetto”</i>
Holstebro et al., 2019	<i>“Trekanten is a missing puzzle piece in Holstebro network”</i>
Kristine Holzendorff DGR	<i>“a city within a city”, “like an island in the city”/ “a heavy cloud down in the city”</i>
Yelena Kostova Team Plan	<i>“Thorsvej and Døesvej form a wall around Trekanten”/ “a drop in the middle of the city” / “surrounded by a wall of roads”</i>
Survey respondent a	<i>“Ghetto”</i>
Survey respondent b	<i>“Turmoil”</i>
Survey respondent c	<i>“Islamabad”</i>

Table 7.1 Metaphors referring to Trekanten in relation to the city of Holstebro

The lack of services and economic activity surrounding Trekanten has equally affected the in-harmony functioning of the neighborhood with the city. Despite the great number of youth educational institutions and other minor services here and there in Trekanten, this latter does not seem to benefit for their in-resulting activity. Moreover, it turned out that they even limited the opportunities for the neighborhood to better integrate with the city, because, whereas those institutions are destinations from all over the city, Trekanten in contrast has no track places, which made it more closed on itself. So, even though Holstebro has developed an educational district north Trekanten highly connected to the city center and to the natural parks on the other side, Trekanten, remains excluded from the overall infrastructural and urban developments. And which proves how with the development of spaces “*that are powerfully connected to other 'valued' spaces across the urban landscape [...] there is often a palpable and increasing sense of local disconnection in such places from physically close, but socially and economically distant, places and people*” (Cohen 1996 in Graham and Marvin, 2001, p.15). The analysis further supports the above-said. Indeed, without

some kindergartens, the supermarket Spar, the restaurant Kamoun and pizzeria Valhalla, Trekanten is purely a residential area. Those above-mentioned services are however all located at the edges of the neighborhood (see fig.7.2), which is in terms of urban function and dynamics, not that different from the educational institutions, since they are further preventing people from entering the neighborhood. That being the case may explain how -even- the alongside spaces in the city, happen to be detached because of the mobilities and the social dynamics that result from an uneven development of infrastructure and amenities (Graham and Healey, 1999 in Graham in Marvin, 2001). And even if the day-care institutions located inside the area are municipal, they are to a great degree (solely) used by the community living out there and which sheds the light on issues of social interchange and integration that deepen the social splintering and hence prevents the social-cohesion

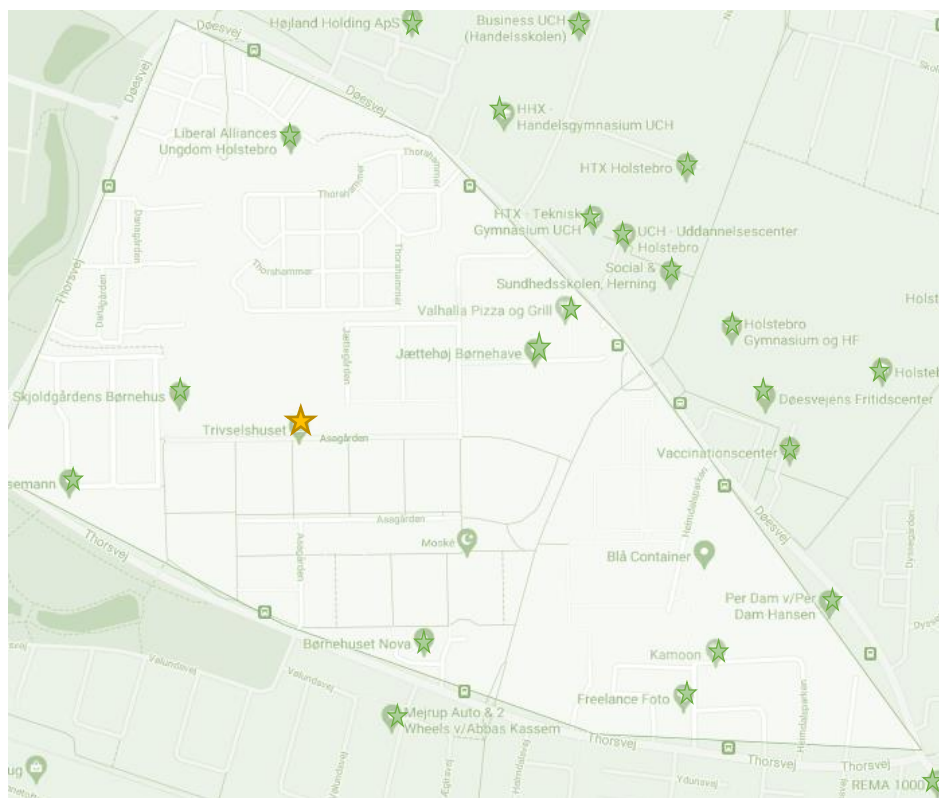


Figure 7.2 Distribution of the services and activity around vs inside Trekanten

The analysis also pointed that lighting has played a major role in detaching Trekanten from the rest of the city. Indeed, the lack of the lightning around and especially inside such a dense residential area evokes a feeling of insecurity and which demotivates and discomfits people to walk or bike by the neighborhood. People are also “*afraid of getting lost [not only because] there [is no] natural connection throughout*” (Folmer et al., 2021), but also because of the dark. This latter information has not only affected the overall neighborhood connection to the city, but has resulted in an inner

disconnection between the different departments in Trekanten and causing an inner (local) splintering. On top of that, the path systems inside Trekanten have further aggravated its inner disconnection. Especially Skolestien that splits the area in two parts and which is known among the planner by 'berlin wall'. Nevertheless, the metaphor of 'berlin wall' presupposes a physical and ideological barrier that divides the same place (or city) into two parts upon cultural and ideological parameters. And that is indeed the case with skolestien in Trekanten which besides its dysconnectivity and inaccessibility, it also 'rives' Trekanten into the department for the superiors (Heimdalsparken) for the advantaged group (Danes), and that for the inferiors (Asagården) where most the immigrants, refugees and the socio-economically vulnerable groups live, (Schou, personal communication, 2021). This result ties well with previous studies wherein mobilities are also affected (maybe determined?) by social inequalities and that the infrastructure not only influence the movement but organize social relations as well (Urry, 2007).

It is however of great relevance to discuss the current structure of Trekanten. In fact, in Trekanten each apartment-block has a private playground or meeting place, which even if it has made it easier for the residents to use time outside, it has on the other hand prevented people living in different departments from gathering and casually meeting and which has limited the internal mobility in the neighborhood as well as the urban outdoor life, and hence fostered its inner disconnection. Planners argued therefore that it is essentially because of the infrastructure that Trekanten is before all internally splintered, and which comes to perfectly align with the argument Graham and Marvin raised when stating that "*much of the urban is infrastructure [and] that most infrastructure [...] constitutes the very physical and socio-technical fabric of [places and] cities*" (Graham and Marvin, 2001 p. 179). Especially after learning that because of its inner path system, Trekanten functions as separated departments. Notwithstanding, the great attention planners paid to the socio-cultural disconnection between Trekanten and the rest of the city, has brought new insights about the inapparent or socio-constructed splintering. Here, I would like to go back to the services and activities inside Trekanten and focus the discussion on the role of the leisure house Trivselshuset (marked with a yellow star on the fig 7.2 above) and then that of the cheap-rent apartments, in further favoring the splintering. In fact, according to Schou, when people come to Trivselshuset, they are met with "*are you in a violent relationship? Do you have problems with your children? Do you have alcoholic problems?*" etc. (Schou, 2021), and which explains indeed some of the reasons behind the aversion the outsiders have toward this place and towards the neighborhood by consequence. Trivselshuset is therefore known for being a place for the vulnerable people or for the immigrants who are in need of

help and support, and hence no purpose nor interest for the outsiders in going out there. Admitting that Trivselshuset has reinforced the isolation of the neighborhood, has revealed the management issues and the challenges the Social Housing Organizations and the Social Housing Master Plan team have been dealing with, especially that the SHMP team is installed in Trivselshuset. That also made me question: what other role can Trivselshuset play in the city? What if it was a destination that offers possibilities for everyone in Holstebro? Could that have helped breaking down Trekanten's isolation?

Moving the discussion further to the housing offer, knowing that on the one hand there is only one private cooperative-housing department in Trekanten, whereas the rest of offers are all rental apartments and that on the other hand Trekanten is the cheapest-rent in the city, may also explain the reason behind the concentration of the socially disadvantaged people: refugees and immigrants out there. Those last-mentioned are either refugees escaping wars or dictators in their home countries, or immigrants who came looking for the opportunity and the job s/he did not have back home, or even natives who have physical, mental or financial difficulties and who cannot afford expensive apartments nor buying a house. Indeed, those people found refuge in Trekanten also because of the potentials the area has (the green areas, playing grounds and the day-care institutions). However, stating that about 85% of the social housing 5-room apartments are located in Trekanten, also explains why most immigrants chose to live out there. Indeed *"people with other ethnic backgrounds have more children than the Danish families generally do"* (Folmer et al., 2021). So, if one *"has 3, 4 or 5 children, then [s/he] can almost only get an apartment [in Trekanten]"* (ibid).

That being said it can be argued that, besides the uneven infrastructure-planning, the splintering is also because of a weak housing-planning and management that has further reinforced the concentration of non-ethnic Danes as well as socially deprived people out in Trekanten. It is therefore argued that it is *"difficult to make a natural placement around the city if the homes that are in demand are only found here"* (ibid). On top of the cheap rent in Trekanten, the fact the neighborhood was classified as vulnerable area on the Danish ghetto list since 2009, was equally responsible for psychologically disconnecting Trekanten. Indeed, the labeling vulnerable ('udsæt' in Danish) is fuzzy for the majority and commonly confused with the term ghetto and which is also supported from the data collected via the survey as some respondents referred to by ghetto and which made Trekanten commonly known for being a ghetto, even after being removed from the list in 2019. It becomes hence clear how when social relations are embedded and laden by power dynamics, *"so will be the social divisions and any associated stereotypes, that are produced through social interaction[s]"* (Fincher and Jacobs, 1998, in Harris and Thomas, 2004, p.475). In that regard, the director of the

housing organization NordVestBo and especially Schou who is a social planner and the project manager of the SHMP at Trekanten stressed the role of the social classification of the neighborhood both at the municipal and at the national level. On the one hand, Trekanten is the only place in the Municipality which is classified at the social class 5 and which reflects less prosperity, the delicate socio-economic and the poor health conditions of the community living out there in comparison to the rest of the municipality. On the other hand, the residential area is labeled and commonly referred to as (black) ghetto. Hence, the splintering is not only about the physical “*but also, the social divides in it*”, and that is on the one hand because of the high number of vulnerable and socio-economically disadvantaged and on the other hand because of the “*relatively high proportion of other ethnic origins*” (Folmer et al., 2021) living out there and which is indeed the highest in the municipality. Those results deliver significantly better understanding of the relation between the stigmatization and the disconnection in the city.

That being the context, the planners also stressed the role of the ghetto law, the labeling; the narratives and the kind of stories people hear and share about Trekanten. Here, it becomes important to point out the role which the media is playing in (re)generating the unpleasant stories about Trekanten and the community living there. Schou highlighted in that respect how the media is usually “*addressing the young people with ethnic backgrounds. Always talk[ing] about them as being a problem [...] being too much and making too much [problems]*” (Shou, 2021). Likewise, Holendorff stated that Trekanten “*has bad prejudices and rumors*” (Folmer et al., 2021). Moreover, some results from the survey are equally relevant to stress here, wherein some respondents highlighted the role of the media in reporting almost only the bad stories about Trekanten. That being said, leads to better understanding of why people from outside Trekanten think that the area is problematic, dangerous and a place for the immigrants and refugees. Indeed, the project coordinator explains that “*they are not enlightened, they only hear the bad [things which are] only 5% of what's actually going on here*” (ibid). Trekanten is accordingly a stigmatized neighborhood, so is the community who “*also feel stigmatized as not good people or not good residents*” (ibid). Those findings raise concerns about the management and the planning of “*the positionality of groups in the city and the extent to which they occupy separate sites in the city*” (Harding and Blokland, 2014, p.131), as well the extent to which that positionality affects the city-dynamics and which can inspire further research on Trekanten.

Since the barriers between Trekanten and the rest of the city are not only by means of infrastructure or service-distribution, but are also rooted in narratives people share (or come-up with) upon the stigma of ghetto, it can therefore be argued that the splintering in this case is not only spatial and

socio-economic but also cultural and psychological. Trekanten is (also being) splintered in all levels. Finally, stating that *“Trekanten should be integrated in the city”* (Gehl Architects, 2015a, p.46), and that developing Holstebro implies integrating Trekanten *“physically, socially and demographically in the rest of Holstebro”* (ibid, p.46), proves the extent to which policy-makers admit that Trekanten is splintered. Nevertheless, declaring that *“the residential area Trekanten is a missing puzzle piece in Holstebro network”* (BSH et al., 2019, p.3) not only clarifies the extent to which Trekanten is splintered from the city, but also affirms that infrastructures are indeed like “jigsaw pieces” that either constitute or break down the tissue of cities (Graham and Marvin, 2001). In order to deal with those above-mentioned issues of stigmatization of Trekanten on the one hand, and in order to reduce the conditioned use of the surrounding services and infrastructures on the other hand, the housing organizations, in collaboration with Holstebro municipality and Gehl Architects consultancy, have been since 2015 working on planning and implementing Den Grønne Rute.

7.2 Den Grønne Rute between design and process

With this project Holstebro municipality and the housing organizations are aiming to *“strengthen the existing qualities, cultivate the existing networks and develop the current identity”* (Gehl architects, 2015b, p.8) by implementing a network of urban spaces and recreational paths thought-out Trekanten. The establishment of DGR is therefore considered as *“a strategic and physical move to increase the experiences, quality of life, security and cohesion in the public housing area Trekanten”* (BSH et al. 2019, p.8). It is accordingly a cohesive plan that will give residents and visitors access to the area (either pedestrians or cyclists) and it is expected to activate the outdoor life, not only because of *“the physical transformations in the [residential structure], but also the social changes that [will] occur when new frameworks are created for people living in the area and guests from outside”* (Holstebro kommune, 2021, para3). Hence, connecting places not only shape and result forms of infrastructure (paths, roads, bridges, etc.) but also those of social relations (Urry, 2007).

Notwithstanding, admitting that the project DGR will make Trekanten *“connect better with the surrounding housing [areas] through a reprogramming of the infrastructure design [and] will strengthen [not only] the identity of the entire Holstebro [but also that] of Trekanten”* (Gehl Architects, 2015b, p.8), reveals how infrastructure *“help to define the [city] identity and development of [the localities]”* (Graham and Marvin, 2001, p.8). Indeed, bringing the urban into move and exchange gives opportunities for social dynamics to happen and evolve. Those results cast a new light on how *“the socio-cultural change in cities is closely bound up with changing practices [...] through*

the construction and use of [...] infrastructures” (ibid, p.10), how the exchange and the interaction of people resulting from [re]programming the infrastructure help construct the urban and not only give meaning and quality to places, but also bound them Healey (2007).

That being the case, I interpret their plan as opening access to Trekanten and which will result not only in better movement of people in and around the neighborhood, but also in better functioning and mobility in the city. Especially as it will also promote new forms of mobility across Trekanten, such as the use of the bike where people from the other side of the city can easily bike throughout Trekanten toward the city center instead of the bypass (Døesvej and Thorsvej), and may hence reduce the use of the car. Accordingly, DGR seems to harmonize *“the activity of individuals and groups in such a way as to minimize the bad effect that may arise, and to promote better ‘performance’ of the physical environment”* (McLoughlin, 1969 p.56 in Allmendinger 2017, p.173). It becomes hence clear how through infrastructure that spaces are bound together and how around and through infrastructure that cities take shape and people move. DGR by reprogramming the infrastructure, will not only help create a working urban environment between Trekanten and the surroundings, but it will also add a sense of cohesion to the neighborhood and hence to the city. Indeed, the implementation of DGR will *“ensure that Trekanten is incorporated in the city of Holstebro, and better integrated into the [...] city structure and people's movements through the city”* (BSH et al., 2019, p.3). Accordingly, infrastructures define not only the physical but also the *“social dynamics [...] within and between urban spaces”* (Graham & Marvin, 2001, p.11) as they underpin the urban functions. Since city planning is not only about the technical structure but also about managing the movement of people and their *“caring about connections with other people”* (Bowman, 2018 in Malveira and Risager, 2020), opportunities for meeting and sharing time and space are equally important in the urban planning and management. In that respect Jensen stated that *“thinking infrastructurally is not something for engineers only. It's just as much a question of sociology [and] anthropology [as] the city is the combination of the built environment, the infrastructures, the technologies, and then the social, the cultural [and] all the ways in which we make community”* (Jensen, 2021). Hence, infrastructures are *“deeply intertwined into the cultural fabric of the city”* (ibid).

Nevertheless, stating that DGR is essentially *“an activity route that makes people who live in Trekanten meet and use”* (Kostova, 2021), and that Trekanten needs more than just a recreational path to be better integrated in the city (Schou, 2021), lead to concerns about how can DGR project actually redress the splintering between the neighborhood and the city in order to better connect them, and if redesigning the infrastructure is ,in this case, sufficient in order to enhance the experience of

the place in Trekanten. Because, in order for Trekanten to open up, it should according to Schou be perceived as a *“target place to get to and use time”* (Schou, 2021). People should have a target, a purpose and motivation to come by the neighborhood. But the question is how can DGR become a target place? Is it by employing *“the same pavement and the same street lights [...], so [one] can see that there is a route all the way through the area”* (Folmer, 2021)? Or by promoting the use of the bike? Or maybe by providing security all the way long Trekanten? In short, can design alone overcome the splintering between Trekanten and the city? Especially if the disconnection is beyond the infrastructural barriers as the analysis has shown. What seems to be challenging in this regard, is the stigmatization: the cultural and psychological splintering that has widened the gap between the community living in Trekanten who *“feel stigmatized as not good people or not good residents”* (Folmer et al., 2021) and the rest of the city who has prejudices because of *“a very ingrained tale [from] people who do not come [to Trekanten and who] still think that this is [only a place for immigrants or socially disadvantaged people] (ibid).*

The answer may however lie in Den Grønne Hjerter which is the central plaza in DGR and which according to Kostova *“a potential place where others from the city can get to Trekanten”* (Kostova, 2021), since it will not only help reconnecting the neighborhood to the city by offering new opportunities for people from inside and outside to meet, but it will also re-assemble Trekanten internally as it will replace the old underused and empty green field at the middle of skolestien (berlin wall) that divided Trekanten into two parts. Also, the design of the plaza seems to consider the different ages' needs in a public space and which can motivate different groups of people to come and use it. With the central plaza, people will better find the way around the area and which will make it possible for the outsiders to enter Trekanten. In sum, the central plaza will help *“activate the area [as it] is a connection and an opening [to make it] easier to find around the area and it [will] help to create security in the form of lighting, [planting and the] meeting places [and which will] help create some attractive encounters [for] different people”* (Folmer, 2021) to meet and share time and place.

But even though this public space *“may help to break down some boundaries [as it can motivate different] people [to get to] know each other. And it might help break down some barriers and some [prejudges] (ibid),* I would argue that neither the design of the plaza nor that of DGR in general can stand alone in overcoming a splintering that is rooted in ignorance, prejudices and a 'fear of the other'. Prejudges that are essentially derived from what the media reports about Trekanten locally in Holstebro and nationally when covering *“the politicians when they are discussing [issues in relation to] the immigrants [and which is] a distant way of seeing integration and immigrants”* (Schou, 2021).

Since the opinions are rooted in ideologies and prejudices, and not essentially on a personal experience with the place or the people living there, some people will come to the plaza and walk DGR only *“to support their prejudgments”* (ibid). It can therefore be argued that even if recoupling DGR with the existing infrastructure is to a large extent a technical task that can be resolved with design, making the central plaza a functioning meeting place for both the neighborhood and the city requires more than technical skills and engineering solutions, it requires focus on communication and great consideration of the socio-cultural aspects and the diversity of the community.

That being the case, the extent to which DGR can overcome the splintering between Trekanten and Holstebro and the inner splintering in the neighborhood via the central plaza as a public space that to welcome everyone, is relatively related to the design and requires therefore re-thinking the process. Because, in order for the project to succeed in reassembling Trekanten, the missing puzzle with the city structure, people should be prepared for diversity in the first place, *“because this is what they will experience taking this route: the diversity”* (ibid). Nevertheless, diversity I refer to here is not about designing meeting places for the different ages and needs, it is more about incorporating people who are different in many ways earlier in the process, so that places are designed with people and not for them. I stress again that it is not about planning for diversity, but more planning with(in) diversity. Especially after knowing how disappointed was the majority of residents in the department Danagården in Trekanten from the trajectory of the route and the project in general, who believe that DGR will only make their area a noisy place where young people from all Holstebro will come hang out, party, listen to loud music and mess up their space. In fact, they even stressed that they do accept when young residents from Asågård (the neighboring department with the highest number of immigrants in Trekanten) come to hang out and sit on their bunches, and which reflects not only how Trekanten is indeed inner splintered, but more importantly the incoherence and intolerance between the different group living out there.

That being the case, I can argue that the community living in Trekanten have a serious communication issue and which is according to me affecting the livability in the neighborhood and further causing the bad image and reputation Trekanten has. Moreover, no matter how much the project coordinator tried to push them toward (re)imagining the place and to propose some ideas for and expectations from the project, the group of residents rejected the idea of a recreational route throughout their department in the first place. It seems therefore too late for the planners to get them on board to support the project, and especially that they were not involved from the start and which makes the residents insecure with the reality of involving them at this stage.

It is with

this in mind that I move to discuss the role of the planner and place-making in promoting planning for diversity in multicultural cities in order to ensure an inclusive planning process and which will prepare the answer for my research question.

7.3 Harnessing place-making for “planning for diversity”

It has been argued that “*the concept of difference is now central to the way in which urban societies are understood*” (Sandercock, 2000a, p.7). Nevertheless, managing the “*differences has become an increasing challenge*” for planners (ibid). Analyzing the case of DGR revealed that planners have admitted the above-said and that planning spaces for diverse people is a challenging and a difficult task. The project process-consultant indicated in this respect that with DGR, they “*want to create areas and public places that are for the many and not for the few* (Folmer, 2021). Indeed, different people have different expectations from a public space; Some people go out for a picnic; others want to party and children of course want to play. But public spaces should also provide opportunities “*where [one] can sit on a bench as an elderly person and watch the young people play basketball. Then there is room for everyone* (ibid). But what if a group of those elderly people are not interested in watching youngsters playing basketball and hear their screaming; elderly people who instead prefer a quiet place to be. Should they keep home and be excluded from the public space and the social life?

The residents of Danagården are a perfect example to disprove that design cannot assemble diverse people. This last-mentioned group of residents refused the idea of sharing their area not only with young but with outsiders in the first place. They are very concerned about the future of their allotment gardens and the tranquility which their area is known for. That being the case brought reflections upon how could planners have prevented such a disappointment that might result in an objection or dispute in further stages of implementing DGR? Or should they make-do, muddle through and ignore the preferences of an important group who represents the majority of the residents at Danagården? Furthermore, who is supposed to advocate for their right to difference? And more importantly can advocating by reporting their complaints and concerns at this phase of the plan, can truly make a difference when the decision has already been made and the trajectory of DGR is out of question?

By admitting that “*there needs to be an increased attention to the residents out in the area* [to help them] *create ownership* [of DGR], *because there are a lot of people* [who are against the project] (Folmer, 2021) and that a big task with DGR is also “*to establish a sense of ownership in the young people [living] in the area*” (ibid), made me question the planners’ (cap)ability in helping people create ownership of a project that they did not decide together. Do they expect to help “*create*

*ownership of the area [by planning] private front gardens”?! (BSH et al., 2019, p.9). How is that actually different from the private grill places or the private playing grounds that exist already? I would therefore argue that even if the private gardens will enhance the sense of responsibility towards those gardens and hence towards the appearance and image of the area, they would at the same time reinforce a sense of individualism where everyone one cares about his/her own private garden, and hence no common responsibility toward the place that could have make people share the activity of gardening instead. Indeed, “the plan is decided now [and] the route is there. They have decided where it should go, what it is best [and there is no] opportunity to influence that. They [...] have decided that this is a good [plan]” (Schou, 2021) and did not get the residents involved from the start. Those results made me question the process at the first place as well as the will of the planners and decision-makers to sincerely involve people. This is indicative for a lack of involvement or potential exclusion especially after the insight Schou brought when stating that the “*involvement of the citizens [should] start before [...] all the plans [are] ready, because otherwise they can't have influence on the plan*” (ibid). Moreover, stating that they, as project team, “are also trying to do something good for them” (Folmer, 2021), brings about concerns about planning for people vs planning with people.*

That being the case I present place-making as a process-planning approach that could not only have prevented the misinformation (exclusion?) of the group of elderly people living in Danagården, but also decreased the cultural and psychological splintering and which could support better integrating Trekanten in the city structure and dynamics. With this approach I want advocate for a more inclusive planning process, especially that the results from the analysis clearly show that on top of the dissatisfaction of the elderly people, the frustration of the young ones, there is also the ignorance from the outsiders who, I believe should as well be involved and develop ownership of the project, so that DGR is the fruit of cohesive city forces collaboration.

In regard to this topic, the literature has shown that place-making by having people at the core of the (planning) process and the design of the spaces which they are to use, promotes the livability, sociability and the diversity and hence the social sustainability. Place-making also emphasizes the cultural and social identities that define a place and which can also support its evolution. Indeed, by paying particular attention to the social and cultural importance of place and the people they (to) occupy and use, place-making is more than just an urban design approach to beautify the place, it promotes instead a collaborative and creative patterns of space imagination that bring the social and the cultural differences of places and community into consideration. As its process is centered around observing, listening to, and consulting the diverse and different people (young, adult, older, those

with disabilities and woman) who either live, work, or (tend to) use the space subject to place-making, planners from the housing organizations and Holstebro municipality, could have used in order to elaborate a conclusive and inclusive plan that prevents the unexpected opposition of a group or another. Especially that people have different expectations from public spaces. Planners, should therefore, open access to participation at earlier stages in order to incorporate more inputs from the community. It is however utopian to get to an absolute ‘yes’ or agreement that meet the needs of everyone, because there will be always people who do not want change and others who are not interested in contributing to making change. Nevertheless, giving them room to express their take on the project and negotiating with them the possibilities at earlier stages in the planning process, would reflect the extent to which their voice matter in the plan, and that they can also decide over the trajectory and maybe even have new insights that the experts miss to consider, especially that it is indeed the community that uses the place most or on the other hand, who know why they do not want to use that place. Only then can people construct a feeling of ownership; when they share an idea and see it happen. Indeed, engaging people earlier in the process could help practitioners understand better the various needs and aspirations not only for that space but for the community as well, who together with, create a common vision for that place. The common vision will evolve into a strategy then into a plan that will result in lifting and improving (the use of that) place and which brings benefits not only to the place itself (its image) but also to the people who (will) use that place and which will promote the social cohesion and a sense of community that help overcome the splintering.

However, learning that the housing organizations have limited the conceptualization of the plan to Gehl Architects consultancy, and that back in 2015 they did not inform the residents about the upcoming project, who only heard about this former from the news, raises further concerns about the reality of the great focus on community involvement today, which is open to question. Despite the big effort the housing organization are putting on getting people to participate, (process consultant, operational-consultant and a communication coordinator) it seems to me that is more to legitimize their choice of up-grading the neighborhood and that they may be failing to conduct a credible participation that could affect both the process and the outcomes of the project if people could really have influenced the plan. I suspect therefore exclusion and tokenism in the process. It is however important to clarify that my opinion does not concern the design nor the trajectory of the route, I by tokenism only refer to the fact that *“no one has been asked if it should be called Den Grønne Rute. [Planners] have already decided where it should be [and] the meeting places where to be. [They] have also decided what level people should be involved”* (Schou, 2021).

Notwithstanding, indicating that people should have a drive to come to DGR, and it should therefore be an experience path when people feel attracted, welcomed and comfortable; that is “*how to ensure that a place becomes for everyone*” (Folmer, 2021), made me question how can people feel welcomed if they were excluded in the first place? The design might be welcoming, but what about the feeling that place reflect? What place-experience does it evoke? I am therefore not sure, if the elderly people from Danagården would develop a sense of ownership when DGR will cost them the tranquility which they admire about their place. Moreover, stressing that some people would say “*why is this spot going to change? My children are playing football there. I'm very happy for this [place] as it is [...] I do not want the change [especially that] the change [is] because of some other people from the rest of Holstebro [who] think that Trekanten is not a good place to be*” (Schou, 2021), introduces a possible confound in the misinformation and mis-engagement of the community living there, which is supposed to be the primarily to benefit from the project, especially after learning that in Trekanten people “have a history of not being able to be involved” (ibid; Dahmani, 2021). Those results raise concerns about the efficiency and of the sufficiency of the involvement at this stage of the project and which could have been addressed by engaging them earlier in the process adopting place-making approach. I therefore admit that planners have mist to mobilize the community living in Trekanten as well as people from the rest of the city. Finally, by referring to this following place-making process, I present my evaluation of the level as well as the timing people get to be involved in the process.

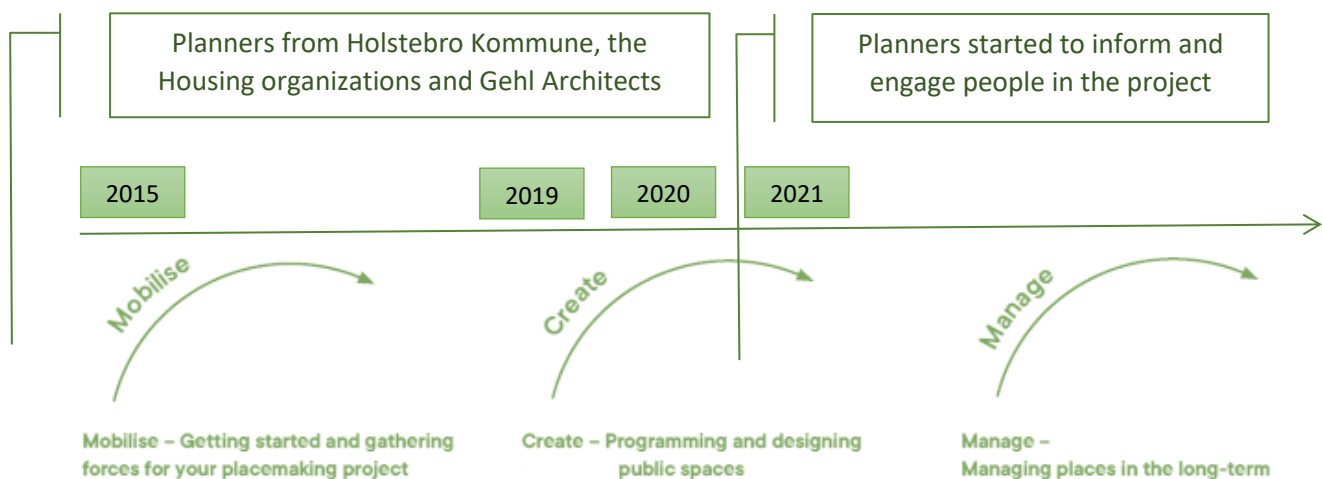


Figure 7.3 Representation of the evaluation of the involvement process

It is with this in mind that I move to the conclusion(s) of my research and therefrom my recommendations for DGR project team as well as for Plan Team in Holstebro Municipality.

8. Conclusion

In trying to answer my research question, I did not only obtain good understanding of “how interlinked infrastructures are involved in the social production and reconfiguration of urban space and experiences of urban life” (Graham and Marvin, 2001, p.30), but I have also emphasized those interrelations so that they do not remain ignored as argued by Graham and Marvin (2001). Moreover, learning that the urbanism in this respect and in relation to the civic society is about “*the coexistence of difference. The [...] co-existence of strangers people who are different [or] socially differentiated*” (Jensen, 2021), has also revealed how relevant was to research planning for diversity.

The answer to **How can place-making “Den Grønne Rute” in Trekanten promote planning for diversity in order to reassemble Holstebro, the splintered city?** is however not straightforward. It can however be introduced progressively. First of all, and despite how close Trekanten is to the city center of Holstebro, the analysis has shown that it is not only physically secluded from the city overall (infra)structure, but also perceived as ‘isolated island’, a ‘city within a city’ and more surprisingly that it is known for a ‘ghetto’, even if it was only a vulnerable area and that it is now out of the ghetto list. And even though the majority of the qualitative and the quantitative results led to similar conclusions in relation to the extent to which Trekanten is disconnected from the city, and hence revealing that the former is indeed splintered from the rest of the city, few other answers saying the opposite should however not be ignored. In the contrary, stating that Holstebro is also disconnected from Trekanten (Schou, 2021) or even “*it is more the city that is split from Trekanten*” (anonym respondent from the survey, 2021) come to support my hypothesis that the city of Holstebro is accordingly splintered. Despite how challenging it seemed at first to research the splintering urbanism in a welfare state context like in Denmark, learning that vulnerable neighborhoods “that are used to be put on the ghetto list, are probably as close as [one] get to a splintering in Danish context” (Jensen, 2021), has only backed my hypothesis and my choice of case.

Nevertheless, what was interesting to learn with this case study is the multi-dimensional splintering the neighborhood has in relation to the city and vis versa. Indeed, the analysis casted new light on different aspects of the disconnection e.g., socio-economic, cultural, psychological and even ideological. The social indicators were in this case the important finding as reason behind the disconnection. Surprisingly, while the planners stressed the role which ‘Doesvej’ and ‘Thorsvej’ are

playing in isolating Trekanten and even referring to them as 'walls' cutting Trekanten down and preventing the people from coming into the area, the SHMP leader as well as the majority of the survey respondents did not consider the infrastructure as a major cause for the disconnection or the splintering between the city and Trekanten. This was indeed crucial in answering the sub. question2: How is Trekanten splintered from Holstebro city?

Now about the second part of the sub. question2: how will "Den Grønne Rute" help reassemble them back?; an analysis of both the design and the process of the project DGR was elaborated. First let's recall that the aim with the project is to "*break [Trekanten's] isolation and create life*" (Pircheret, 2021, p.14). The planners who are essentially inspired by the design of Gehl stressed many times that "*Trekanten should be integrated in the city*" (Gehl Architects, 2015a, p.46), and that developing Holstebro implies integrating Trekanten "*physically, socially and demographically in the rest of Holstebro*" (ibid, p.46). However, what seemed to be challenging in integrating Trekanten in the city or what I prefer to refer to by re-assembling Trekanten with the city, is not the physical splintering, but more the ignorance, prejudices and the 'fear of the other' some outsiders have towards the neighborhood. Especially after what the analysis has revealed of expression of a splintering which goes beyond the infrastructure that is surrounding Trekanten. There are indeed some cultural, psychological and ideological barriers that has prevented the in-harmony function of the neighborhood with city or the other way around. Especially with the answers from some people who do not live in Trekanten and who refer to it by 'ghetto', 'Islamabad' and 'place with turmoil'.

Even though, the design of DGR seems to meet the needs of all ages in a public space, in order to meet and share time and place and hence harnessing a plan for the diverse people, what seemed to be missing is the diversity in and during the process. Moreover, learning that Trekanten needs more than just a recreational path to be better integrated in the city and that DGR is only one way to open it up (Schou, 2021), has initiated reflections about the limitations of the design in overcoming a splintering that is rooted in stigmatization, ignorance or even 'a fear of the other' resulting from the (biased?) coverage of media that only report 5% of what actually happens in vulnerable neighborhood and which feels like 95% since that is the same (and most common) narrative. I therefore urge the project team to reconsider diversity into the process by making DGR more of an experience process to remember and tell the good stories about, rather than a destination to get to. In fact, one of the most important goal with this project is according to Vestergaard the director of the Housing Organization NordVestBo is to create ownership of the area among the people living out there and especially the young ones (Folmer, 2021). Notwithstanding, witnessing the great disappointment and opposition of

a group of elderly residents living in one of the departments at Trekanten, and who were completely against the idea of a network of recreational routes and public spaces that go through their department, provided additional information about the insufficiency of the design in incorporating or harnessing diversity. In conclusion, the design of DGR does not seem to be able to help create an ownership of the route and hence the area, at least not for the last-mentioned group of people who basically refuse the idea of the project that according to them threatens their tranquility and stability. Future studies about elderly people and their relation with public spaces or recreational routes could explore more the rationalities behind their fear of opening up to the public.

That being the case I introduce place-making as a collaborative approach to design public spaces together with the community expected to use it in order to give room for the public to co-design and imagine the places they want (or will) use. People are nevertheless different in many ways (class, gender, age, culture, religion, ethnicity, and sexual preferences) and have different experiences and expectations from public spaces or outdoor-life. What is challenging for planners in this respect is the social interactions that will result from gathering people in one place. People who may be confronted with a feeling of a ‘fear of the other’ or even (worse) intolerance and ignorance which prevents and revokes the sociability and hence the suitability. As “*the concept of difference is now central to the way in which urban societies are understood*” (Sandercock, 2000b, p.7), planners should have considered those differences earlier in the planning process of DGR by mobilizing the public forces in a place-making project. This latter presents a working “*framework where not everything is set, or decided from the very beginning*” (Perrault et al., 2020), but gives the opportunity and the possibilities to cultural and social differences to help define the place. That being the case place-making has indeed and the community at its core and which can also support the evolution of the project in long term. Indeed, by paying particular attention to the social and cultural importance of place and its meaning to the people they (to) occupy and use, place-making turns to be more than just an urban design approach to beautify the place, it promotes instead a collaborative and creative patterns of space imagination that brings the socio-cultural differences into play and consideration. Especially as it is centered around the diverse and different people who are expected to use the public space and which can also help change the prejudices, and which could also help make people find common interests. Indeed, the co-existence of differences is also about finding out the common interests that cannot be revealed in the context of indifference or ignorance. Nevertheless, we should not ignore that overcoming such challenges regarding the reputation of places needs time to succeed (Former, 2021).

Another important detail worth highlining in relation to this case is the non-diversity among the project team itself, who are all (Dane) expert planners, architects, designers and engineers. I would therefore suggest that they re-consider the composition of their steering group and maybe involve some teachers from the schools who are closer to the children and young people, social workers who work closely with disadvantaged people and why not some psychologists that can help with the psychology of the place. Moreover, it is of a great relevance to the project of Den Grønne Rute to re-think the utility of the SHMP in advancing some of their aims with the project. Especially after sensing the extent to which Trekanten is inner-splintered, therefrom I suggest that DGR goes hand in hand with the current SHMP in order to first ensure an inner coherence that will support the sustainable integration of Trekanten socially, culturally and finally infrastructurally.

Nevertheless, reconsidering bilingual mediators that can facilitate the meeting with people with weak Danish competencies may also help involve more people into the planning process. It is only by considering the different aspects of differences people have, that planners can promote diversity in planning, make Trekanten a livable place to be, the city more inclusive and thus reassemble the missing puzzles. Because not only is Trekanten the missing puzzle, so is tolerance, diversity and maybe even sincerity in collaborative planning practices. In this respect future research should be devoted to the participation process.

Inspired by Engwicht, who according to him cities are created “*to maximize exchange opportunities*” (Engwicht, 1999 in Efroymson, Rahman & Shama, 2009, p. 2), I suggest to Plan Team at Holstebro Municipality, which is not only witnessing a growing multicultural society but also knowing for its ‘Kulturen til Forskel (culture if difference), that planners learn more about how manage the co-existence of differences and more specifically about this approach of place-making when deciding to plan a public space. Indeed, planners have a crucial role in designing spaces and cities that give a room for differences to co-exist and co-evolve, especially in multicultural cities that.

Finally let’s not forget that planning is about “*managing our co-existence in shared spaces*” (Healey, 1997, p. 3 in Sandercock, 2000, p.13) and that “*the more diluted and scattered the exchange opportunities, the more the city begins to lose the very thing which makes it a city: a concentration of exchange opportunities. What makes a city efficient and an exciting place to be is this diversity and density of potential exchanges*” (Engwicht 1999, in Efroymson, Rahman and Shama, 2009, p.4).

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