

# Performative Governance and Territorial Stigmatization: The Case of AxelGro

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## **Abstract**

In recent years, territorial stigmatization has emerged as a growing field of study, focusing on how specific areas and their residents are perceived through negative stereotypes, representations, and social categorizations. The purpose of this thesis is to answer the research question: *How does symbolic governance and performative actions in the project AxelGro unintentionally contribute to the (re)production of territorial stigmatization?*. It examines whether territorial stigmatization is perpetuated or challenged in the AxelGro project that took place on September 6th 2023 in Axelborg, Horsens. As a novel and innovative initiative within the Danish non-profit housing sector, AxelGro provides a valuable context for examining how territorial stigmatization might persist. By analyzing AxelGro's symbolic governance practices and performative actions, this study explores how narratives frame problems and solutions in the non-profit housing sector. The thesis employs Maarten Hajer's performative perspective on governance to establish a comprehensive analytical framework to understand how storylines, metaphors and discourse coalition contribute to shaping the perception of stigmatized neighborhoods. Using data from the event, such as minifilm, articles, and project description, the study aims to illuminate the complexities of territorial stigmatization. Conclusively, the thesis finds that, while AxelGro is a response to social challenges, its focus on "social mixing" and "integration" unintentionally reinforces stigmatizing narratives by presenting Axelborg as a community in need of external intervention. The study highlights a disconnect between residents' perspectives and those of external stakeholders, pointing to a conflict of interests. The thesis argues that AxelGro paradoxically both challenges and perpetuates stigma simultaneously. Despite this, the project has facilitated initial community engagement, laying the groundwork for stronger social ties and future empowerment.

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

The non-profit housing sector in Denmark is undergoing immense physical and structural changes, due to a complex array of challenges that both are specific to social housing, such as social segregation and stigmatization, but also apply to the general housing stock, such as economic pressures or lack of housing supply. Therefore, many initiatives from both state, municipalities and housing organizations have been made in an attempt to meet these challenges and work towards more desirable outcomes. The most consequential and defining for the contemporary development of the Danish non-profit housing sector that is taking place stems from bill "*A Denmark without Parallel Societies - No Ghettos in 2030*", commonly known as the Parallel Society Act, which aims to ensure more 'social cohesion' in Danish cities through the introduction of measures that changes the social compositions of housing estates all over Denmark (The Danish Government, 2018). Particularly, the high concentration of non-western immigration is at the centerpiece of the bill. This has been widely criticized by academics, media and residents due the problematization and stigmatization of people who reside in non-profit housing estates. For instance, stigmatization is oftentimes caused by the media's negative portrayals of some housing estates by correlating the resident's actions and ethnic background to their address, rather than criticizing the structural conditions that have caused segregation in the Danish housing sector (Andersen et al., n.d.). Furthermore, the explicit aim of the bill is to eradicate all "ghettos" in Denmark in an attempt to avoid "parallel societies", which in, the bill, stands in contrast to Danish society and insinuates that parallel societies cannot integrate into Danish society and therefore are not desirable from a political standpoint. Nonetheless, the bill contributes to the stigmatization of housing estates through its yearly release of the list of parallel societies, which gets a lot of media attention and non-profit hous-

ing estates that have been less known beforehand receive a media identity that problematizes the housing estates and become subject to transformative changes (Andersen et al., n.d.).

This thesis investigates the stigmatization within the non-profit housing sector by examining the Neighbourhoods for Generations initiative, led by Landsbyggefondens (The National Building Fund). It focuses on AxelGro, a winning project in this initiative, based in Axelborg, Horsens. AxelGro represents an innovative, experimental approach to developing the non-profit housing sector, engaging with the local housing association ALBO and the social housing intervention organization Botrivsel.

It investigates how governance practices and symbolic actions within the AxelGro project may unintentionally reinforce territorial stigmatization or, conversely, support meaningful destigmatization. Using Maarten Hajers framework of discourse analysis and dramaturgy, this study analyzes how language, performance, and stakeholder interactions shape perceptions of Axelborg and its residents, in an attempt to answer the following research question:

Specifically, it examines how governance practices and symbolic actions within the AxelGro project might inadvertently reinforce territorial stigmatization. Drawing on Maarten Hajers framework of discourse analysis and dramaturgy, this study analyzes how language, performance, and stakeholder interactions shape perceptions of Axelborg and its residents. The research question guiding this analysis is:

**How does symbolic governance and performative actions in the project 'AxelGro' unintentionally contribute to the (re)production of territorial stigmatization?**



## Chapter 2

# Stigmatization in the Danish non-profit housing sector

The Danish non-profit housing sector is unique in its construction in comparison to other international social housing structures. It accounts for a 20% of the Danish housing stock and exists as an alternative to the rental and varying degrees of ownership models available to citizens. This model became known as the association-based model and is characterized by being self-financed and having a high degree of collective ownership (H. G. Larsen and Hansen, 2015). However, the housing associations have increasingly been governed by professionals and marketized directorates (Risager, 2023).

In this constellation, the housing associations function as non-state actors and manage the development of the sector which is based on a non-profit principle where the surplus of rent is reinvested back into the sector to manage, renovate and expand it further (H. G. Larsen and Hansen, 2015). This arrangement has protected the sector from commodification whereby they have managed to keep the rents low in comparison to other forms of tenancy. However in recent times, especially since the 2000s, a shift towards commodification and a hard-line approach to immigration has caused an imperative for radical changes in the non-profit housing sector (Risager, 2023). Whereby government policies have significantly altered the role and functioning of the National Building Funds structural, shifting it from a relatively independent support structure for the non-profit housing sector toward a more regulated and strategically directed tool for government objectives (H. G. Larsen and Hansen, 2015).

Three policies have been implemented to further commodify the sector by enact-

ing changes to the National Building Fund. The first policy came in 2002 with the intent of 'activating' the National Building Fund which constituted demands and restrictions on the National Building Fund finances and objectives. The National Building Fund was now also required to fund new construction, resident counseling, and accessibility initiatives responsibilities that had traditionally fallen to local or state governments (H. G. Larsen and Hansen, 2015).

The second policy, a right-to-buy scheme, was signed into law in 2004 with the intention of 'strengthening the property right' of the non-profit housing sector, pushing it further toward commodification. However, due to the collective ownership structure of Danish non-profit housing, implementation faced legal obstacles. Although initially few units were privatized, a 2007 Supreme Court ruling allowed local branches, under certain conditions, to move forward with privatization, potentially opening the door to gradual enclosures within the sector (H. G. Larsen and Hansen, 2015).

The third policy, a decoupling of local democracy, was introduced in 2009. This meant that decision-making got more centralized in the state and subsequently made it easier for the state to implement measures to govern the 'problematic' parts of society, especially in regards to the immigration population (H. G. Larsen and Hansen, 2015). By weakening tenants' democratic input, the policy facilitated top-down governance which supported a agendas like the 'ghetto strategy' that allowed for demolition and renovations of housing estates that were deemed as especially problematic. This policy included stricter housing regulations, social mixing policies and in tandem with immigration laws allowed for easier eviction procedures, harsher punishments for crimes and enhanced surveillance.

The gradual shift towards commodification alongside a public discourse where immigrants increasingly became perceived as a societal problem by the governments paved the way for the bill "*A Denmark without Parallel Societies - No Ghettos in 2030*" which has been defining for the development of the non-profit housing sector ever since.

This bill has inadvertently pushed for organizational changes within the National Building Fund and influenced a strategic turn towards more experimental approaches, in the form of the competition Neighbourhoods for Generations, to find new solutions to the complex problems that the non-profit housing sector is subject to.



## Chapter 3

### Case selection: AxelGro

The case selected for the case study of this report is the project AxelGro by the winning team Hele landet, ØsterGro and AH advice, formerly known as Thinking outside the B(l)ox. The AxelGro project is an experimental approach to development that has been applied to the non-profit housing estate of Axelborg in Horsens municipality.

The AxelGro project seeks to address challenges, as described by the competition brief of Neighbourhoods for Generations, to create more cohesiveness between generations. Their approach resulted in vision of building a rooftop restaurant on top of one of the buildings blocks, inspired by ØsterGro, that involve food centered activities such as community gardening, community dining and other educational purposes. Additionally, the restaurant would provide jobs for the residents of Axelborg in exchange for low rent (Hele Landet, 2023).

The purpose of the project is to iteratively test out food driven activities to gradually gather information and prepare for a potential redevelopment of Axelborg with the collaboration of the residents and other local stakeholders (Hele Landet, 2023).

Initially, the AxelGro team planned in collaboration with the housing association ALBO and the social housing intervention organization Botrivsel, an event that took place on September 6th. 2023 where the ideas would be tested on the ground with the residents and other relevant stakeholders, such as Horsens Mayor, Horsens Architect, potential funding agencies and a local school. Prior to the event on September 6th another event took place in April the same year, with only residents, whereby they would allocate a piece of land in Axelborg for community gardening

and plant vegetables that would later be used to community dinning.

The event on September 6th. 2023 spanned throughout the day and were separated into three categories.

1. Morning: Flower printing and apple pressing activities with local schoolchildren, incorporating an educational component.
2. Midday: Harvesting crops that were planted in April in collaboration with residents.
3. Evening: Community dinner inside a tent with 100 guests, whereby it consisted of 75% residents and 25 % local stakeholders, funds and other relevant organizations that could contribute to the project at a later date.

During the event journalists from The National Building Fund, Horsens Posten and Fagbladet boligen covered the activities and interviewed key stakeholders.

To understand the stigmatization of Axelborg, the author will in the following section dive into the history and perceptions of Axelborg.

### 3.1 Axelborg

Axelborg is one of two of the non-profit housing estates that have been part of the competition *Neighbourhoods for Generations* by The National Building Fund, the other one being Høje Gladsaxe in Gladsaxe municipality.

Axelborg has been specifically chosen of the two housing estates, because only in Axelborg were they able to establish an experiment in collaboration with the local housing estate, social housing intervention organization and residents. This begs the question of how such a project is received by local authorities and residents - and it can help illuminate how a novel approach to the development of Axelborg changes perceptions among the involved stakeholders and reveals how territorial stigmatization is either perpetuated or challenged.

Axelborg was built in 1962-66 and is in the district of Sønderbro in Horsens Municipality. It consists of 603 resident divided into 284 apartments with an approximate of 40 % of non-western immigration population (Landsbyggefonden, 2024; Social, 2023). According to the latest data from 2023, Axelborg is currently classified as a "prevention zone" (Social, 2023). This means that the *Act amending the law on*



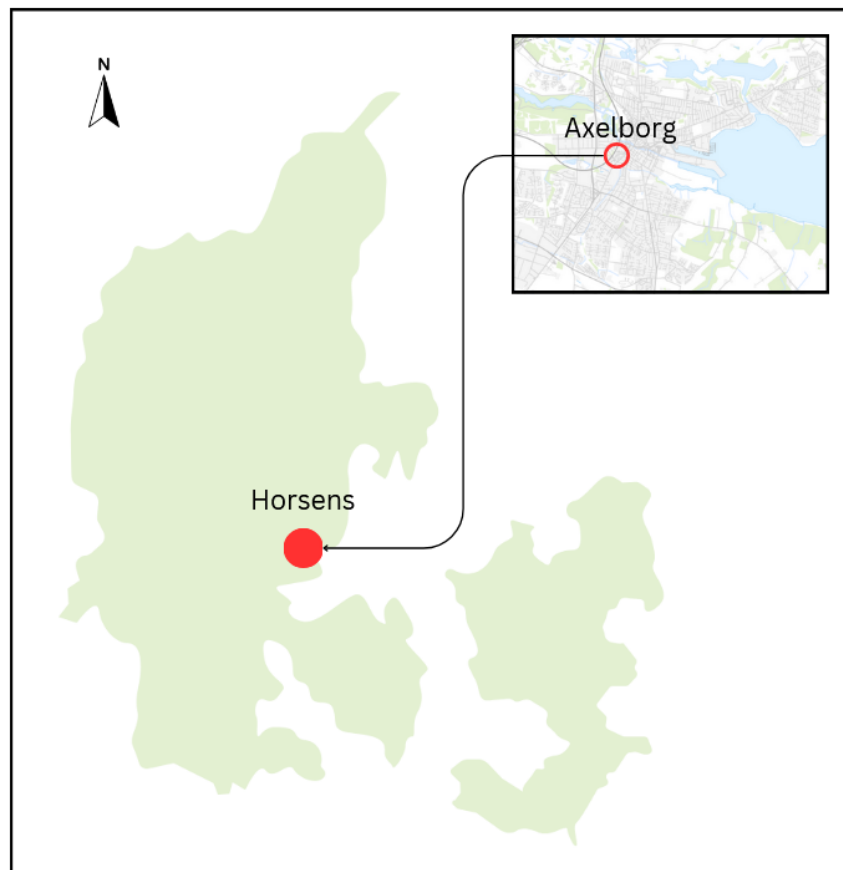


Figure 3.1: Map of Axelborg, produced by author in Canva



**Figure 3.2:** Infomedia articles on Axelborg translated from Danish to English through google translator (Infomedia, 2024)

social housing, etc., law on rent of social housing and law on municipal allocation law is applicable to Axelborg and in light of this, Horsens municipality has an obligation to set out restrictions on who can enter the rental apartments in Axelborg (Social, 2023; Social- og Boligministeriet, 2021). This law is an extension of the Parallel Society Act and prescribes mechanisms to change the social composition by applying restrictions on how the municipalities can allocate residents towards the non-profit housing sector. Axelborg has been included in the prevention zone category, due to at least 30% of Axelborgs residents being of non-Western background - which is the criteria for that categorization alongside low connection to the labor market, violations of the penal law, low taxable income and educational attainments. All compared according to the national average (Social, 2023).

Axelborg is, like many other non-profit housing estates, subject to stigmatization. This can be seen through the local media's portrayals of Axelborg as a place where crime, violence and police presence are highlighted. From a initial search on Infomedia by using the term "Axelborg" and setting the location to Horsens, 9 out of the first 20 articles are related to negative portrayals of Axelborg by highlighting crime, police present and vandalism see Figure 3.2.

## 3.2 Conclusive remarks

The AxelGro project represents an attempt to address Axelborg's challenges by fostering community engagement through the use of food-driven activities. However, as we have seen, Axelborg's status as a prevention zone, coupled with prevalent media portrayals of crime, indicates that deeper issues of stigmatization persist. These stigmatizing representations impact both the community's self-perception and how it is perceived by external stakeholders.

The following chapter will explore the concept of territorial stigmatization in depth by providing a framework for understanding historical and social forces that produce stigmatization and how stigmatization oftentimes is closely related to specific places.

## Chapter 4

# Creating a Theoretical Framework

### 4.1 Territorial stigmatization

The concept of territorial stigmatization and the underlying processes have attracted growing attention in the past decade. As a result of financial and migrant crises' across Europe, we have seen an intensification of stigmatization of poverty, migrants and refugees and what might in general terms be described as individuals and groups on the lower end of the social and symbolic hierarchy of society. (T. S. Larsen and Delica, 2019).

At the same time, the physical places in which these groups reside have become objects of radical policies such as demolitions, gentrification and privatization. It is therefore eminent to investigate how territorial stigmatization is produced and reproduced by stakeholders and understand how it can persist, despite the many attempts from a variety of stakeholders to rid areas of the mark of stigma (T. S. Larsen and Delica, 2019). This is especially true, when it comes to the development of social housing, which most often are the objects of these interventions and where the stigmatization of place and inadvertently its residents are on the receiving end of.

The concept originates from Loïc Wacquants 1993 paper *"Urban Outcasts: Stigma and Division in the Black American Ghetto and the French Urban Periphery"* (Wacquant, 1993) and since then has been further developed by a variety of researchers that, as we will see later, has resulted in a diverse field of study. Wacquant builds upon Ervin Goffman's conception of stigma where Goffman identifies three types of stigma, abominations of the body, blemishes of individual character, and tribal

stigma by adding a spatial component to the stigmatization of individuals and groups of society where place becomes the fourth form of stigma, marking certain areas as socially tainted and influencing how the inhabitants of these areas are perceived and treated from above (structural perspective) and from below (individual characteristics) (Wacquant, 1993), (Goffman, 1963).

Before delving deeper into the the structural aspects of the production of territorial stigmatization, an overview of the field of study is needed to grasp the variety of applications researchers have utilized earlier.

#### **4.1.1 The cartography of territorial stigmatization in research**

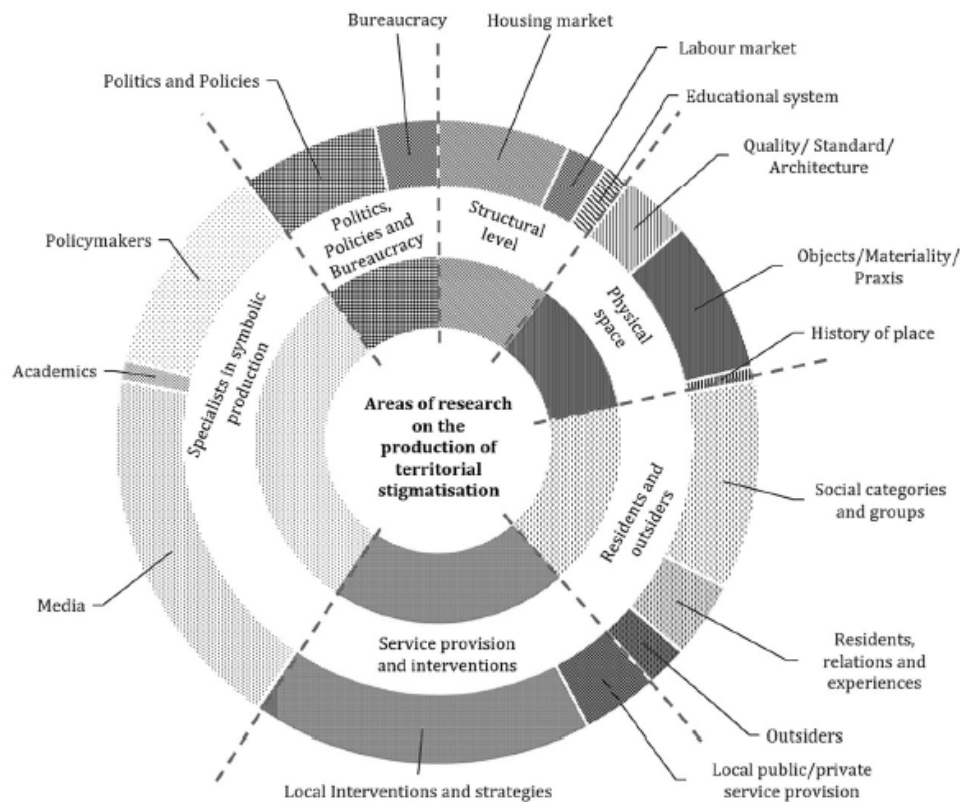
As mentioned, territorial stigmatization represents a diverse research field and is therefore applicable to a wide range of different scales, cities and places which is evident in the literature on territorial stigmatization. In view of its complexity and the current versatility of the field of study, Troels Schultz Larsen and Kristian Nagel Delica have developed an overview of research into territorial stigmatization by analyzing 119 peer-reviewed articles on the subject and categorizing them into 16 modalities as illustrated in Figure 4.1. I will present each category and modality to provide a better understanding of the field and position the report within the existing body of research.

Although each area of research is distinct in their own right, their respective positioning is structured in such a way that each field of research is adjacent to other fields of research with which they overlap the most see Figure 4.1. This in turn might downplay the concept's complexity, but gives a visual representation and overview of the research on territorial stigmatization (T. S. Larsen and Delica, 2019).

##### **Structural level**

At the structural level, Larsen and Delica identifies three modalities which relate to the labour market, educational system and housing market. Studies concerning the labour market focus on parameters such as unemployment and job insecurity, especially when it comes to stable job opportunities. Moreover, the studies show how the structural transformations in the wage-labour relationships affect residents mobility and limits their social investments in their own communities (T. S. Larsen and Delica, 2019).

Few studies address how the educational system contributes to territorial stigma-



**Figure 4.1:** Illustration of the synoptic model of areas of research of territorial stigmatization and the 16 modalities that comprises it (T. S. Larsen and Delica, 2019)

tization. Those that do highlight that low educational attainment in affected areas risks symbolic degradation of educational institutions that are spatially proximal to stigmatized territories which reinforces the devaluation of educational credentials. Additionally, educational institutions in stigmatized territories often foster a sense of 'othering' among students causing them to internalize a negative perception of themselves as a problem category. One of the causes of this is the discrepancy between the teachers' ambitions to provide equal footing for all students and the reality of the students graduating with degrees that are perceived as less valuable in society (T. S. Larsen and Delica, 2019).

Research exploring the housing market is divided into two categories: top-down and bottom-up approaches. Top-down studies examine causes and effects related to management practices, including gentrification, rent gap theory and neighbourhood transformations. These often involve interventions through large-scale demolitions, privatization of public housing and the use of flagship projects. These ap-

proaches are oftentimes connected to a neoliberal agenda promoted by stakeholders such as developers, real estate agents, officials and politicians. Additionally, some studies suggest that displacement and social fragmentation of the residents, undermines their ability to build up enough social capital to counter some of the measures that are thrust upon them from above (T. S. Larsen and Delica, 2019). In contrast, bottom-up studies focus on how structural mechanisms concentrate low-income groups. They highlight how limited access to rental housing or home ownership effectively funnels low-income groups into social housing estates and hence reinforcing territorial stigmatization (T. S. Larsen and Delica, 2019).

### **Physical space**

On the physical space, three modalities are identified which relate to quality, standard and architecture; objects, materiality and praxis; and history of places.

Firstly, studies on the quality, standard and architecture show how inferior materials, lack of proper maintenance and subpar workmanship contributes to the production of stigmatization in the affected areas. Furthermore, bad planning decisions and physical isolation of the housing estates from the rest of the city further exacerbates this stigma (T. S. Larsen and Delica, 2019).

Secondly, studies on objects, materiality and praxis examine how collective perceptions and architectural features such as high-rise buildings influenced by Corbusian ideals, mass production techniques, and monofunctional planning affect specific areas. Researchers link these post-World War II developments to negative indicators like noise, litter, and vandalism, creating a landscape of insecurity (T. S. Larsen and Delica, 2019). Importantly, while these issues characterize stigmatized areas, they do not cause territorial stigmatization; rather, they are responses to discrimination and stigma, reflecting the societal narratives that predict violence and disorder (T. S. Larsen and Delica, 2019).

Lastly, studies on the history of places contribute to the collective perceptions created of the stigmatized areas over time. This issue cannot merely be addressed by re-branding or using other discursive manipulations, but rather requires a significant time, energy and resources to effectively remove the stigma, which often lingers despite numerous area based interventions implemented (T. S. Larsen and Delica, 2019).

### **Residents and outsiders**

On residents and outsiders, three modalities are identified which relate to social categories and groups; residents' relationships and experiences; and outsiders.

To understand the first modality we return to Goffman's concept of stigma and its three categories. In regards to blemishes of the body (Besbris et al., 2015) findings show that territorial stigmatization impacts individuals' prospect in economic transactions which reinforces social inequality (Besbris et al., 2015). Additionally, Warr (2005), suggests that blemishes of the body discredits individuals and that they react by disguising information and social status that might discredit them such as sharing ones address or appearance (T. S. Larsen and Delica, 2019; Warr, 2005).

Concerning blemishes of character various studies highlight the marginalization of social groups such as drug users, criminals, gang members, minority youth, the homeless and single mothers (McNeil et al., 2015), (Patel, 2014), (Castro and Lindbladh, 2004), (Wacquant, 2008). These social categorizations can become indicators of how collective mythologies are formed and persist through the stigmatization of individuals and the places they reside (T. S. Larsen and Delica, 2019).

In regards to tribal stigma studies diverge in three directions, firstly a categorization through ethnic specific groups such as the Romani people, Baraku in Japan and Ghanaians in Canada (Tabuchi, Fukuhara, and Iso, 2012; Zaami, 2015). Secondly, broader social groups such as race and ethnicity in the US and Europe respectively and finally, by class, especially the working class as a discredited group (T. S. Larsen and Delica, 2019).

What is important to pay attention to is that oftentimes these categories overlap and are found in the same territories, which shows how territorial stigmatization differentiates from Goffman's three categories of stigma and utilizes territory as one of the crucial characteristics of the stigmatization that is occurring (T. S. Larsen and Delica, 2019).

The second modality, resident relations and experiences, discussions and inconclusive debates in research shows the dichotomy of how the residents themselves partake in the stigmatization of their area. Residents can tend to internalize the stigma they are exposed to from the outside and therefore contribute to degrade their areas even further (T. S. Larsen and Delica, 2019). Conversely, criticism to this view demonstrates that the resident tend to project local pride and resistance in the face of discrimination and stigma (T. S. Larsen and Delica, 2019). These opposing



perspectives reveal a lack of academic consensus on whether residents internalize and perpetuate stigma or express local pride and resilience in response to it.

The third modality, outsiders, is concerned with how the outside perception affects residents self perception where more uniform perceptions and prejudices of the areas become prevalent by defining the area through its worst qualities as opposed to the residents perception of the diversity and complexity that exists within. While studies empirically focus mostly on the residents relationship with outside perspective, it is less known how outsiders perceive the places (T. S. Larsen and Delica, 2019).

### **Service provision and interventions**

On service provision and interventions, two modalities are identified that both are concerned with how local interventions contribute to the production of territorial stigmatization. What differs between them is that one set of studies primarily focuses on how low-level bureaucrats operate through a double standard by differentiating between the residents and 'other' people, which results in a devaluation of the quality, educational achievements and medical services for the local residents (T. S. Larsen and Delica, 2019). The consequence of such an approach is that it can be challenging to attract skilled staff which further exacerbates the already existing low standards and (re)confirms the bad reputations prevalent in the areas (T. S. Larsen and Delica, 2019).

In the second set of studies the focuses on the local initiatives and strategies such as area-based interventions and regeneration projects. A sub-set of studies explores social mixing strategies aimed at counteracting territorial stigmatization and evaluates its successes and failures in doing so (Dunn, 2012), (Arthursen, 2010). While another sub-set of studies focus on regeneration and redevelopment strategies (Hastings, n.d.), (McCormick, Joseph, and Chaskin, 2012), (Patel, 2014). What stands out among these studies is the lack of attention to how the strategies and interventions themselves contribute to territorial stigmatization. Despite these insights, research in this area remains underdeveloped and require further exploration (T. S. Larsen and Delica, 2019).

### **Specialist in symbolic production**

Regarding specialist in symbolic production, three modalities are identified that are concerned with media, academics and policy makers. While media and poli-

cymakers on the production of territorial stigmatization is relatively well studied, academics are oftentimes lacking (T. S. Larsen and Delica, 2019).

Stigmatization through media has been studied extensively since the early sixties, recently more nuanced views into how media contributes to the production of territorial stigmatization have been explored (T. S. Larsen and Delica, 2019). Two directions emerge which are on one hand studies related to how newspapers, the press and the journalistic tools and techniques used to describe stigmatized areas are framed and represented. On the other hand studies into mass media, news outlets and TV shows represent stigmatized areas. Notably, representations of stigmatized areas through social media is lacking and in need of further exploration (T. S. Larsen and Delica, 2019).

Results and similarities among the two categories above is a structural asymmetrical representation of the stigmatized areas. This means that the points of view from outside and above that constructs simplified social groups are dominant, while leaving little to no space for more nuanced representations coming from inside and below. This asymmetrical representation oftentimes leads to negative connotations (poverty, crime, gangrelated violence, unemployment etc.) attached to stigmatized territories whereby the residents are unable to direct media discourse and provide more nuanced perspectives on the issues discussed in media outlets. Notably, this area of research is extensively studied in comparison to the other two modalities (T. S. Larsen and Delica, 2019).

Concerning the modality of academics and policymakers, very few studies explore the production of stigmatization by academics themselves, while it is more prevalent for studies to address a variety of policymakers such as, politicians, think tanks, top-level bureaucrats and real estate developers. Studies suggest that these groups attempt to frame the representation of the stigmatized area according to their own agendas and employ strategies that reinforce negative stereotypes and selectively highlights information that aligns with their interests. This could be through flagship projects and promises to radically transform the areas physically and socially (T. S. Larsen and Delica, 2019).

### **Politics, policies and bureaucracy**

On politics, policies and bureaucracy, two modalities are identified namely politics & policies, and bureaucracy. Larsen (2019) mentions that this category, while it overlaps most with other categories, especially the structural level and service provision and interventions is worth separating, because contrary to the other cat-

egories it is concerned with the relation between the different scales as opposed solely on the micro scale (service provision and intervention) and macro scale (structural level) (T. S. Larsen and Delica, 2019).

Politics and policies produce territorial stigmatization by acting as arbiters in defining problems and proposing solutions. They also establish the framework in which physical and social spaces are shaped through policy documents, such as national, municipal, and local strategies in collaboration with other powerful stakeholders such as specialist in symbolic production. Regarding policies, two distinct fields of research focus on either the US or Europe. In the US context, policies are directed towards the desertification of stigmatized areas, whereas in Europe, policies aim to revitalize neglected public and social housing estates through the frameworks defined by relevant institutions. The European approach towards revitalization tends to use area-based interventions, especially in regards to Scandinavia, which has contributed, to some extent, to halting further decay and provided residents with localized institutions to help mitigate some of the effects of territorial stigma associated with the social housing estates (T. S. Larsen and Delica, 2019).

The second modality, bureaucracy, attention is directed towards how regulation and bureaucracy supports the production of territorial stigmatization through the use of problem definitions and categorizations of social groups and places applying differential mechanisms to the management of stigmatized territories (T. S. Larsen and Delica, 2019).

#### **4.1.2 Conclusive remarks**

The literature on territorial stigmatization highlights the complexity of the phenomenon and the need for a nuanced understanding of how both micro-level interventions and macro-level policies shape the experiences of residents in stigmatized areas. A critical contribution to the study on territorial stigmatization is how various stakeholders engage in perpetuating stigmatization, from policy makers to media to residents themselves.

However, the diversity of the research into territorial stigmatization has fostered a growing number of critiques. One such critique is based on Phelan and Link, whereby they argue that the study of territorial stigmatization has primarily had a individualistic character and lacks a structural component (Link and Phelan, 2001). This point of critique indicates a knowledge gap, which this thesis attempts to contribute to, by incorporating macro-level structural aspects in tandem the the micro-level interventions of the production of territorial stigmatization in the

case of AxelGro. For this, a discourse analysis will be coupled with the concept of territorial stigmatization in order to to understand if and how stigmatization persists through the use of novel strategies to the development of Axelborg.

## Chapter 5

# Shaping an Analytical Framework

### 5.1 Discourse analysis: Epistemological foundation

Discourse analysis and its epistemological roots in social constructivism assume that knowledge is always understood and produced through certain lenses that the researcher applies (Egholm, 2014). It is a form of relativism whereby the aim is not to understand a phenomenon per se, but rather has an emphasis on the underlying sense-making mechanisms that are imbued in the process of making sense of problems and solutions to circumstances (Egholm, 2014). Additionally, social constructivism assumes that the perspectives of individuals' expressions eg. through language, represent an overarching collective which is constituted by language and systematized through discourse analysis. Reality in this sense always has its point of departure in the cultures and ideologies in which the social phenomena appear (Egholm, 2014).

Two types of analytical strategies can be employed when conducting discourse analysis; microanalysis and macroanalysis. The aim of microanalysis is to gain a better understanding of the everyday practices of the subjects that are analyzed. Meanwhile macroanalysis focuses on institutions and discursive formations at a broader structural level (Egholm, 2014).

This thesis employs a macro-analytical strategy, wherein the aim is to gain a better understanding of the structural aspects of discourse and the discursive formations created contribute or challenge stigmatization.

## 5.2 Discourse analysis: A performance perspective on governance

This thesis employs Maarten Hajers's framework for analysis as described in his book *"Authoritative Governance: Policy Making in the Age of Mediatization"* wherein the focus will be on the symbolic aspects of governance and how language and practice shapes policy and creates a framework by defining problems and subsequently the logical proposed solutions that derive from certain frames of viewing certain problems. This approach will be used in conjunction with the theory on territorial stigmatization as described in the chapter 4.1 to understand how territorial stigmatization is either produced or challenged through the performances of the stakeholders involved in the case of AxelGro.

Language has a profound impact in shaping our views and experiences in the world and it is also what guides actions. Therefore, how we talk and which narratives are dominant also determine what courses of action taken by stakeholders are appropriate. By tracing these narratives, the author seeks to illuminate how language through a performative perspective is used to construct realities (Hajer, 2010). Additionally, this approach assumes that politics is staged and to get to the 'real' politics and policymaking, we need to investigate what lies behind these performances by the varying stakeholders engaged (Hajer, 2010).

Maarten Hajer's analytical framework synthesizes discourse analysis and dramaturgy, offering a lens through which governance can be examined. While traditional discourse analytical approaches have predominantly focused 'what people say', Hajer's dramaturgical approach offers a distinct perspective, thereby emphasizing the performative aspects of 'where they say it' and 'to whom they say it' (Hajer, 2010).

This analytical framework gives attention to the stakeholders' utterances (scripting), their audiences (staging) and the context (setting) in which it is uttered. Complimenting Hajer's earlier work on discourse analysis wherein he outlines the variety of concepts in analyzing discourses. The figure below presents an overview of the concepts that can be used for analyzing discourses see Figure 5.1 & 5.2. However, only a few concepts have been chosen for this thesis as some have been deemed unnecessary.

## Discourse

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*Discourse*: an ensemble of notions, ideas, concepts, and categorizations through which meaning is allocated to social and physical phenomena, and which is produced and reproduced in an identifiable set of practices

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*Metaphor*: understanding and experiencing a particular thing/event in terms of another.

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*Storyline*: a condensed sort of narrative that links an event to one or more discourses and thus provides the basis of discourse coalitions.

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*Discourse coalitions*: the ensemble of particular storylines, the actors that employ them, and the practices through which the discourse involved exert their power.

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*Practice*: operational routines mutually accepted rules and norms that give coherence to social life.

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*Discursive affinity*: arguments that may have very different roots and meanings but that together uphold a particular way of seeing

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*Emblematic issue*: a specific policy problem that captures the imagination at a particular moment in time and fulfils a key role in the general understanding of a much larger problem complex (metonym).

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*Discourse structuration*: a discourse dominates the way a given social unit (a policy domain, a firm, a society all depending on the research question) conceptualizes the world.

---

*Discourse institutionalization*: a discourse solidifies in particular institutional arrangements—say, a measuring system for air pollution.

---

*Indexicality*: performances are scripted and staged in a way that draws on previously existing knowledge or experience of audiences, stimulating them to understand the performance as such an event.

---

*Intertextuality*: a particular statement refers to other texts to enhance the power of the statement.

---

*Citation*: the in situ mobilization of historical events to understand a new situation and/or to exert influence.

---

*Performativity*: a reiteration of a norm or set of norms.

---

*Positional statement*: a claim that, if not rebutted, creates a particular discursive reality

---

**Table 5.1:** Concepts of argumentative discourse analysis (Hajer, 2010)

Dramaturgy
<i>Scripting</i> : the efforts to create a particular political effect by determining the characters in the performance (the 'dramatis personae', the protagonists and antagonists) and to provide cues for appropriate behaviour.)
<i>Staging</i> : the organization of an interaction, drawing on existing symbols and the invention of new ones, as well as to the distinction between active players and (presumably passive) audiences (mise-en-scène).
<i>Setting</i> : the physical and organizational situation in which the interaction takes place, including the artefacts that are brought to or found in the situation.
<i>Perfomance</i> : the way in which the contextualized interaction itself produces social realities like understandings of the problem at hand, knowledge, new power relations.
<i>Counter-scripting</i> : efforts of antagonists to undo the effect of the scripts of protagonists

Table 5.2: Concepts of dramaturgy (Hajer, 2010)



## Chapter 6

# Analytical Strategy

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of the analytical strategy and provide justifications for why some concepts in the analytical framework as described in Chapter 5 are selected while others are omitted. Moreover, it provides a delimitation on the theory on territorial stigmatization as described in Chapter 4.1. This allows for the analysis to become more focused on only the relevant concepts. The author has focused on concepts that best allow for an exploration of how stigmatizing narratives are constructed and maintained as a result of the AxelGro project.

### 6.1 Territorial Stigmatization and Governance

In Chapter 4.1, an overview of the field of territorial stigmatization was provided. To further narrow the scope and position this thesis within the various branches of field of research on territorial stigmatization, the focus will be on interplay between different scales, namely micro-scale (service provision & interventions) and macro-scale (structural level). However, as Larsen and Delica (2019) emphasize, the modalities of territorial stigmatization often overlap, and this thesis acknowledges that intersections with other modalities, such as media, politics, and the housing market, are inevitable. These overlapping domains are relevant, especially given their mutual influence on the AxelGro project.

The focus on the interplay between scales is motivated by AxelGros significance as a catalyst for radical shifts in the governance of social housing, proposing new solutions for the complex challenges within the Danish social housing sector. Fur-

thermore, the involvement of high-ranking policymakers in this seemingly small-scale project reflects its potential to reshape the symbolic perceptions of Danish non-profit housing sector. By situating the study within this context and focusing on the symbolic power wielded by policymakers, this thesis seeks to offer a nuanced understanding of how governance and policy discourse shape both the perception and lived reality of residents in stigmatized areas.

Additionally, this thesis will explore whether stigmatizing language continues to persist or if AxelGro marks a meaningful shift toward destigmatization in the Danish non-profit housing sector.

## **6.2 Discourse and dramaturgical analysis**

Regarding the dramaturgical aspects, four out of five concepts have been selected: scripting, staging, setting, and performance. While counter-scripting is often relevant in many social interactions where political processes are disrupted, it is not applicable to this particular event. The event was curated in such a way that it did not allow access for 'antagonists' to disrupt or divert the pre-determined scripts of the organizing stakeholders. It functioned as a closed event, with only hand-selected individuals and residents participating, minimizing the risk of disruption.

To apply the analytical framework effectively, the concepts must be carefully selected based on their relevance to the themes of territorial stigmatization and symbolic governance in the context of the AxelGro project. Table 6.1 illustrates which concepts are selected and which ones are omitted.

### **6.2.1 Selected concepts**

#### **Scripting**

Understanding the script is crucial to gain insight into the intended purpose(s) of the event and introduce the characters and their motivations for participating. This allows us to better understand the setting provided by organizing stakeholders.

<u>Dramaturgy</u>	
Selected	Omitted
<i>Scripting</i>	
<i>Staging</i>	
<i>Setting</i>	
	<i>Performance</i>
	<i>Counter-scripting</i>
<u>Discourse</u>	
Selected	Omitted
<i>Metaphor</i>	
<i>Storyline</i>	
<i>Discourse coalitions</i>	
	<i>Practice</i>
	<i>Discourse affinity</i>
	<i>Emblematic issue</i>
	<i>Discourse structuration</i>
	<i>Discourse institutionalization</i>
	<i>Indexicality</i>
	<i>Intertextuality</i>
	<i>Citation</i>
	<i>Performativity</i>
	<i>Positional statement</i>

**Table 6.1:** Selection and omission of concepts

## Staging

Staging allows us to gain insight into how the interaction is organized and attention controlled during the event. It helps us distinguish between which characters become active players and which ones become audiences.

## Setting

The setting provides us with the physical and organizational situation that affects the characters' actions and adaptations to the situations they are in. Furthermore, the analysis will be based on how the setting is constructed through an examination of the different activities set up during the event.

### Metaphors

Metaphors are a crucial component when trying to understand the symbolic meaning that is attached to a place. In the case of AxelGro, metaphors such as social mixing and building bridges are not necessarily explicitly negative per se, but might contribute to simplifications and unintentionally reinforce negative perceptions through the process of 'othering' the place and hence the residents residing in it.

### Storylines

Storylines are crucial to understanding how territorial stigmatization is produced and maintained by the stakeholders involved. They help contextualize the case of AxelGro within a broader societal discourse, which is essential for this thesis. Furthermore, storylines contribute to identifying the varying narratives present in AxelGro, allowing for a later investigation into which narratives align with each other and, consequently, which discourse coalitions are formed among stakeholders. These coalitions reveal shared or conflicting perspectives, highlighting how certain narratives gain prominence while others are marginalized. This analysis ultimately clarifies the mechanisms by which territorial stigmatization is either reinforced or contested within the AxelGro project, offering insights into the symbolic power of discourse in shaping community perceptions.

### Discourse coalitions

Discourse coalitions are a useful concept when trying to understand how multiple stakeholders are communicating and examining where they align with each other. In the context of AxelGro, multiple stakeholders are present during the event: politicians, planners, The National Building Fund and residents. Furthermore, it can contribute to understanding how stigmatizing discourse is embedded into the existing governance practice and highlight which narratives are dominant in Axelborg.

#### 6.2.2 Omitted concepts

In conducting this discourse analysis, only a subset of the concepts in Figure 5.1 is applied, as not all are equally relevant to the study. Concepts such as *Indexicality*

and *Intertextuality* are excluded, given the empirical focus on video and articles without significant cross-referencing. *Discourse Structuration* and *Emblematic Issue* are not addressed, as this analysis centers on a single case rather than on long-term or widely publicized developments within the social housing sector. *Positional Statements* and *Discursive Affinity* are also omitted, as the focus here is on collective rather than individual actor perspectives, and on broader coalitions rather than nuanced alignment. Finally, *Discourse Institutionalization* is not prioritized, as this study does not aim to examine the long-term establishment of discourse in governance practices but rather to explore immediate symbolic actions within AxelGro.

## Chapter 7

# Methods

### 7.1 Case study

This thesis adopts an instrumental case study, as described by Robert E. Stake (1995), to explore the dynamics of territorial stigmatization and symbolic governance in the non-profit housing sector. In an instrumental case study, the primary aim is not to understand the case itself in its own right but to use it as a means to explore a broader issue or to gain insights into a particular phenomenon (Stake, 1995). The AxelGro project represents a novel approach to the development of the Danish non-profit housing sector and provides a lens through which to examine symbolic governance and the persistence of territorial stigmatization.

This case study focuses on how stakeholders involved in the AxelGro project perceive and subsequently construct narratives that either produce or challenge stigmatization of Axelborg and its residents.

To address the research question *"How does symbolic governance and performative actions in the project AxelGro unintentionally contribute to the (re)production of territorial stigmatization?"*, the author has selected three primary sources of data: articles from engaged journalists, short film produced by the AxelGro team and the project description of the "Neighbourhoods for Generations" initiative. The combination of these data sources provides a multifaceted analysis of the AxelGro project and a comprehensive insight into how the project has been perceived by the participating stakeholders such as residents, politicians, the housing organization ALBO and the AxelGro team.

### 7.1.1 Articles

Three articles in this thesis's dataset were produced specifically in relation to the AxelGro event: an article from the local news outlet Horsens Posten, which focuses on events within Horsens Municipality; an article from Fagbladet Boligen, which covers issues and developments within the non-profit housing sector; and an article published by the National Building Fund (Koefoed, 2023; A. B. Kristensen, 2023; Landsbyggefonden, 2023). These articles provide insight into the media portrayal of AxelGro and as an extension Axelborg. In the articles several interviews with key stakeholders has been conducted which will be used to analyze stigmatization of Axelborg. All the articles can be found in the appendix see

Furthermore, they contribute to understanding external perceptions of Axelborg and how they position the AxelGro project in a larger societal context. By analyzing the articles, the author attempts to identify whether media portrayals reinforce stigmatization and it helps illuminate how these portrayals influence the symbolic governance of Axelborg and as an extension the non-profit housing sector.

### 7.1.2 Short film

The interviews included in this thesis' dataset have all been made into a short film which was created by Hele Landet and includes discussions with a range of stakeholders: residents, Horsens mayor Peter Sørensen, Horsens city architect Jesper Pagh and the director of ALBO Steffen Møller Borgbjerg. These interviews provide insight into the experiences of key governing stakeholders and residents and how they perceive the project. It also sheds a light on how governance practices are enacted which is crucial to understanding the dynamics that exist in the governance of Axelborg. Furthermore, these interviews provide insight into the symbolic actions of governing stakeholders and how these actions/utterances contribute to unintentional stigmatization of the area and its residents.

### 7.1.3 Participant observation

Furthermore, it is necessary to note that the author has directly participated in the AxelGro project and therefore considerations must be taken into account in regard to participant observation.

In their book *Deltagende Observation* Kristensen et al. (1999) distinguishes between four different roles an observer may adopt during data collection: The total ob-

server, the observer as a participant, the participant as an observer, and the total participant (S. Kristensen and Krogstrup, 1999). In this thesis the role of a total participant was applied due to the need for direct engagement and immersion within the social setting being studied. This approach allowed the author to experience the dynamics and interactions firsthand.

The author attended the AxelGro event on September 6th 2023, as part of an internship with Hele Landet - Social Architects. This involvement included participating in the planning process leading up to the event, fulfilling a representative role during the event, and contributing to its conclusion. At the event, the author organized apple pressing and flower-print activities for schoolchildren. Furthermore, the author has talked with various stakeholders about the event and what it might mean for Axelborg and its residents, however, these conversations have not been included in the data set used in the analysis as these were not logged at the time being, yet might affect the author's general approach to the case.

Lastly, it should also be noted that the author is familiar with Axelborg not only academically, but also through lived experience because they have resided in one of ALBO's other housing estates, Sundparken in Horsens. for 15 years.

## 7.2 Large language models

Throughout the research process, ChatGPT and Gemini have been used as supportive tools in several areas, including translation, identification, structuring, refinement and sparring. For each area, the author has used different prompts to achieve the desired outcome and to enhance the report. The generated text has not been used as a source or as final written content, as it has been deemed as being unreliable for accurate and verifiable information. Claims generated by the tools have been specifically avoided in this regard.

In regard to translation, the author has used prompts to request translations primarily from Danish to English. This approach has both been used for single words or sentences, but also for larger parts of texts such as translation of the data used in the analysis. Prompts such as "Translate to English - ..." or "Translate this text to English..." have been applied.

Furthermore, for identification, the author has designed prompts for finding inspiration for identifying themes or missing pieces that could add to a variety of sections and make them more cohesive. This approach has likewise been used to locate information in other scientific papers, by using the attach file function,



whereby the author would attach a file and ask questions to inquire about relevant information. The identification function has been utilized in the introduction, theory, methods and analysis. Prompts such as "How could I make this text better ...", "Which authors have written about ..." or "Where does the author mention ..." have been put into use.

In relation to structuring the report, prompts have been designed to structure the sections and organize the content more coherently. Prompts focusing on the logical flow of the report have been utilized to help with the readability and cohesiveness of the report as a whole. Prompts include "Can you suggest transition phrases or paragraphs to connect the ... with ..."

For refinement, the purpose has been to improve reader-friendliness and make the text more precise and improve clarity by cutting of unnecessary words, repetitions or finding alternative formulations for the same ideas. Larger sections of text have been fed to the tools with prompts such as "Can you improve upon this text ..." or "Help me write this better ..."

Lastly, the tools have been used to find inspiration on how to connect concepts, phrasing, or suggestions for how to explore the analysis. These applications have been used throughout the thesis. This has been done using prompts such as "How could i approach the analysis using the concept of ... "

## Chapter 8

# Analysis

The focal point of the analysis will be on the event arranged on September 6 2023 in Axelborg, Horsens by Hele Landet, ØsterGro and AH advice. The research question guiding this analysis is: *How does symbolic governance and performative actions in the project AxelGro unintentionally contribute to the (re)production of territorial stigmatization?*

During the analysis, the analytical strategy will be applied as elaborated in Chapter 6. The analysis will be divided into two parts, namely a discourse analysis and a dramaturgical analysis. The purpose of the dramaturgical analysis is to gain insight into how the scene and involved stakeholders have set up the framework in which the event could take place. This will help us understand how symbolic governance and territorial stigmatization by analyzing the interactions between stakeholders either reproduce or challenge the stigmatization of Axelborg. In the discourse analysis storylines, discourse coalitions and metaphors will be examined, which in turn will contribute to understanding how territorial stigmatization is reproduced or challenged. This will be done by examining each stakeholder's utterances and positioning them in relation to other stakeholders with the intent of discovering discourse coalitions and narratives that produce or challenge stigmatization.

## 8.1 Dramaturgical analysis

### 8.1.1 Setting, staging and scripting

#### Axelborg

The AxelGro project took place on the Axelborg estate, strategically situated near the community garden established earlier that year and in proximity to the apartment blocks. The event organizers were allocated a small area where they were able to run the AxelGro project. The project featured three main activities namely; apple pressing & flowerprinting; harvesting; and community dining which were all adjacent to one another, yet organized during different times of the day. The choice of location near the community garden and open green spaces facilitated easy interactions between residents and stakeholders, creating opportunities for dialogue about the project. By situating the event within a familiar area that had not previously served as a social gathering space, the organizers demonstrated how this area could transform into a community hub.

The day started off by inviting young children to play with flower prints and learn how to produce apple cider, which would later be served in the community dining marked 'AxelGro'.

The community garden symbolized a 'blooming' of new relations fostering a collaborative atmosphere where the garden's produce would be shared among the residents.

The community dining took place in a tent, fostering an intimate atmosphere with music by a local jazz band and a song written specifically about the diversity of Sønderbro. The mixed seating arrangements encouraged conversations between residents and external stakeholders and offered an opportunity to meet others across generational and ethnic divides with the act of sharing food serving as a unifying element. The community dining experience had a fine dining component to it by offering a seven-course meal provided by chefs from ØsterGro instilling a sense of the event being special and elevating the experience.

Additionally, during the day, the author and other members of the organizing team were led by the co-director of ALBO on a walk through Axelborg. The co-director shared insights into the historical development of the estate, including details about a renovation in the 1990s that had replaced a distinctive yellow brick facade, something ALBO viewed with nostalgia as part of the estates architectural



**Figure 8.1:** Community Garden in Axelborg

identity.

The AxelGro event carried a symbolism through its timing and structure beginning with activities led by children in the morning and concluding with an evening gathering that united people across generations under the setting sun.

### **Policy context**

Axelborg is one of two housing estates in Horsens that is affected by the Parallel Society Act, the other one being Sundparken. While Sundparken has been known as the more troublesome area in Horsens, Axelborg has been the 'other' troublesome area and besides being known for being dysfunctional, it has also been characterized by its degrading architecture.

The National Building Fund's framing of the project set out three main objectives in their competition brief for increasing the attractiveness of Axelborg namely; strengthening civil society; supporting the connection to the city; and creating & facilitating meaningful meetings across cultures and ages. (Landsbyggefonden, 2022).

The objective to strengthen civil society aligns with recent shifts in the nature of volunteer engagement. Where past volunteer work often required long-term commitments, current trends lean toward more episodic forms of participation, especially among younger residents Landsbyggefonden, 2022. The objective aims at adapting Axelborg to contemporary forms of engagement that are more flexible.

To support the connection of the city, the National Building Fund recognizes the

stigmatization that Axelborg is subject to, yet inadvertently reinforces this stigma by framing Axelborg as an isolated area in need of integration. This approach mirrors the stigmatizing language commonly found in media portrayals, characterizing Axelborg as a disconnected entity that must be opened up to the rest of Horsens (Landsbyggefonden, 2022).

In its objective to facilitate meaningful meetings across cultures and ages, the National Building Fund seeks to bridge cultural divides and reduce segregation within the community (Landsbyggefonden, 2022). However, the framing of segregation as a lack of integration carries negative associations, particularly for ethnically diverse populations. This approach may unintentionally reinforce stigmatizing narratives by suggesting that minority populations must adapt to majority norms, potentially intensifying perceptions of cultural hierarchy rather than fostering mutual inclusivity.

With these three aims, the National Building Fund establishes a framework that aims to combat the negative associations attached to Axelborg and turn it into a resilient community. However, these goals may also reflect the limitations in addressing such stigmatization. While the emphasis on openness and integration is meant to reduce the symbolic boundary between Axelborg and the city, it also indirectly reinforces the perception that Axelborg is in need of intervention to be able to connect with the city.

## **8.2 Discourse analysis**

Each section in this analysis represents two distinct scales of territorial stigmatization that Axelborg is subject to. These scales include micro-scale with an emphasis on the value that residents and external stakeholders share in what the AxelGro provides Axelborg and its residents and a macro-scale with an emphasis on the symbolic production by external and influential stakeholders. Each scale will address the varying storylines, discourse coalitions and metaphors to gain better insight into how territorial stigmatization is either reproduced or challenged by the involved stakeholders.

### **8.2.1 Residents and outsiders**

The first scale of analysis, residents and outsiders is directly addressed by several of the stakeholders in varying ways and by different storylines which is apparent in

the dataset. Stakeholders directly addressing the community include the residents, the ALBO direct and the city architect.

These storylines include community building, intergenerational and intercultural connection and citizen participation. For each storyline, some coalitions among the stakeholders are identified that address the same points.

### **Community building**

Among the residents, a storyline of community building and an appreciation for the opportunity to meet the neighbours is apparent and indicates a fulfilment of a need to interact with neighbours that the AxelGro project has been able to facilitate. For instance, Janni, Mohammed and Eva highlight:

*"If we can strengthen the bond between the different cultures here in another way than what we have now... to avoid trouble... So we can become one big family."* - Janni (resident)

See Appendix D

*"When others (neighbours) work in our garden, they take breaks and talk with each other"* - Mohammed (resident)

See Appendix D

*"... its great that they can do something like this because it brings people together"* - Eva (resident)

See Appendix D

These utterances indicate how the residents view their neighbours by using metaphors such as "big family" and "bring people together". It illustrates a perception among the residents that they have a positive outlook on their neighbours and view each other as a unified entity. This approach directly challenges the stigmatizing views of Axelborg as being an isolated and dysfunctional community. which an initial search on Infomedia has indicated see Figure 3.2.

Janni highlights that by "strengthening the community bonds", the project can help mitigate "trouble". This reveals an awareness of the stigmatizing views that exist of Axelborg generally in the media but also recognizes that avoiding trouble is a priority among the residents. Additionally, by using the metaphor "one big family"

which brings with it positive associations, she emphasizes a desire and willingness to become more harmonious as a community which is prevalent among other stakeholders as well.

### **Intergenerational and intercultural connection**

Other aspects of community building that are mentioned are more pertained to the intergenerational and intercultural connection the AxelGro project has been offering the residents. Here a coalition among some residents, Steffen (ALBO director) and Jesper (City architect) is apparent.

*"If we can strengthen the bond between the different cultures..." - Janni (resident)*

See Appendix D

*"When others work in our garden... with people from different nationalities..." - Mohammed (resident)*

See Appendix D

*"This is a community that is truly unique because it can bring generations together" - Steffen (ALBO director)*

See Appendix D

*"If we can actually build a restaurant on top of one of the blocks, created and run by the community and across generations..." - Steffen (ALBO director)*

See Appendix A

*"Here in Axelborg, where there is actually a very socially mixed, also generationally, it is important to try to stick to that as much as we possibly can." - Jesper (City architect)*

See Appendix A

Despite the stakeholders all referring to intercultural and intergenerational connections, it is important to take their influence in the AxelGro project into account. Steffen's statements appeal to the National Building Fund. For instance, the usage of "across generations" stems from the project description laid out by the National Building Fund. This suggests that his interests are in attracting attention from the National Building Fund by aligning his rhetoric with the aims of the National

Building Fund, since they are the ones that can co-finance a potential redevelopment of Axelborg and by showing how their agenda of creating intergenerational communities align with the goals of ALBO.

Meanwhile, the focus of the residents lies with the intercultural connection and how the project contributes to the meeting across cultures in the community. This suggests that it is important for the residents to highlight that the ethnic diversity of Axelborg is not a hindrance for them to connect with their neighbours.

Furthermore, these statements stand in contrast to the image that is portrayed of the non-profit housing in the Parallel Society Act, which claims that the variety in ethnicity is a threat to societal cohesion. Especially, when the speaker is ethnically Danish, it bears more weight in such statements, because it challenges the dominant narrative of cultural division, potentially defying the stigmatizing representation of ethnic diversity as a social threat. When a Danish speaker emphasizes the positive potential of intercultural connections, it disrupts stereotypes that often associate non-Danish communities with social fragmentation.

Jesper emphasizes both the intercultural and intergenerational characteristics of Axelborg. His use of the term "socially mixed" suggests that he is referring to the diversity in ethnic composition, but it is unclear what that term means specifically in his utterance. However, it implies that social mixing is desirable in the eyes of the municipality and that Axelborg already embodies this ideal.

Furthermore, it is important to note that the term social mixing can have many interpretations and consequences according to how it is defined by the governing stakeholders attempting to implement it. However, Jesper's comment suggests that the social mixing that already exists in Axelborg is to be preserved and not changed radically, which challenges the goals laid out by the law "*A Denmark without parallel societies - no Ghettos in 2030*" whereby a change in social composition through government intervention has been initiated. This also indicates a conflict of interests between local and state governance of the non-profit housing sector (The Danish Government, 2018).

In conclusion, there is a clear contrast in perceptions of the projects value for Axelborg. Residents focus on strengthening relationships and everyday interactions with their neighbors to improve social ties within the community. In contrast, Steffen and Jesper, who hold more influential positions, frame their goals in strategic terms, emphasizing themes of social mixing and intergenerational connection. Steffens focus on a restaurant on top of a block suggests a desire to reshape Axelborgs image, transforming it into a destination that appeals to outsiders. This vision co-



incides with the production of stigmatization through the use of flag-ship projects, undermining the residents aspirations for internal and relational improvements and fostering stronger cohesion between the residents.

## 8.2.2 Specialists in symbolic production

This section explores key themes within the AxelGro project, particularly focusing on citizen participation, the dichotomy of "us" versus "them," and the potential scalability of the project.

### Citizen participation

The theme of AxelGro functioning as a springboard for better citizen participation in the local community is addressed by Morten (Hele Landet) and Steffen (ALBO director). Both stakeholders have worked closely together to plan and organize the event and have ambitions to improve citizen participation. However, it is noteworthy that the discussion about improved citizen participation is mainly framed by the event organizers, rather than the residents themselves. This distinction is significant, as it reflects the top-down nature of the discourse around participation.

*"Instead of a boring citizens' meeting, our experience is that we get more qualified inputs when we stand on the spot and can see and point and touch..."* -

Morten (Hele Landet)

See Appendix E

*"But in addition, we can also use the physical framework and the activities we do as a platform for dialogue with residents and citizens"* - Morten (Hele Landet)

See Appendix E

*"The residents are not just involved; they get involved in a way where they are sort of creating a growing community together."* - Steffen (ALBO director)

See Appendix A

*"... the community garden is underway, and the idea of community and involvement can still be worked with down here on earth"* - Steffen (ALBO director)

See Appendix B

*"There is already an incredible amount of community out here. We have a super well-functioning bingo club, but that's only one segment" - Steffen (ALBO director)*

See Appendix E

Both stakeholders come from two different perspectives but share that they act from a position of authority in each of their ways.

Morten for instance focuses on the quality of citizen involvement with emphasis on the benefits of a more practical approach, while Steffen highlights how it can help strengthen the community. However, none of the stakeholders address how such involvement would unfold in practice going from doing activities together to decision-making processes and risks that their efforts remain tokenistic.

Steffen's first statement indicates that the residents have been involved, but the fact that they have not been part of planning the event and have only been invited by the planning team consisting of Hele Landet, ØsterGro, AH advice and the local social housing intervention group BoTrivsel, reveals that their involvement has been minimal in the process. This contributes to the stigmatization of the residents assuming they might not be able to define their future in the potential upcoming redevelopment of Axelborg as the development of AxelGro has been a rather top-down process with very little citizen involvement in the planning.

The residents are left in a position where stakeholders from authority positions define the framework in which this development takes place and are thereby not actively part of the development. Nonetheless, as seen in the previous scale of analysis, the residents seem appreciative of such an initiative, highlighting what seems to have been a lack of coordination and interaction among the residents to effectively represent the residency.

Mortens use of the metaphor "platform for dialogue" suggests that the ambition of the AxelGro project is to become a place where new relationships can develop and lead the residents to construct new narratives of their neighbourhood which implies that the residents can, through dialogue, share their own stories and act collectively. This, in contrast to the planning of the event, attempts to foster a better connection to counter the stigmatization of Axelborg.

In conclusion, top-down planning is clear as so far the residents have not been involved in defining the parameters of the event. Nonetheless, the residents seem appreciative of such an effort despite their lack of involvement due to the expressed lack of ability to organize themselves and represent the residency effectively.

### **'Us' and 'Them'**

A separation between Axelborg and Horsens is unintentionally highlighted by influential stakeholders. The storylines and discourse coalitions among these stakeholders are concerned with the positioning of Axelborg on a municipal level by 'opening up' Axelborg.

*"With AxelGro, we have the chance to restart the story of Axelborg. Axelborg has been a tough place many years ago, and that reputation is hard to get rid of. We have a completely different composition of residents today, but the story continues..."* - Steffen (ALBO director)

See Appendix A *"If we can actually build a restaurant on top of one of the blocks, created and run by the community and across generations, then that will be the story of Axelborg."* - Steffen (ALBO director)

See Appendix E

Steffen's use of metaphors such as "restart the story", "hard place" and "the history lingers" suggests that he recognizes the stickiness of the stigmatization that Axelborg has been subject to, which aligns with the general portrayal of Axelborg in the public media.

By using the term "hard place", he implicitly recognizes and labels the residents living in the neighbourhood as having been problematic. Additionally, by showing a desire to "restart the story" and get rid of "the history that lingers", it suggests that the problem is not the residents, but rather the dominant negative narratives about the residents that need change.

*"It really ties into many other great projects. Where we perhaps are a bit weaker is where it's been harder to get Axelborg to connect with the surrounding community. But a project like this can certainly help to tap into that."* - Peter (Mayor)

See Appendix D

*"I definitely think this project can contribute to creating new contexts and create better awareness in the city of Axelborg and perhaps also make it a destination for people coming from outside."* - Jesper (City architect)

See Appendix A

*"We have an overarching mission, like many other municipalities, to create a mixed city with mixed residential areas. The project harmonizes with that"*

*mission by being able to create new contexts"* - Jesper (City architect)  
See Appendix E

*"The restaurant must be run by a commercial partner... but in return the restaurateur undertakes to give back... And at the same time it must be an attraction where the city's citizens also experience that it is beautiful in Axelborg..."* - Morten (Hele Landet)  
See Appendix B

*"Today we had a school class out making applesauce... because with the project we want to open up Axelborg... It is also a way to build a bridge from Axelborg and the surrounding city."* - Morten (Hele Landet)  
See Appendix B

*"After all, this is also a matchmaking process. The core task for us is to ensure some local anchoring, because we are not going to run it"* - Morten (Hele Landet)  
See Appendix E

Peter and Jesper, in contrast to Steffen, have a more holistic perspective on how the AxelGro project fits into the agenda of the municipality and how Axelborg can invite people coming from the outside in, implying that it is currently seen as closed off and isolated, which further contributes to the stigmatization of the area and aligns with the narrative that it is a place that is not welcoming of other people.

Both Morten and Jesper highlight how the AxelGro project can contribute to making Axelborg a "destination" or "attraction" which suggests that their interest is to transform Axelborg into a flagship project and open it up for commercial interests, which exemplifies the neoliberal political direction laid out by the varying Danish government since the 2000s that has had tremendous effects undermining the non-profit aspect of the non-profit housing sector on and challenges the notion that non-profit housing sector is solely a residential area.

Furthermore, Jesper's statement on creating a mixed city with mixed residential area can risk displacing the lower-income residents that seek to live in Axelborg, because of their lack of options otherwise. This contributes to the stigmatization of the residents because it insinuates that the current makeup of social composition is not desirable and is in need of change to create an Axelborg that is more integrated with the rest of the municipality.

These perception by stakeholders in positions of power, reveals a contrast in am-

bitions between residents and external stakeholders. While residents highlight the importance of community building and deepening social ties, external stakeholders such as Morten, Steffen and Jesper define the improvement of Axelborg in terms of opening up Axelborg to the outside and bringing in commercial interests.

This dichotomy between Axelborg and the city reveals a reinforcement of the negative portrayals through separation of 'us' and 'them' and by addressing the problem in terms of Axelborg needing to 'open up', it shows the asymmetrical representations used in describing Axelborg whereby the narratives from outside and above dominates among influential stakeholder.

### Scaling AxelGro?

During the event, Steffen and Morten address how the AxelGro project has the potential to be scaled to other housing estates in the non-profit housing sector. By doing so they reveal that their interests are not only in providing a successful project for the residents of Axelborg, but also have larger perspectives and ambitions in expanding the concept to other housing estates in Denmark. Paradoxically, while the AxelGro project has the potential to shape and inspire the future development of the non-profit sector, this ambition comes at the expense of Axelborgs residents, ultimately undermining the projects intended impact.

*"This is something that could be done in many cities, larger or smaller than Horsens, and in various scales. But what makes the project valuable is its scalability. The learning should happen in places other than Horsens, and we certainly believe it can be nationwide."* Steffen (ALBO director)

See Appendix D

*"In the long term, the idea from the project can be scaled out to other cities, but it doesn't necessarily have to be a garden, it could just as well be a sewing room, a bicycle workshop, a sports library."* - Morten (Hele Landet)

See Appendix B *"We try out the idea in reality instead of thinking about something behind a desk. Then we can use the prototype to further develop the project."* - Morten (Hele Landet)

See Appendix E

The AxelGro project, while focused on Axelborg, is seen by stakeholders as a potential model for broader application across Denmark's non-profit housing sector.

Both Steffen (ALBO director) and Morten (Hele Landet) express interest in making AxelGro a replicable initiative that could be scaled to other housing estates. This perspective highlights a shift from viewing the project solely as a community-building tool for Axelborg to seeing it as a prototype for national policy and social integration strategies in other housing estates as well.

Steffens statement underscores the belief that AxelGros successes could serve as a scalable model. His vision positions the project as a learning platform for future renditions of similar projects in other housing estates in the non-profit housing sector. This perspective shows how the interests of ALBO are to position themselves as front runners in the future development of the non-profit housing sector as a whole by changing the negative perceptions of a deprived neighbourhood.

Morten broadens this perspective, suggesting that the AxelGro model could inspire a range of community-based projects beyond urban gardens, like workshops, sports libraries, or bicycle repair centers. This approach reinforces the projects flexibility and aligns with non-profit housing goals of enhancing community life through varied forms of engagement.

Mortens reference to prototyping suggests that AxelGro is intended as a practical test for strategies that can later be refined and expanded. His emphasis on the methods itself by implementing real-world application as a means to fine-tune the model illustrates a desire to scaling the project in ways that meet community-specific needs. However, it is yet to be seen if more renditions are to be applied for developing the idea, since the Neighborhoods for Generations competition concluded in October of 2023.

### 8.3 Conclusive remarks

In conclusion of this section, the ambition to scale the AxelGro project to other housing estates reveals two different perspectives on what scaling would mean in practice. Nonetheless, the project serves a dual purpose, while on one hand serving the local community and strengthening social ties and on the other aiming to influence national policy frameworks in the non-profit housing sector to apply the model elsewhere. However, these two frameworks might risk working against each other, since the focus on influencing national policy might risk overlooking the unique social dynamics that are specific to Axelborg itself.

## Chapter 9

# Conclusion

The AxelGro project offers a lens into the dynamics of territorial stigmatization in Danish non-profit housing to answer the research question: *How does symbolic governance and performative actions in the project AxelGro unintentionally contribute to the (re)production of territorial stigmatization?*

This thesis, reveals that while AxelGro is novel and a response to social challenges within Axelborg, it also embodies various inherent tensions. The project's emphasis on "social mixing" and "integration", while well-intentioned, inadvertently reinforce stigmatizing narratives by framing Axelborg as an isolated community in need of external intervention to align with broader societal norms.

Narratives imposed from outside and above continue to dominate the discourse, inadvertently employing stigmatizing storylines and metaphors that deepen the marginalization of Axelborg and, by extension, the Danish non-profit housing sector. The disparity between residents' utterances and those of external stakeholders reveals a stark contrast in ambitions and hopes for what the AxelGro project can be able to provide which indicates a conflict of interest between the two groups.

Finding that AxelGro indeed and to a certain extent unintentionally contributes to the (re)production of territorial stigmatization. this thesis contributes to the field of territorial stigmatization and symbolic governance by illustrating how policy-driven projects in the non-profit housing sector can paradoxically challenge and reinforce stigma, depending on their framing, language, and implementation.

The findings in the analysis show that there is a need for a shift towards more resident-oriented approaches that prioritize narratives from the community that is being worked with, allowing residents to play a greater role in shaping their envi-

ronment and its external perception. However, it also recognizes that as it stands, the residents are not able to represent themselves, due to a lack of organization. Therefore the AxelGro project has also been a success in the sense of facilitating initial meetups between residents and other stakeholders, which is the foundation for enhancing stronger community ties.



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## **Appendix A**

### **Article: Fagbladet Boligen**

(Koefoed, 2023)

12. SEP. 2023 KL. 11:00

RESIDENT LIFE

SOCIAL HOUSING

# New cultivation community and pop-up restaurant increase unity in Axelborg



Photo: Emilie Koefoed

12. SEP. 2023 KL. 11:00

FREELANCE JOURNALIST

**Emilie Koefoed**



## **With cultivation communities and a pop-up restaurant, Axelborg in Horsen creates unity among residents and a new positive narrative about the residential area.**

**T**he marquee is decorated with flowers from the garden and plant prints from the local school, and there is home-pressed must on the tables. The vegetables are picked a few hours before in the kitchen garden. The festive dinner is made by residents of Axelborg and professional chefs and marks a milestone in the AxelGro project.

During the last three months, the project team, the housing organization Albo and residents have worked to establish a cultivation community in the public housing area Axelborg in Horsens. Before the summer, the residents took part in a plant workshop in Axelborg, and on 6 September 2023 they helped harvest the vegetables and prepare a seven-course party menu – facilitated by professional chefs from the ØsterGRO restaurant in Copenhagen. The dinner was attended by both residents of Axelborg, local zealots and politicians, including the mayor of Horsens, and representatives from Landsbyggefonden.

The idea stems from Landsbyggefonden's international idea competition Neighborhoods for Generations, where the aim is to create meaningful communities across generations.

*The article continues below the picture.*





Photo: Emilie Koefoed

### A new (cultivation) community

Rebecca Busch Kjærulff, who has lived in Axelborg for several years, has been involved in the community garden from the start, and for her the project has already meant a lot.

"I have gained a new community from the project. There are many people I have now met whom I have not spoken to before. And then I got a new hobby. I have learned a lot from the professionals about planting and harvesting"

**Rebecca Busch Kjaerulff**  
resident in Axelborg

Director of the housing organization Albo, Steffen Møller Borgbjerg, also experiences that there is a lot of activity in the garden and that the project creates new meetings and relationships.

"The garden is a new thing that you have in common, and it has clearly created a new unity. The residents are not just involved; they get involved in a way where they are sort of creating a growing community together. In this way, this project will boost the community we already have out here - across generations," he says.





Photo: Emilie Koefoed

## The story of Axelborg

The pop-up restaurant on 6 September is only a foretaste of the final goal: namely to establish a permanent commercial restaurant on the roof of one of the buildings in Axelborg.

"With AxelGro, we have the chance to restart the story of Axelborg. Axelborg has been a tough place many years ago, and that reputation is hard to get rid of. We have a completely different composition of residents today, but the story continues. If we can actually build a restaurant on top of one of the blocks, created and run by the community and across generations, then it will be the story of Axelborg," says Steffen Møller Borgbjerg.

City architect in Horsens, Jesper Pagh, who attended the dinner, also sees an important opportunity to open up the area and integrate it better into the city.

"I definitely think this project can contribute to creating new contexts and create better awareness in the city of Axelborg and perhaps also make it a destination for people coming from outside," he says.

## Read more:

['Thinking outside the b\(l\)ox'](#)



[dsbyggefonden's idea competition and the other winning proposals](#)



## **Appendix B**

### **Article: Horsens Posten**

(A. B. Kristensen, 2023)



The residents of Axelborg have planted a communal garden, from which they will be harvested for use in a future restaurant. On Wednesday, the garden's profits were used in a communal meal. Here you can see from left Steffen Kristensen from ØsterGro, director of Albo Steffen Borbjerg and project manager from Hele Landet Sociale Arkitekter, Morten Petersen. Photo: Astrid Bigum Kristensen

## HORSENS POSTEN

# Axelborg thinks outside the box: The winning project will create common utility gardens and a restaurant on the roof

The residents must take responsibility and help grow ingredients for a restaurant at the top of Axelborg, which in turn will bring the residents together, offer jobs and create joint events. It is the hub of a winning project from an international architectural competition.

07 sep. 2023 kl. 08:33

Astrid Bigum Kristensen [askr@jfm.dk](mailto:askr@jfm.dk)

Horsens: - This will change the story of Axelborg. Years ago, Axelborg had a reputation for being a place where it was unsafe to walk around. Today we are a better place, but some still think that Axelborg is a place where ugly things happen. With this, we can shed light on a well-functioning area, says Steffen Borgbjerg, director of the housing association Albo, which is behind Axelborg.

"By this" he means a completely new project with community, vegetable growing and a restaurant on top of one of the blocks in Axelborg, and the visions are big.

The project must not "just" be a restaurant, it must be a gathering point and community for both residents and guests from the rest of Horsens.



This is how the winning team imagines that the restaurant and the garden on the roof can come to be. Illustration: Hele Landet Sociale Architecter

- The restaurant must be run by a commercial partner. It will be a very small rent, but in return the restaurateur undertakes to give back - both by finding employees among the residents, holding four annual events, holding a free communal meal a week. And at the same time it must be an attraction where the city's citizens also experience that it is beautiful in Axelborg with a view of the fjord from the restaurant, explains project manager Morten Petersen from the company Hele Landet - Sociale Arkitekter.

The project is one of four winning projects from this spring's architectural competition "Neighbourhoods for Generations", which Landsbyggefonden was behind. Here, Axelborg was selected as one of two cases. the participating teams could work with.

The winning project, entitled "Thinking Outside the B(l)ox", was created by Hele Landet - Sociale Arkitekter in collaboration with the Zealand roof farm ØsterGRO and Andreas Høegh from AH Advice.

## **Party menu from the communal garden**

Wednesday culminated several months of work with both the planting of the garden, interviews with the residents and countless meetings with the municipality and other partners.





Children from 2.D. at Horsens Byskole Lindvigsvej took the teaching out of the classroom and visited Axelborg, where they learned how to juice apples. Photo: Astrid Bigum Kristensen

- Today we had a school class out making applesauce. We have that because with the project we want to open up Axelborg, let the area's school classes come and learn in the facilities in the utility gardens. It is also a way to build a bridge from Axelborg and the surrounding city, explains Morten Petersen.

In the early summer, the residents of Axelborg planted a vegetable garden, and during Wednesday the crops were harvested, because they were to be used for the evening's festive dinner, which the chefs from ØsterGro were in charge of, while the vegetable gardens were replanted with new crops.

- Here in Axelborg, we start from the utility gardens and have established a community garden, because there is already a well-functioning community around the gardens. In the long term, the idea from the project can be scaled out to other cities, but it doesn't necessarily have to be a garden, it could just as well be a



sewing room, a bicycle workshop, a sports library, says Morten Petersen.



Teaching was moved out of the classroom and into Axelborg, where the teaching of "from garden to stomach" was on the program. Photo: Astrid Bigum Kristensen

## Long views

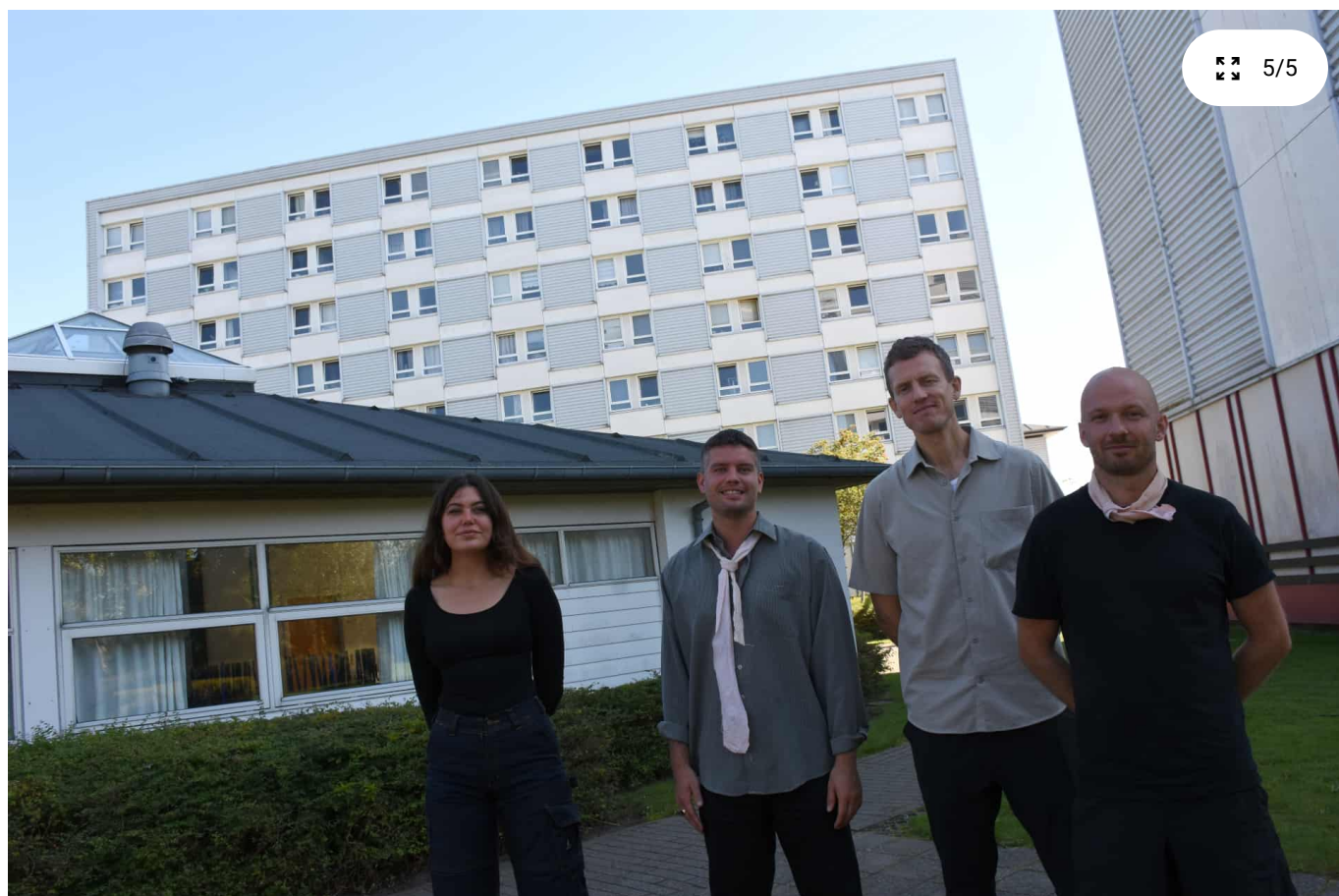
But the work is far from over. Because building a restaurant on top of a block of flats is not something that happens overnight.

- We are ambitious and we want to realize the project. But money must be sought, because it must not cost the residents extra. And it may take a long time before anything concrete happens, but the community garden is underway, and the idea of community and involvement can still be worked with down here on earth, says Steffen Borgbjerg.

A total of 115 proposals from all over the world entered the competition, of which 79 were selected for evaluation. Four winners were appointed, of which Axelborg is

the center for the two. The project "Nursing the Care" was also selected here.

Locally, Insero Horsens, Familien Hansens Fond and Sønderbro Kulturhus Fond have supported the creation of the project's test day.



Axelborg years ago had a tarnished reputation. The new project will turn the large apartment blocks into a cozy meeting place and an attraction for the rest of the city. Here you can see architect Nella Qvist, project manager Michael Petersen, urban developer Andreas Høegh and director of Østergro, Steffen Kristensen. Photo: Astrid Bigum Kristensen

## Tonight's menu

COLD DISHES:



## **Appendix C**

### **Article: Landsbyggefonden**

(Landsbyggefonden, 2023)

LBF / News / Tasteful urban development for all ages in Horsens



## Tasteful urban development for all ages in Horsens

A seven-course celebratory dinner with local produce from Axelborg in Horsens is one of the first concrete results of the Landsbyggefonden's idea competition Neighborhoods for Generations. The ideas from the competition must inspire how we can now and in the future live together across generations.

The late summer sun is beating down on the new community garden in Axelborg, where a handful of residents are watering and planting new ones and exchanging good advice about fertiliser.

Carrots, onions and herbs stand neatly in rows, and there is not a shadow of weeds.

Today's harvest on September 6 is part of a seven-course celebratory dinner prepared by residents and professional chefs.

## **Urban development that can be felt – and tasted**

The festive dinner is a test of the idea of creating a restaurant on top of one of the apartment blocks, which stems from the Landsbyggefonden's international idea competition Neighborhoods for Generations.

The demographic development means that there is a need to investigate new ways of living and communities that can bring the generations together, create meaningful connections between people and combat loneliness.

The pop-up project AxelGro Horsens is the embodiment of a winning proposal from the conference, namely 'Thinking outside the b(l)ox'

This and the other three winning proposals in the Landsbyggefonden's idea competition must inspire the entire public sector to think new.

The AxelGro project can inspire the housing associations to use the Act on side activities in general housing associations.

The agenda to create future generational neighborhoods will now and in the future be of decisive importance.

With Neighborhoods for Generations, Landsbyggefonden has helped to start the conversation - and AxelGro is a concrete contribution to the ongoing debate about how we should live together across generations in the future.

## **The winning projects – in their own words**

## **The goal is a permanent restaurant**

The goal is for residents and an external company to jointly establish a permanent commercial restaurant on the roof of one of the buildings in Axelborg.

The ingredients must come from the community garden, which was planted three months ago with a plant workshop for the residents.

The winning and project team consists of the advisory company Hele Landet in collaboration with AH Advice and ØsterGro, which is Denmark's first rooftop farm.

ØsterGro is a well-tested concept that shows that communities around food can bring together many generations.

The young people are often interested in getting a student job, while the busy families with children appreciate participating in communal meals, and the seniors have the time and desire to look after a vegetable garden.

Today's festive dinner is an attempt to test the whole idea in one day - from harvesting to preparation and serving:

"It's urban development that people can feel," explains Morten Kirkeby Petersen, urban planner at the company Hele Landet.



Morten Kirkeby Petersen, urban planner at the company Hele Landet, who was behind one of the four winning proposals in the Landsbyggefonden's idea competition.

"We try out the idea in reality instead of thinking about something behind a desk. Then we can use the prototype to further develop the project," he says and continues:

"But in addition, we can also use the physical framework and the activities we do as a platform for dialogue with residents and citizens".

"Instead of a boring citizens' meeting, our experience is that we get more qualified inputs when we stand on the spot and can see and point and touch. It's about making the abstract future concrete in the present, " he concludes.

[Read more about the idea 'Thinking outside the b\(l\)ox' here .](#)

## Matchmaking with new partners

The pop-up restaurant on September 6 provides the opportunity to connect different people and actors.

Out of the 100 dinner guests, 75 are residents, and the last 25 are local actors: the mayor, the city architect and people from various administrative areas relevant to the project, including education, employment and culture and leisure.

"After all, this is also a matchmaking process. The core task for us is to ensure some local anchoring, because we are not going to run it," points out Morten Kirkeby Petersen and continues:

"That is why from the start we have also worked together with Boligforeningen Albo and the social housing unit BoTrivsel, because they are the ones who have the network and the contact with the residents."

He also emphasizes the importance of securing a binding partnership, where the commercial partner can be allowed to run a business on the housing association's premises without paying a high rent.

In return, the partner then gives something back to the housing area in the form of e.g. communal dining, jobs for the residents and access to organic vegetables.





Gardening brings together several generations and cultures, and good advice and knowledge about plant species and cultivation is exchanged.

[See TVSyd's report from the evening.](#)

## **The community flourishes at the same time as the kitchen garden**

The apple press is still standing in front of the community hall. The must for today's feast has been pressed by a 2nd grader from the local school and is now bottled with the label "AxelGro in bottle."





The celebratory dinner on 6 September attracted residents of all ages and across cultures, as well as neighbours, local zealots and political actors.

The project has helped to strengthen the community in the residential area, says Rebecca Busch Kjærulff, who has lived in Axelborg for a few years and who has been involved in maintaining the kitchen garden from the start. Today she just planted spinach.

"There are many people I have seen around who I have only now started talking to with the project. And it's really everyone who comes to the garden," she says and continues:

"I've had my little niece out here, who is three years old, so it's everyone from her age and also many older people."

## The project is helping to restart the story of Axelborg

It was just decided at a residents' meeting last week that the garden should be a permanent community garden, says director of Albo, Steffen Møller Borgbjerg.



Steffen Møller Borgbjerg, director of the housing organization Albo, is closely involved in the AxelGro project. He clearly notices that there is a lot of activity in the garden.

"This is an offer that will bring the generations together in a new way. There is already an incredible amount of community out here. We have a super well-functioning bank club, but that's only one segment," he points out and continues:

"Some others cook together in groups; it's a different segment. AxelGro stays across generations. This is what we see the value in," he asserts.

Like many other residential areas from the same period, Axelborg is somewhat isolated, in a triangle between some major roads and the railway line.

AxelGro is a chance to open up the area and restart the story of Axelborg, explains Steffen Møller Borgbjerg:

"Axelborg has been a tough place many years ago, and that reputation is hard to get rid of. We have a completely different composition of residents today, but the story continues," he reports, alluding to the fact that a change in image typically does not come by itself. Visible mental markers are needed – in this case, a rooftop restaurant.

Steffen Møller Borgbjerg continues:

"If we can actually build a restaurant on top of one of the blocks, created and run by the community and across generations, then that will be the story of Axelborg."



0:00 / 1:09



## **AxelGro shows a way to a more mixed city**

The city architect in Horsens, Jesper Pagh, joins the celebratory dinner and talks between two of the seven courses:



Jesper Pagh, city architect in Horsens, was one of the guests at the celebratory dinner on 6 September and follows the project with great interest.

"We have an overarching mission, like many other municipalities, to create a mixed city with mixed residential areas. The project harmonizes with that mission by being able to create new contexts," he asserts.

Horsens, like many other cities, is characterized by the fact that different population groups and generations typically gather in different neighbourhoods. But in the general housing area in Horsens, it has succeeded in creating a different development, he believes:

"Here in Axelborg, where there is actually a very mixed population composition, also generationally, it is important to try to stick to that as much as we possibly can."

## **Appendix D**

### **Minifilm**

**Transcription of short film of AxelGro event produced by**  
**Hele Landet – Social Architects**  
**(English translation)**

Date: 06/09/2023

Location: Axelborg, Horsens

Speakers: ØsterGro representative, Steffen Borgbjerg (ALBO Director), Alexandra Sørensen (School Teacher), Eva (resident), Mohammed (resident), Janni (resident), and Peter Sørensen (Horsens Mayor)

**[00:00] Opening Scene – Welcoming the Residents and Schoolchildren**

*[Drone footage shows the Axelborg blocks and the adjacent garden. The camera shifts to people in the garden talking, and tools being distributed to the residents]*

**[00:19] ØsterGro Representative:**

"Wow, it's turned out so beautifully! You are amazing!"

*[The camera pans over the garden, showing neat rows of vegetables]*

"Just look at this, it's one of the most beautiful rows. I'm so happy with those leeks and carrot beds."

*[Schoolchildren from the local elementary school arrive]*

**[00:31] Steffen Borgbjerg (ALBO Director):**

"It's been difficult to explain what it's really about until now when we can show it and involve them. We are happy that many residents have chosen to get involved. So we are very excited to see how the day and evening turn out."

*[The camera shows children pressing apples and making apple cider]*

**[00:45] Alexandra Sørensen (School Teacher):**

"They don't know much about where the food comes from, so I think today they'll experience, 'Oh, this is how you make apple juice.' You can use apples for more than just eating, and you can use nature to create art."

*[The camera shows children making flower prints on fabric]*

"They are making flower prints, so they get an experience of 'from soil to table.' It gives so much more to be outside and try things, instead of reading them in a book or looking at a screen, which is what you do a lot in schools. When you come to a place like this, the children become more interested and motivated. It also gives some ideas about how we can use nature to create cool lessons."

*[The camera shows the children holding up their pressed apple cider in bottles labeled "AxelGro"]*

**[01:34] ØsterGro Representative:**

"I brought two kinds of scissors."

**[01:37] Eva (Resident):**

"I think it's great that they can do something like this because it brings people together. You get to know other people, right? The sense of community when talking with people, right? It's lovely!"

**[01:48] ØsterGro Representative:**

"And then you can simply twist it off!"

**[01:50] Mohammed (Resident):**

"Community too. When others work in our garden, they take breaks and talk with each other – with people from different nationalities. When I pick some vegetables, my neighbor picks other kinds, and we cook together, relax, and talk with each other. Of course, it's great!"

*[The camera pans to the handover of crops from the garden to the kitchen]*

**[02:15] Janni (Resident):**

"If we can strengthen the bond between the different cultures here in another way than what we have now, it'll be fantastic. Also, for the young people – children and young people – specifically to avoid trouble, which we otherwise have. So we can become one big family."

**[02:34] Transition to evening with Jazz Music as People Gather**

**[02:39] Peter Sørensen (Horsens Mayor):**

"It really ties into many other great projects. Where we perhaps are a bit weaker is where it's been harder to get Axelborg to connect with the surrounding community. But a project like this can certainly help to tap into that."

*[The camera shows people greeting and socializing]*

**[02:56] Steffen Borgbjerg (ALBO Director):**

"We want AxelGro to become a permanent thing because we believe it is a solution. This is a community that is truly unique because it can bring generations together."

*[The camera shows communal singing]*



"This is something that could be done in many cities, larger or smaller than Horsens, and in various scales. But what makes the project valuable is its scalability. The learning should happen in places other than Horsens, and we certainly believe it can be nationwide."

*[The camera shows the meals being served to the guests]*

**[03:28] Peter Sørensen (Horsens Mayor):**

"Tonight is also, of course, about celebrating this project, which I, as mayor, think is important to support. People in Axelborg deserve this just as much as anyone else."

*[Drone footage zooms out, showing the Axelborg block in the distance]*

## **Appendix E**

# **Project description**

(Landsbyggefonden, 2022)

# Open Call: Neighbour- hoods for Generations

Idea competition

December 2022 - February 17th 2023



We want  
your ideas!

# Content

3	Invitation
7	Challenges
21	Jury
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Neighbourhoods for Generations is an idea competition created by Landsbyggefonden (The National Building Fund).

The competition material is developed by The National Building Fund with contribution from the following partners.

**Gehl** ARKITEKTKONKURRENCERDK

# The National Building Fund calls for ambitious, innovative, and creative ideas to develop Neighbourhoods for Generations.

Neighbourhoods for Generations are places that invite for sociability and mutual support, where people of all ages are seen and valued as members of their stairwell, housing block, and neighbourhood.



## Challenges

Due to demographic changes and urbanisation, cities and neighbourhoods are facing multiple, converging challenges including a lack of affordable housing, an increase in social segregation, poor access to health and social services, and worsening rates of mental health. How can we form more socially sustainable and affordable places for people of all ages to live and rethink the way we plan, organise, live and interact in our cities?

## Global challenges call for interdisciplinary solutions

We call on people of all professions, backgrounds, and levels of seniority to submit ideas contributing to the development of the Neighbourhoods for Generations concept. From academic groups and departments, to urban strategy and design firms, housing start ups, public service providers and social support services, to name a few, we encourage interdisciplinary submissions from all relevant sectors. We encourage fresh proposals, but also welcome innovative ideas and concepts from other contexts.

**Be awarded up to  
500,000 DKK to  
develop and showcase  
your idea**

Projects, concepts, and activities included under the heading Neighbourhoods for Generations concept could be:

- Urban space design, strategy, & programming
- Service system design
- Housing & neighbourhood typologies
- Digital tools & apps
- Communication & engagement platforms
- Community process design
- Art & Play installations

## Develop your idea with financial support and showcase it to the world

The four most innovative ideas submitted will be selected as winners of the competition. In addition up to 10 ideas will receive honourable mentions on the website and be part of the competition's exhibition.

The four selected ideas will receive financial support and expert advice to develop and adapt ideas to one of two case sites in Axelborg and Høje Gladsaxe, Denmark. The winning ideas that are developed will be exhibited in Copenhagen and presented at the UIA World Congress of Architects and the Danish Non-profit housing sector's 'Almene Boligdage' - all part of Copenhagen being the World Capital of Architecture 2023 (<https://copenhagenincommon.kk.dk/en>), a major forum for discussing the future of our cities.

Winning teams will receive:

- 350,000 DKK (excluding VAT) to finance further development of the initial pitch.
- A dedicated profile on the Neighbourhoods for Generations website.
- Expert support and advice from Neighbourhoods for Generations' secretariat and partners during a development process.
- Exhibition in Copenhagen as part of World Capital of Architecture 2023 to an international audience, the non-profit housing sector and general public.
- Access to, and participation in, debates at UIA World Congress of Architects and Almene Boligdage.
- Up to 150,000 DKK (excluding VAT) to cover exhibition materials, construction, and maintenance. Of which, up to 35,000 DKK (excluding VAT) to cover travel and accommodation costs associated with participation expenses in Copenhagen.

# We want your ideas!

The National Building Fund invites you to help shape the future of non-profit housing through this open call, leading to an exhibition and opportunities to share your thoughts during the World Capital of Architecture in Copenhagen 2023.

<b>Dec 2022</b>	Open Call	<b>Competition start</b>
<b>17 Feb 2023</b>	Open Call	<b>Deadline for submitting ideas</b>
<b>27 Mar 2023</b>	Assesment	<b>Results and winners notified</b>
<b>Apr - May 2023</b>	Further development	<b>Dialogue with winning teams</b>
<b>May 2023</b>	Announcement	<b>Winners and honourable mentions announced</b>
<b>Jun 2023</b>	Exhibition	<b>Exhibiton opens</b>
<b>2 - 6 Jul 2023</b>	Participation	<b>UIA World Congress of Architects</b>
<b>30 Sep 2023</b>	Participation	<b>Almene Boligdage</b>



# How can we rethink the neighbourhood for generations, inviting people of different ages to live together and share their skills and time?

A Neighbourhood for Generations unites urban design and social infrastructure. It's a place that recognises different people's daily needs and gives space for interaction and common activities that encourage mutual support and local community.



The world around us is changing faster than ever before. Longer lifespans, fewer births, an ageing population, smaller households, and more people moving to the city, are all drivers that characterise the demographic changes that Europe is facing – and consequently, the way we plan, inhabit, and live in cities must follow.

The demographic changes and urbanisation entails a number of consequences for 1) **people's mental health**, where one out of many problems is the increase in the number of lonely people across generations, 2) **urban areas** experiencing growing segregation and social inequality, and 3) the quality of and access to **welfare services**.

With these challenges a number of opportunities and possibilities arise:

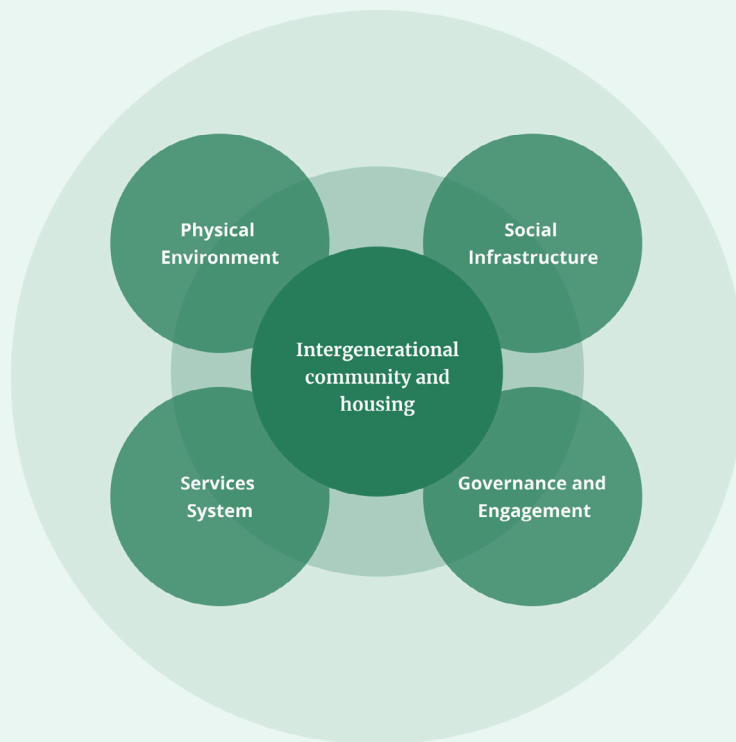
- The increase in the number of active seniors represent untapped resources for civil society and local communities.
- New family structures and more seniors create a demand for new forms of living and housing typologies.
- Opportunities to promote new shared facilities arise when more people will need to share limited space.
- Predefined perceptions of engagement and participation, service systems and institutional structures have the potential to be rethought according to values and mindsets of new generations.

## Intergenerational community and housing

The vision is that the neighbourhoods of the future are characterised by intergenerational communities and housing. The Neighbourhoods for Generations concept recognises the role of different people, young and old, providing the space and occasions for meaningful interaction and mutual support as a natural part of daily life.

The intergenerational concept characterises a community where people of different ages are brought closer through cooperation, interaction, and exchange. Today many urban neighbourhoods are inherently multigenerational, with several generations living in the same area, but few of them succeed in bridging generations.

Creating an intergenerational neighbourhood is an ongoing, long-term, process, where innovation is required at all levels to challenge how we shape societies today. To exemplify what this means, four important planning components are highlighted in the competition.



### Physical Environment

A Neighbourhood for Generations should meet the spatial needs for all ages including public spaces, shared facilities, housing typologies, streets, and infrastructure. The physical environment - from the home to the surrounding neighbourhood - holds the potential to create inviting places that can be the stage for everyday activities and support a thriving neighbourhood community for all generations.

### Social Infrastructure

A Neighbourhood for Generations should meet the social needs for all ages, incomes, statuses, identities, and beyond. The social infrastructures of a neighbourhood - local networks, community organisations, work spaces, cultural functions - all hold the potential to foster social interaction and meetings across generations. The quality of social infrastructure in communities affects the well-being, social networks, the shared community experience, and sense of belonging and identity.

### Governance and Engagement

A Neighbourhood for Generations should include and engage people of all ages. Empowerment, participation in political processes, and opportunities for community involvement are all vital parts of an inclusive neighbourhood. To achieve a nuanced dialogue about how our cities can adapt to the needs of- and be enjoyable for everyone- involvement of all groups of generations is crucial.

### Services System

A Neighbourhood for Generations provides accessible service systems and platforms for residents of all ages. Having high quality and available community based services, such as retail services, public transport systems, health services, home and daycare providers etc. in a neighbourhood does not only strengthen the individual's well-being but also the community as a whole.

## Affordable Housing

Having a good place to live is one of the most important prerequisites for creating a good life for oneself and others. Consequently, decent and affordable housing is central to ensuring a sustainable city and quality of life, as it contributes to reducing inequality and segregation.

In Denmark, affordable housing is secured by the non-profit housing sector. The non-profit housing sector is a unique model and constitutes 20% of the Danish housing stock. Unlike public housing or social housing, non-profit housing is not restricted to low-income families but is available for anyone. The tenants represent 180 nationalities and span broadly on the social and economic scale. However, in general – compared to the national level – the residents in the non-profit housing in Denmark are characterised by lower income, higher unemployment rate, more psychologically vulnerable, and poorer health. Non-profit housing consists of apartments, townhouses and single-family homes in cities, in provincial towns and in the countryside. However, the sector is more than just housing. The non-profit housing areas are communities and places for everyday life and togetherness and are an important part of creating socially sustainable neighbourhoods.

*20% of the Danish housing stock*  
is non-profit housing

*≈ 30 billion DKK*  
has been set aside for renovations in the period 2020-2026

*149.980 homes*  
are currently being renovated

*200.000 citizens*  
in 50 neighbourhoods are affected by social development plans supported by The National Building Fund

**The National Building Fund** can be considered as the Danish non-profit housing's solitary savings account. The National Building Fund supports large-scale renovations, social development plans and activities in challenged housing areas, and rent regulations in the existing housing stock.

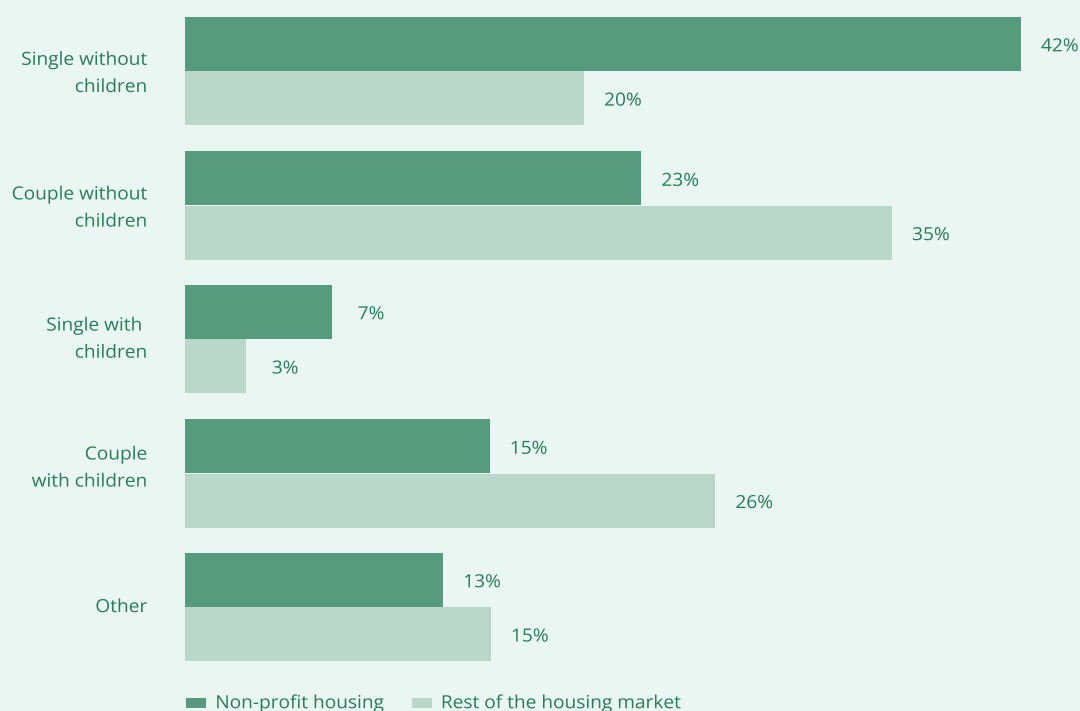
Learn more about the non-profit housing model at <https://lbf.dk/om-lbf/english/>



The Nordic countries have different models to provide affordable housing. In Finland, non-profit rental and right of occupancy housing companies and foundations, such as HEKA, are providing reasonably priced rental housing. In Norway, housing allowances' is the main way to secure affordable housing, though cooperative housing still represents a small but important affordable housing supply. In Sweden, affordable housing is mainly provided by municipality owned public housing companies, and also by the two national cooperative housing organisations HSB and Riksbyggen.

### Family types in non-profit and profit housing

The graph shows the difference between family types living in the Danish non-profit housing and the rest of the danish housing stock.



*Source: BL calculations based on data from The National Building Funds Beboerstatistik, Danmarks Statistik og register data. 2022.*

The non-profit housing sector has historically been a key player for innovation within housing in Denmark. Aspirational visions and ideologies of healthy welfare housing were the driving force behind many of the investments in non-profit housing projects of the 60 and 70s. These projects were characterised by monofunctional district, housing blocks, and a greater degree of private automobile ownership. In the decades that followed, neighbourhoods built around these ideal concepts became less attractive. Today, low income groups are increasingly concentrated in certain areas and are less likely to use the opportunities and services found in the city.

The non-profit housing sector now again strives to be innovative in the development of cities, neighbourhoods and communities. With the aim to be a key urban strategic partner in urban development, the Danish non-profit housing sector wishes to receive new creative and visionary ideas for socially sustainable neighbourhoods of the future. This is not only relevant for the development of new neighbourhoods but also for the development of existing non-profit housing areas to prepare them for the challenges of the future.

## Two cases for inspiration

Two existing non-profit housing areas in Denmark have been selected as cases: Axelborg and Høje Gladsaxe. The cases are to be viewed as inspiration and to give concrete examples on non-profit housing areas in terms of size, location, residents groups, as well as to highlight current challenges and potentials that non-profit housing are facing today.

Based on interviews with residents and housing organisations representatives, six topics have been highlighted to show the potentials for each area. The topics have been chosen to give inspiration on how the neighbourhoods can support an intergenerational community and housing in the future.

The six topics are as follows:

- #1 Strengthen civil society
- #2 Support the connection to the city
- #3 Create and facilitate meaningful meetings across cultures and ages
- #4 Offer flexible housing to every life situation
- #5 Support an inclusive citizen involvement
- #6 Encourage intergenerational understanding

## Axelborg, Horsens

Axelborg is a non-profit housing area built in 1962-66 located in Horsens, Denmark. Axelborg is currently facing a large-scale physical renovation and wishes to be presented with new and innovative ideas for how they can use the momentum to safeguard housing and community in the neighbourhood in the future. The development consists of ten blocks with 3-8 floors.

*Watch the video of Axelborg at <https://neighbourhoodsforgenerations.com/challenges> or find it at iBinder*

With approximately 603 residents in 284 tenancies with 1-4 rooms, the average of people per household is 2.1. The majority of the households consist of single people without children. 20 of the apartments are youth housing.

Axelborg takes social responsibility and houses more people receiving social security benefits than the rest of the municipality and is therefore supported with a social development plan. The plan supports, among other things, a women's network and a job cafe that helps unemployed residents in their job search.

### #1 Strengthen civil society

*Guiding questions: How can we rethink organisation and planning to facilitate civic engagement? Which activities, digital platforms, processes etc. can enhance civic engagement and bridge generations? How can we reduce barriers to engage new generations and create a new social norm of volunteering?*

*Civil society and volunteerism helps to ensure a strong sense of cohesion and ability to act, and is one of the cornerstones in non-profit housing areas. In the social housing development plan, activities, and events in Axelborg are supported and planned. In recent years, however, there has been a decline in the number of volunteers. Many residents' perceived expectations of obligations and responsibilities of volunteers can act as a deterrent. This is also a general trend that is reflected in the rest of society. Young people in particular want to participate actively, but on a smaller and more non-committal scale. Volunteering is moving away from permanent commitment to episodic volunteering, which requires increased planning.*

## The neighbourhood and its surroundings

The area is located in the south-western part of Horsens, 1.5 km from the train station and city centre. At a local scale, Axelborg is in close proximity to schools, day care centres, and a limited selection of retail. A cycle highway, which will connect the area with the city centre, train station and campus area, is currently being planned in collaboration with the municipality.

Personal interests and initiatives, such as allotment gardens and barbecue spots, can be seen in the outdoor space. There is a Resident's House, which can be used year round by the residents and people from nearby non-profit housing areas.

For the upcoming renovation, Axelborg has been granted financial support from the National Building Fund to rethink its infrastructure, with the purpose to strengthen the overall attractiveness of the residential area. The project aims to give the entire area a new and inviting character, which supports the experience of a welcoming, open, and inclusive place that is an integral part of the surrounding city and the centre of Horsens.

### #2 Support the connection to the city

*Guiding questions: How can we break down mental and physical barriers and create an attractive neighbourhood for all generations? Which programming can contribute to positive associations of the neighbourhood? How can collaborations with local stakeholders and institutions be an active part in creating an intergenerational neighbourhood?*

*Axelborg is a monofunctional housing area and is perceived as isolated from the rest of the city. Interaction with surrounding areas and citizens is limited, despite many institutions in the surrounding areas and attractive public outdoor facilities in Axelborg, such as a new flexible sports field. In similarity with many non-profit housing areas in Denmark, a few negative stories from the press have contributed to a stigmatised image of the area. The negative perceptions of the areas is a barrier to creating an attractive and integrated neighbourhood, that also risks further excluding marginalised groups.*





1. Daycare, 2. Retail, 3. Supermarket, 4. Gas station, 5. Elderly housing, 6. Flexible sports field, 7. Playground, 8. Allotment gardens, 9. Barbecue, 10. Community house, 11. Laundry, 12. Restaurant, 13. School, 14. Culture house, 15. Saloon, 16. Petanque

## An increase in the number of seniors

Axelborg has a younger composition of residents than the rest of the municipality, with less than 10% being over 65 years of age. But according to the population projections for the municipality as a whole, the number of seniors is expected to rise exponentially in the coming years, also in Axelborg.

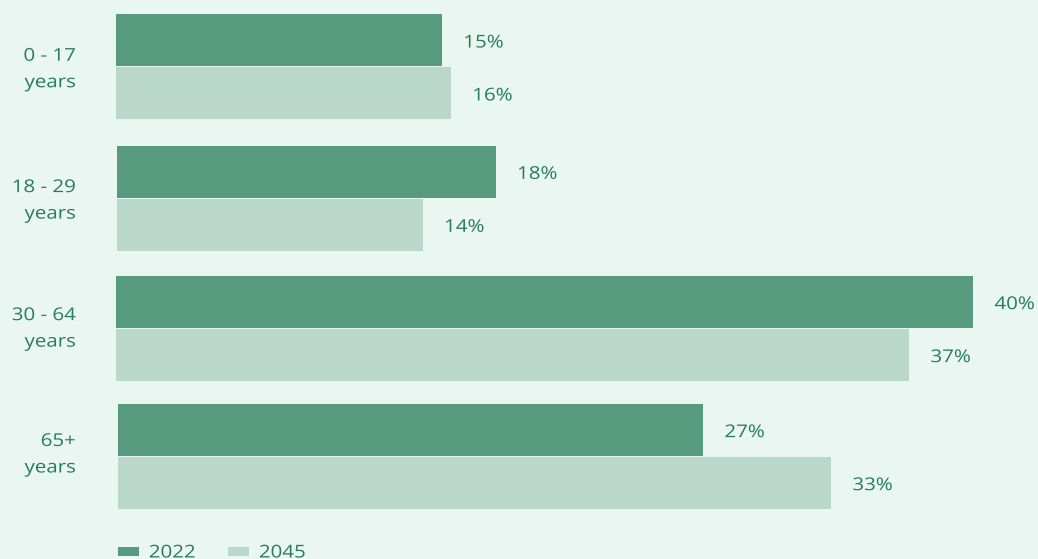
### #3 Create and facilitate meaningful meetings across cultures and ages

*Guiding questions: How can we facilitate positive meetings that break down barriers between cultures and ages? Which social, spatial, and digital resources can strengthen the cohesion in the neighbourhood? How can we create opportunities for intergenerational activities and shared encounters in the city?*

*Meaningful meetings with people who are different from us (ie. in age, cultural or ethnic background etc.) help us become more knowledgeable about ourselves, each other, and the world. There is a tendency in Axelborg, and in general, towards a greater degree of segregated communities, with lack of integration. This is a trend that characterises most cities, where segregation is reflected in everyday life - in schools and institutions, informal meetings in public spaces, on the labour market, etc.*

### Non-profit housing residents in Horsens Municipality by age group

The future non-profit housing tenants in Horsen's municipality are expected to consist of a noticeable larger group of seniors compared to the municipality's current non-profit housing tenants.



Source: The National Building Funds calculations based on data from The National Building Funds Stamdata and Danmarks Statistik, population pr. 1st of January 2021 and 2022 (BEF2021 and BEF2022).

## Høje Gladsaxe, Greater Copenhagen

Høje Gladsaxe was built in the 60's and was, at that time, the most modern and advanced prefabricated construction. The non-profit housing area is one of the most important and iconic examples of modernist architecture in Denmark. Høje Gladsaxe has been selected as a case for inspiration due to both the area's history but also because of the current urban strategic development which consists of a close collaboration between the area's five housing organisations and the municipality. The aim of the collaboration is to develop and strengthen Høje Gladsaxe as a neighbourhood and as an attractive place to live.

*Watch the video of Høje Gladsaxe at <https://neighbourhoodsforgenerations.com/challenges> or find it at iBinder*

Høje Gladsaxe contains five 15-storey blocks, two 8-storey blocks and a row of low-rise buildings with around 2,000 apartments from 1 to 5-bedrooms. On average, there are 2.1 residents per household, with the majority being single people without children. On average, Høje Gladsaxe has fewer couples with children than residents in the rest of the municipality.

### #4 Offer flexible housing to every life situation

*Guiding questions: How can a neighbourhood be attractive to all generations and different life situations? Which typologies can offer a more flexible housing? Which initiatives can support a more flexible moving pattern based on changing life situations?*

*In Høje Gladsaxe, the different sizes of the apartments provide housing for different living situations and needs. Some residents in Høje Gladsaxe have lived there all their lives, from when they were children to seniors and have moved inside of the area as a result of changing housing needs - for example when children move away from their parental home. But there is also a tendency for residents to move out of the area when they start a family, as they do not find that the area meets the housing needs of a family with children. The apartments which do meet family needs are in high demand and have a long waiting list and are often occupied by single families without kids - in general the more rooms, the longer people stay in their homes.*



## The neighbourhood and its surroundings

Høje Gladsaxe contains and is surrounded by many different facilities and institutions. The original idea of Høje Gladsaxe was to create a small-town community within the area with the required amenities needed for all ages. In general, the residents of Høje Gladsaxe hold a great pride in the area. They especially appreciate the affordability of the housing, the green area, and the proximity to different facilities.



1. Daycare, 2. Playground, 3. Public School, 4. After-school centre, 5. Church, 6. Youth club, 7. Local police station, 8. Supermarket, 9. Library and community center for general public, 10. Retail, 11. Restaurant, 12. Allotment gardens, 13. Barbecue, 14. Community room, 15. Grocery store, 16. Frisbee golf, 17. Sport fields, 18. Taekwon-do, 19. Gas station, 20. Bus stop, 21. Swimming hall, 22. Racket sport, 23. Bowling, 24. Stadium, 25. Ice skating, 26. Soft ball, 27. Hairdresser, 28. Arena for recreation and activities, 29. Community space for residents, 30. Horses, 31. Petting zoo

## Participation and civil society

An active and rich community with more than 50 local activities and initiatives is a unique characteristic of Høje Gladsaxe. But as with many activities and interests, several of these are typically age- and nationally-based communities. The same applies to the resident democracy, where the democratic process sometimes struggles to attract younger generations.

### #5 Support an inclusive citizen involvement

*Guiding questions: How can we qualify citizen involvement and create space for new participation formats? How can we secure representation across all ages with involvement while recognising the heterogeneity of each generation? How can we make sure that every generation has a say in the shaping of their neighbourhood?*

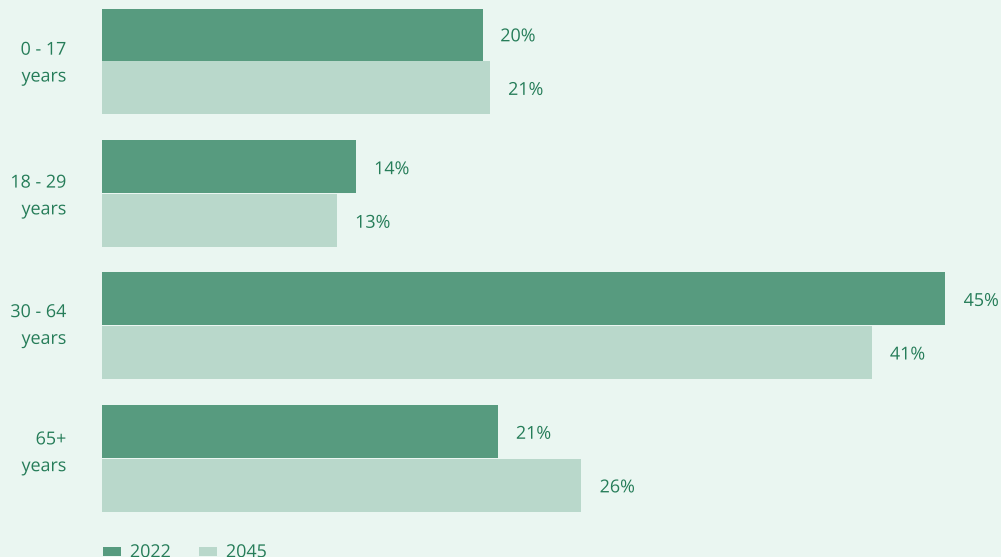
*Tenant democracy is one of the three pillars of the Danish non-profit housing model and gives the tenant influence over their own housing area. The democracy model consists of formal structures and guidelines, which do not necessarily agree with the tendencies that young people want in relation to participation in association communities. Recent years, some housing organisations have been challenged with a decline in participation across generations - a challenge also known in Høje Gladsaxe. It has been difficult to attract new generations and cultures to participate in the formal decision-making fora.*

## A diverse neighbourhood

Around 4,000 people live in Høje Gladsaxe with a large diversity both in terms of age, household types, cultures, and life situations. The housing association and the municipality have a joint strategic goal for Høje Gladsaxe to reflect the surrounding city. In the future citizens in Gladsaxe Municipality and in non-profit housing areas are expected to consist of a larger group of seniors compared to the municipality's current non-profit housing tenants but is also expected to still consist of a lot of families with children and teenagers.

## Non-profit housing residents in Gladsaxe Municipality by age group

The future non-profit housing tenants in Gladsaxe's municipality are expected to consist of a noticeable larger group of seniors compared to the municipality's current non-profit housing tenants.



Source: The National Building Funds calculations based on data from The National Building Funds Stamdata and Danmarks Statistik, population pr. 1st of January 2021 and 2022 (BEF2021 and BEF2022).

## #6 Encourage intergenerational understanding

*Guiding questions: How can we challenge age-based assumptions about people? How can we improve the experience and perception of safety in the neighbourhood including physical and social safety, for all generations? How can locally based services, platforms, and technologies be imagined differently in order to build trust and interactions between generations?*

*Assumptions about people based on their age are often misleading and can be a barrier to bridge generations. One of the challenges Høje Gladsaxe is facing today is low perception of safety in the neighbourhood. When talking to the residents in Høje Gladsaxe it shows that part of the low perception of safety derives from negative assumptions about especially young people and their behaviour in public spaces. In general, perception of safety is influenced by spatial and social circumstances and varies across generations. Experience and perception of safety is an important factor for people's overall wellbeing.*



# Meet the Nordic Jury

The jury consists of strong interdisciplinary profiles within urban planning, design thinking, social sustainability, citizen engagement, affordable housing, collaboration and partnerships, community building, and more from the Nordic countries.

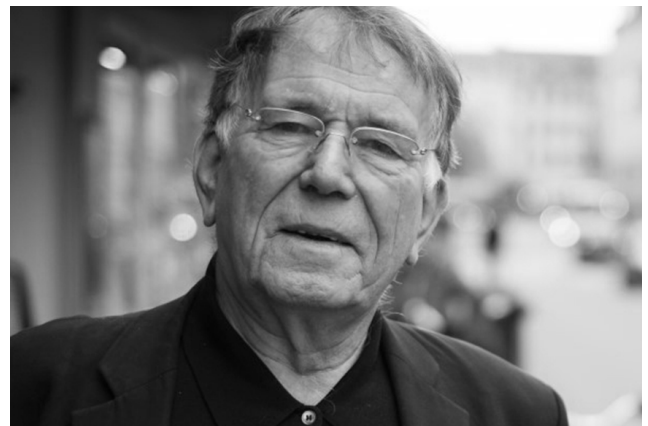


## Natalie Mossin

Head of Institute, the Royal Danish Academy – Institute of Architecture and Technology

Focus area: Sustainable development in build environment, partnerships, and innovations

Natalie is Head of Institute at the Royal Danish Academy - Institute of Architecture and Technology. She is a Vice-president of the UIA as well as President of Congress for the UIA World Congress of Architects in 2023.



## Jan Gehl

Professor, Architect Maa, Founding Partner Gehl

Focus area: People-centred urban design, public spaces, urban planning

Jan is an Architect, Founding Partner of Gehl Architects, and former Professor and Researcher at The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, School of Architecture. Over the course of his career, he has published several books and been awarded numerous national and international awards.



### **Hanna Harris**

Chief Design Officer, City of Helsinki

Focus area: Design thinking, collaborations, citizen engagement

Hanna is the Chief Design Officer of the City of Helsinki. She holds a licentiate of Social Sciences and Urban Research and is specialised in making architecture and design visible, and making use of the opportunities they present in society.



### **Mikkel Warming**

Head of Development, 3B

Mikkel is Head of Development for the non-profit housing association 3B with approximately 12,000 non-profit housing units in Copenhagen. Earlier, Mikkel has been chief of social development plans and social initiatives in 3B. Before joining 3B Mikkel was Mayor for Social Affairs in the City of Copenhagen from 2005 to 2013.



### **Steffen Møller Borgbjerg**

Director, ALBO

Steffen is director of ALBO, Horsens's largest non-profit organisation that manages 55% of all the non-profit housing in Horsens - including Axelborg. Steffen has been in the non-profit housing sector for more than 15 years. He holds a master's degree in Business Administration.



### **Finn Williams**

City Architect of Malmö

Focus area: Public sector, placemaking, urban regeneration

Finn is the City Architect of Malmö. He was one of the co-founders and CEO of Public Practice in London; a social enterprise that is building the public sector's capacity for proactive planning.





### **Christian Pagh (head of jury)**

Director and Chief Curator of the Oslo Architecture Triennale

Focus areas: social, cultural, and artistic aspects of urban development

Christian Pagh is Director and Chief curator of the Oslo Architecture Triennale. Christian has headed a wide range of projects within urban planning, architecture and culture, both as a partner in the strategic design company Urgent.Agency and in the public sector. He is a lecturer at Copenhagen Business School in Design Thinking and holds a master's degree in Modern Culture and Philosophy from Copenhagen University and Paris VIII. A recurring theme in Christian's practical and academic work is exploring the intricate connections between cultures and places.



### **Gro Sandkjær Hanssen**

Senior researcher at OsloMet and Professor II in Urban and Regional Planning, NMBU

Focus areas: urban planning, climate transition of cities, public space, participation and governance

Gro holds a Ph.d. in political science and is a senior researcher at the Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research (NIBR), OsloMet. She is also a Professor in Urban and Regional Planning (NMBU), educating planners. Her research in urban planning centres around the themes of climate transition, sustainable urban development, public space, participation and governance. She led the evaluation of the Norwegian Planning- and Building Act, and is currently part of The Advisory Board for Urban Architecture of the City of Oslo, and the governmental appointed "2050 Climate Change Committee"- which investigates which choices Norway faces in order to achieve 95% reduction.

# Get ready to submit your project

Tell us about your idea and contribute to the discussion on how we can create neighbourhoods for generations. Get the opportunity to be awarded up to 500,000 DKK to further develop and exhibit your idea to the world.



## The Competition Task

An idea pitch that contributes to creating the intergenerational neighbourhood of the future must be submitted. The idea must address one or more of the described challenges, tendencies and future trends, while also describing how the idea contributes to an intergenerational community and/or housing. The pitch should relate to one or more of the four components of the future Neighbourhood for Generations: physical environment, social infrastructure, system of governance, and service systems. Furthermore, describe how the idea contributes to an intergenerational community and/or housing.

The idea pitch must show how the public housing sector can creatively and innovatively contribute to a socially sustainable neighbourhood and be part of the solution to the challenges of the future.

Submissions should briefly describe initial thoughts at an exhibition of ideas that is realistic within an area/space of max 8 m<sup>2</sup> and within the budget of up to 115.000 DKK (excluding VAT) in expenses for exhibition materials, construction of exhibition, maintenance etc.

Download the submission template on iBinder or  
<https://neighbourhoodsforgenerations.com/submit>

## Submission requirements

- Submission template must be filled out and submitted on iBinder
- In addition to the template the submission can be supplemented with text descriptions, photos, illustrations, drawings, diagrams etc. The additional material must not exceed 10 pages in A4.
- The submission template and additional submitted material must be uploaded at iBinder in digital form, as a PDF, in A4 format.
- Entries are to be submitted anonymous and in English
- The submitted material must be anonymous and marked on the frontpage and filename with the 6-digit id-number from iBinder (find ID under 'Submit your entry') and a project name.
- In addition to the idea pitch, the identification template on iBinder with contact information and team description must be filled out and submitted on iBinder.

- Submissions are welcome, but not limited, to adapting the idea pitch to one of the two cases, Høje Gladsaxe and Axelborg, highlighted in the brief.
- We also welcome realised but innovative projects, visions, and other products from other contexts in the last few years.
- The competition is open for professionals, organisations, academics, artists, and students of all kinds. Interdisciplinary teams are encouraged.

## Process

- The competition material will be available at iBinder from Saturday, 3rd of December 2022. Only digital submission through iBinder will be accepted. <https://www.ibinder.com/external/enquirylink.aspx?id=phggeqdgky>
- Questions regarding the competition are to be posted on iBinder and will be answered as soon as possible. Questions are to be submitted by 1st of February 2023.
- The deadline for submission is Friday, 17th of February 2023 12:00 pm (CET)
- Four ideas will be selected as winners and up to 10 ideas will receive honourable mentions. Winners and honourable mentions will be announced in June 2023
- The winning entries will sign agreement with the National Building Fund by the 7th of April (agreement is to be found on iBinder) and commit to the following:
  - Further develop the initial proposal in the spring 2023 and adapt the idea to one of the selected non-profit housing areas, Høje Gladsaxe or Axelborg, in close cooperation with representatives from the housing area, the National Building Fund and urban strategic advisors from Gehl Architects.
  - Undertake to exhibit the completed idea in Copenhagen during World Capital of Architecture and actively participate in debate sessions and presentations at the World Congress of Architecture, UIA in Copenhagen on July 2-6, 2023, and participate at the General Housing Days (Almene Boligdage) in Copenhagen on the 30th of September 2023.
- Entrants may not publicise their competition entries until completion of assessment and winners are announced.

## Assessment

- The proposals are assessed by the appointed jury with assistance from special advisors to the Jury: Jesper Loose, Director in Arbejdernes Boligselskab I Gladsaxe, Steen Rosvang Andersen, Construction Consultant in Albo, Anita Pedersen, Urban Strategic Team Manager at Landsbyggefonden, Liselott Stenfeldt, Director at Gehl, and Astrid Marie Astrupgaard, Urban Sociologist at Gehl
- Entries will be assessed on the basis of their ability to meet the vision defined, as well as the wishes and requirements set out in the competition brief. There will furthermore, be an emphasis on the ability of the idea to be:
  - innovative and contribute to bridge generations
  - scalable and robust
  - further developed and communicated widely to the public
  - socially and economically sustainable

## Rights of ownership

The competition sponsor will acquire ownership of the entries submitted. The copyright to an entry remains with the entrant. The competition sponsor, and third parties will be entitled to publicise entries in media such as magazines and websites. In connection with such publication, the names of entrants will be mentioned.

[Open iBinder](#)



*Need help to iBinder? Go to [www.neighbourhoodsforgenerations.com/submit](http://www.neighbourhoodsforgenerations.com/submit) and see instructions or contact iBinder support:  
Telephone: +45 89 88 78 30  
E-mail: [support@iBinder.dk](mailto:support@iBinder.dk)*

# We want your ideas!

The National Building Fund invites you to help shape the future of non-profit housing through this open call, leading to an exhibition and opportunities to share your thoughts during the World Capital of Architecture in Copenhagen 2023.

<b>Dec 2022</b>	Open Call	<b>Competition start</b>
<b>17 Feb 2023</b>	Open Call	<b>Deadline for submitting ideas</b>
<b>27 Mar 2023</b>	Assesment	<b>Results and winners notified</b>
<b>Apr - May 2023</b>	Further development	<b>Dialogue with winning teams</b>
<b>May 2023</b>	Announcement	<b>Winners and honourable mentions announced</b>
<b>Jun 2023</b>	Exhibition	<b>Exhibiton opens</b>
<b>2 - 6 Jul 2023</b>	Participation	<b>UIA World Congress of Architects</b>
<b>30 Sep 2023</b>	Participation	<b>Almene Boligdage</b>

