



# Program

## Urban Planning for a Civil Society

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Thesis Program  
20,625 Characters



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*“Monks reflect their spirituality towards the other. Its a very interesting way of thinking - how humans need to also think on that staging of relationships in order to be able to relate to each other in a more efficient, sustainable, but say rooted way. [...] The importance of that staging of relationships for me relies on the importance and the neccesity of the potential new ways of relating in society.”*

**Tatiana Bilbao**  
*The annual Kenneth Frampton Endowed lecture*  
(Columbia GSAPP, 2020) 19:01

# Summary

The things we take for granted are challenged as distrust, misinformation, and NIMBYism, endangers our ability to handle even greater issues, such as the climatic crisis.

In the Danish suburbs, it is the calm before the storm as this way of living is itself a great threat with great environmental impact and a challenged social capital. This program therefore seeks to find architectural answers for how to turn this detrimental urban fabric into a sustainable one.

On a typical industrial site in the Herlev Municipality suburbs, on the fringes of Copenhagen, I propose a new development ecology that taps into the existing players of society and adds a new layer of understanding social capital building, through the creation of a secondary welfare system by redefining the role of civil society in urban development.

The Ecology will take form as a series of investigations and proposals in the strategic sphere, pointing in a new direction where development is not a phase, but an ongoing negotiation of spaces between relevant actors, guided by environmental principles of radical reuse, and local responsibility to the social and climatic context.

This program seeks to imagine a new Typology for the suburb to work as a physical manifestation of the ideals, developed in the Ecology. As such, the business as usual is challenged by working holistically with local actors, such as companies, civil society organizations, residents, and the municipality to create spaces that encourage an active citizenship in the creation of social capital.

This challenges the way we think about programming, dedication of space and responsibility towards each other. The thesis project seeks to develop architectural answers to encourage a hybrid responsibility. It is about a common understanding of how we as citizens meet, greet, talk, move, understand, play with, work aside, service, and help each other.

Delivering a project in Mileparken, Herlev, at the architectural scale, that acts as a Social Typology Prototype, is the main goal of the thesis. This is coupled with a strategic proposal for bringing the prototype in play in a larger context - The Development Ecology.

How can we as citizens take on direct responsibility in the creation of sustainable cities? Through an engagement that gives as much back, as it requires from us.

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# The Civil Society

One could say, that in Denmark, the strategy for social capital creation is not for the many, but for the few.

- **Jonas Hvid**  
*Ros til Somaliernes coronainsats.* (Jyllands Posten, 2020)
- 
- **Jane Jacobs**  
*The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (Pimlico, 2000), 86
- 
- **Dr. Philip Knight on Michigan food Banks**  
last modified October 16, 2020  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ET-4GkqaVr54>
- 
- **Elinor Ostrom**  
*Governing the Commons - The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action* (Cambridge University Press, 1990)

Looking at civil society through the lens of an architect, it quickly becomes apparent, how this notion of freely allowing people to assemble with common interests, visions or challenges is of vital importance to our cities in terms of health•, crime••, poverty•••, environmental impact•••• etc.

In literature this has been unfolded in numerous ways – for architects most notably through the writings of Jane Jacobs. She underscores what parameters are needed to build social capital on a city wide-scale.

On an economic level, Elinor Ostrom argues for the importance of letting actors organize and negotiate to obtain the most beneficial outcome for all. By doing so, the pursuit of social capital becomes not only a social democratic vision of an equal and just society, but also a liberal thought of creating the most value through individual actions.

## Towards Social Capitals

- **Daniel Rea Kraggskov**  
*Singing Alone - Urban Planning for a Civil Society* (The Royal Danish Academy, 2021)
- 
- **Robert D. Putnam**  
*Bowling Alone* (Simon & Schuster, 2000)
- 
- **Mette Hjørre, Helene Elisabeth Dam Jørgensen & Malle Linholm Sørensen**  
*Frivilligrapport 2016-2018.* (Center for Frivilligt Socialt Arbejde, 2018)

Planners and lawmakers have acknowledged this need for the support of social capital building. A study shows how Copenhagen with large funds poured into the sector secures well-functioning frameworks for established groups, but at the cost of a centralization of the spaces, little informal engagement, and a lack of diversity in engaged citizens and types of organizations. One could say, that in Denmark, the strategy for social capital creation is not for the many, but for the few, which is contradictory.•

This tendency is global. Robert D. Putnam in his book 'Bowling Alone' argues how social capital building in the US has faced a collapse in the decades from the 60s, with large consequences following.•• While not as extreme in Denmark, the tendencies are similar – despite public efforts to strengthen the civil society, social capital is challenged by changing patterns of settlement, technology and work-life balance.•••

*Planning with social capital at the heart of the discussion to reverse this tendency will be a goal for this thesis.*

*The hope is to couple services to a more local engagement and understanding of your fellow citizens – not as a dismantling of the professional healthcare services or public housing schemes, but as a widening of the scope.*

## A Secondary Welfare State

Kyong Park et al.  
Urban Ecology  
- Detroit and  
Beyond  
(Map Book  
Publishers, 2005)

In the Nordic Welfare model, a plethora of welfare services is provided to citizens through the state. In contrast, most American cities rely on NGOs and religious societies to provide a variety of services such as education, healthcare, housing, food etc. While this is done out of scarcity, it comes with some benefits in terms of social capital building – a sort of network of care for the people around you – and for yourself to benefit from.

The positives of these findings can be harvested to benefit the Danish welfare system to create a secondary system that works in tandem with state and municipality. The hope is to couple services to a more local engagement and understanding of fellow citizens – not as a dismantling of the professional healthcare services or public housing schemes, but as a widening of their scope. The influence of locally engaged citizens who are interested in parts of what the welfare state does, can directly inform its development, and therefore benefit from much more locally tailored services – a democratic privilege and obligation that extends beyond casting a ballot occasionally.

The borders between what can be perceived as private, common, and public become blurred. *Imagining how the spaces of this new civil welfare society might look is the role of an architect and as such a goal for this thesis.*

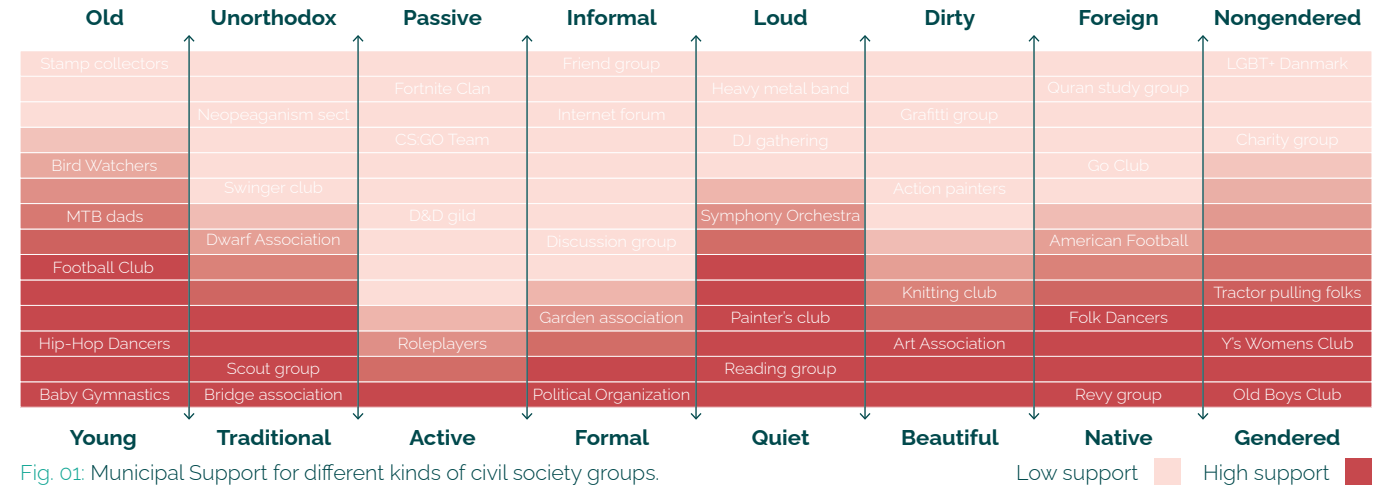


Fig. 01: Municipal Support for different kinds of civil society groups.



Fig. 02: Eyes on the street are seldomly planned nor valued.



Fig. 03: Common dining at Absalon Church



# The Suburban Dream

## Environmental Impact

**Robert Sanders**  
Suburban sprawl cancels carbon-footprint savings of dense urban cores. (Berkeley News, 2014)

The suburbs of Copenhagen greatly expanded during the post-war economic boom, and despite the finger plan concentrating public infrastructure, the car was and is still the main mode of transportation here. In combination with low densities and large individual footprints, this makes the suburban condition one of the largest climate challenges. Studies show that the per capita emissions can be 400% higher than a resident in the dense city.

When the house is planned as a tradable economic asset, it becomes volatile to speculation, without regard to long term environmental concern and as a result, houses less than 30 years old are being demolished because the new owner simply did not like the placement of the kitchen.

The sprawl generates large distances between points of interest leading to larger investments needed in heating, electricity, and sanitation infrastructure. It is simply not sustainable.

*To tackle our climate goals, we have to change this development, which will be another aim for this thesis.*

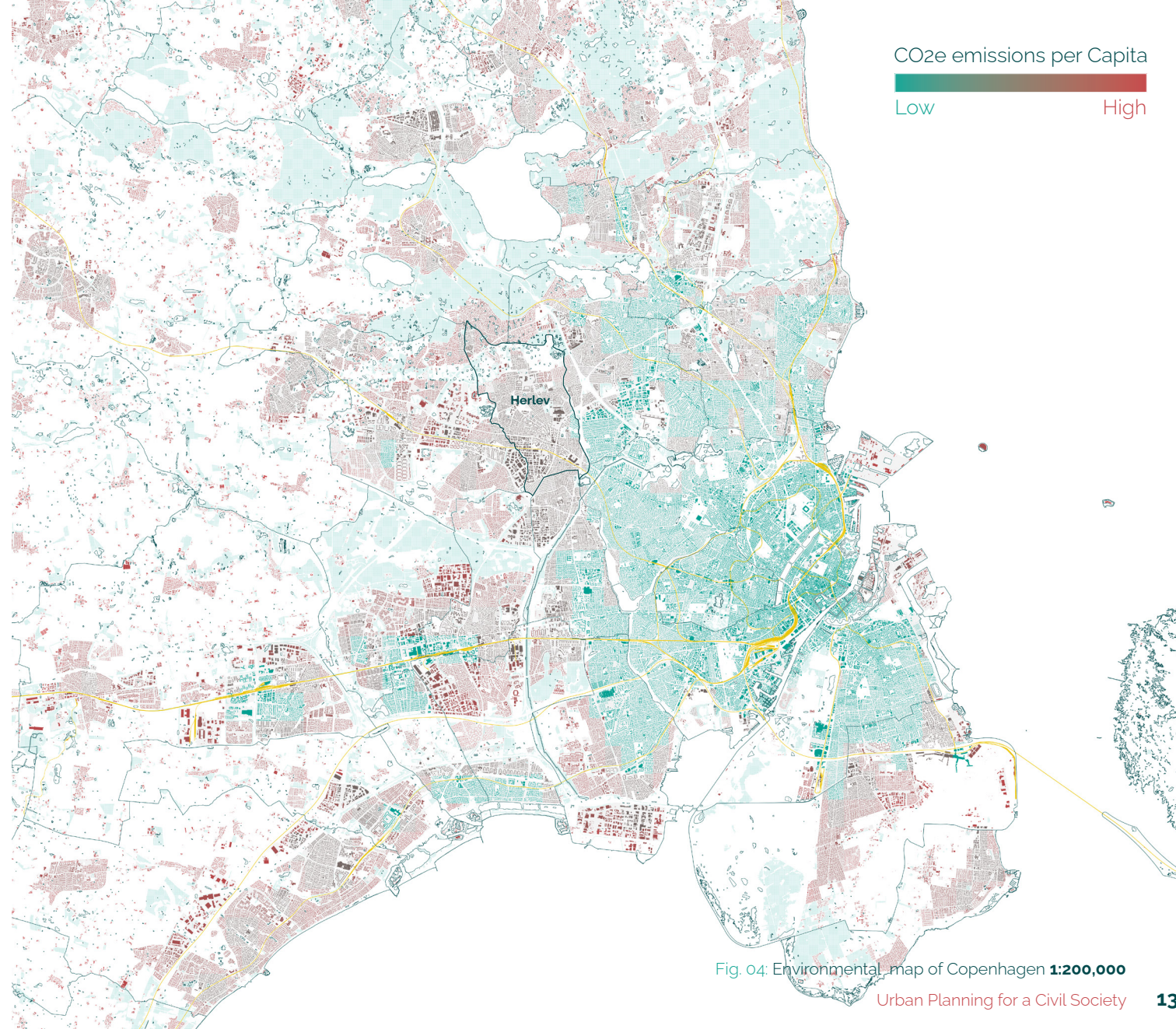


Fig. 04: Environmental map of Copenhagen 1:200,000



*"People like to have clarity and order and something that they understand so that they can make decisions in it."*

**John Habraken**  
DE DRAGER / A film about Architect John Habraken  
(schwarzpictures.com, 2014) 49:00

## The Forces of Individualism

The reasons for the suburb to become such a widespread phenomenon are numerous, but the cultural shift towards a competitive and individualistic society most likely played a major role in shaping the dream of the modern family to be unimaginable without your own plot, house, and car.

Although at first, the suburb might look like everybody is equally prosperous, it hides socio-economic spans as cheap plots makes way for individual real estate dream developments by well-off couples while also allowing for cookie cutter low rent housing estates for less fortunate citizens.

This diversity is often overlooked in the suburban municipal planning and there is a risk that disparity between what is the perceived and the actual social makeup leads to an alienation and NIMBYism of the local society in which you live, endangering the strides towards social capital building.

This individualism while detrimental in some respects, also have some qualities to build on such as an entrepreneurial spirit and a DIY set of skills needed to build up both relations and facilities. *In this thesis project, this entrepreneurial power will be utilized to build social capital, while recognizing the diversity of the suburb.*



Fig. 05: The Dream.



Fig. 06: The Nightmare.

*Disparity between what is the perceived and the actual social makeup leads to an alienation and NIMBYism of the local society in which you live, endangering the strides towards social capital building.*



# Site

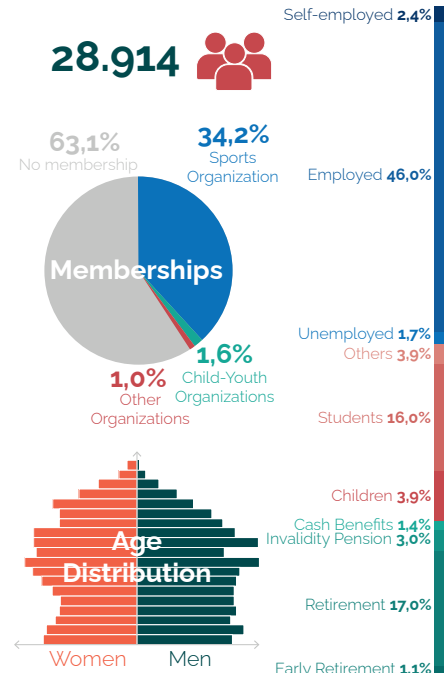


Fig. 07: Herlev Municipality demographics.

Fig. 08: Urban fabric and acknowledged civil society organizations **1:40,000**

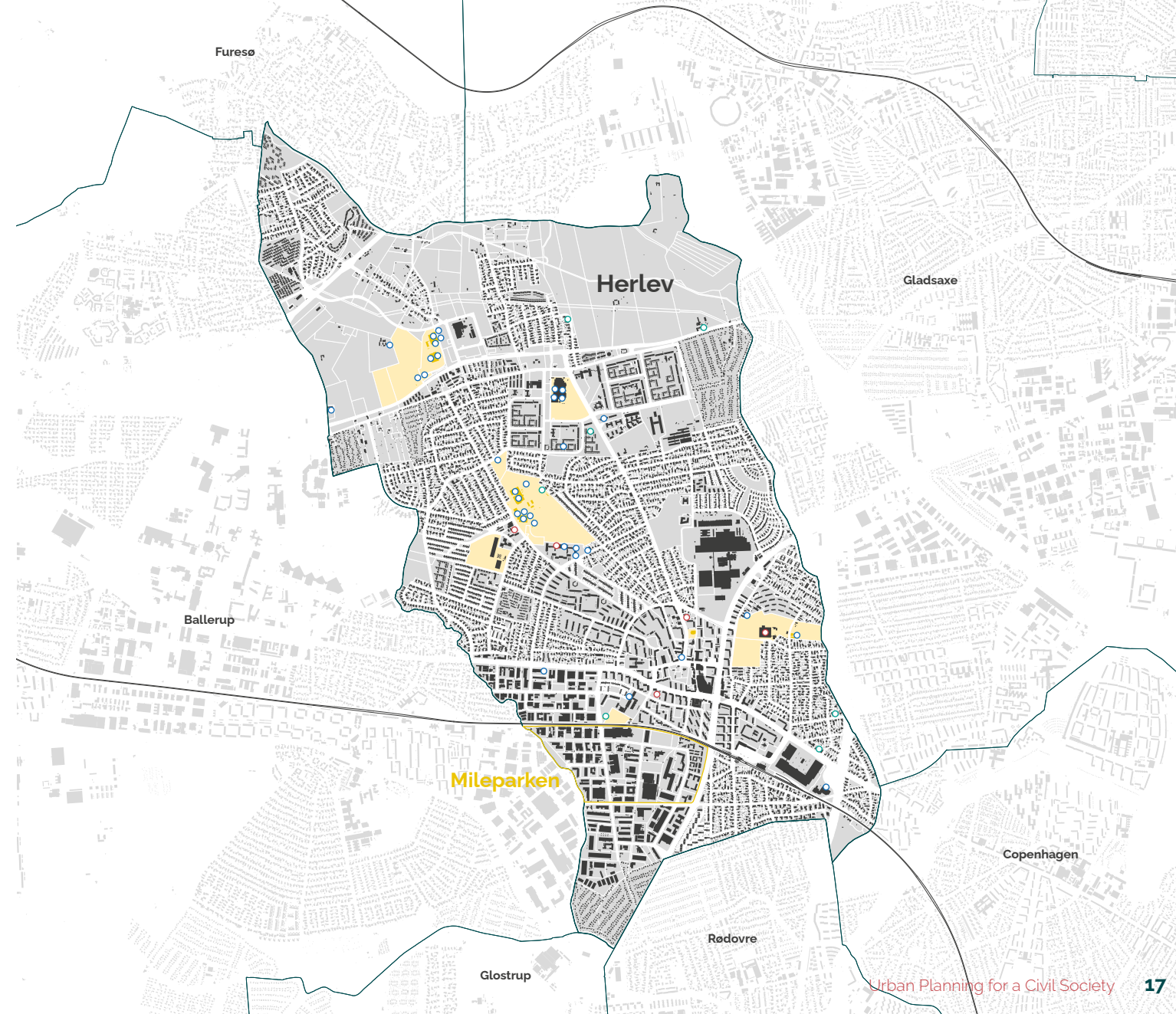
- Municipal Owned facilities for organizations ■
- Municipal Owned plots for organizations ■
- Sports Organizations ○
- Child-Youth Organizations ○
- Other Organizations ○

Herlev Municipality is situated just outside the city of Copenhagen, with very clear connections to the larger logics of the Copenhagen Metropolitan area. Herlev is right where the fingers of the 'Finger Plan' dissolve and starts to have more clearly defined boundaries between land and city, while still being close enough to the city center to be affected by the expanding city.

Housing prices are on the way up, although you might still find relatively affordable apartments. The rising demand pushes the municipality to consider housing development in non-housing areas, such as the industrial area Mileparken.

The Municipality is also a sought after destination for businesses, and Herlev employs a very active strategy to attract businesses. It is also part of the planned Light Rail connection running to the east of the site, creating a public transit link between these inner parts of the 'fingers'.

The citizens of Herlev are very active in sports organizations with one third of the inhabitants being members of such. The Municipality puts a great emphasis on giving sports opportunities to its citizens for instance with their creation of the 'Go-Herlev' website coupled with their thorough sports strategy with the goal that every citizen should be part of sports activi-









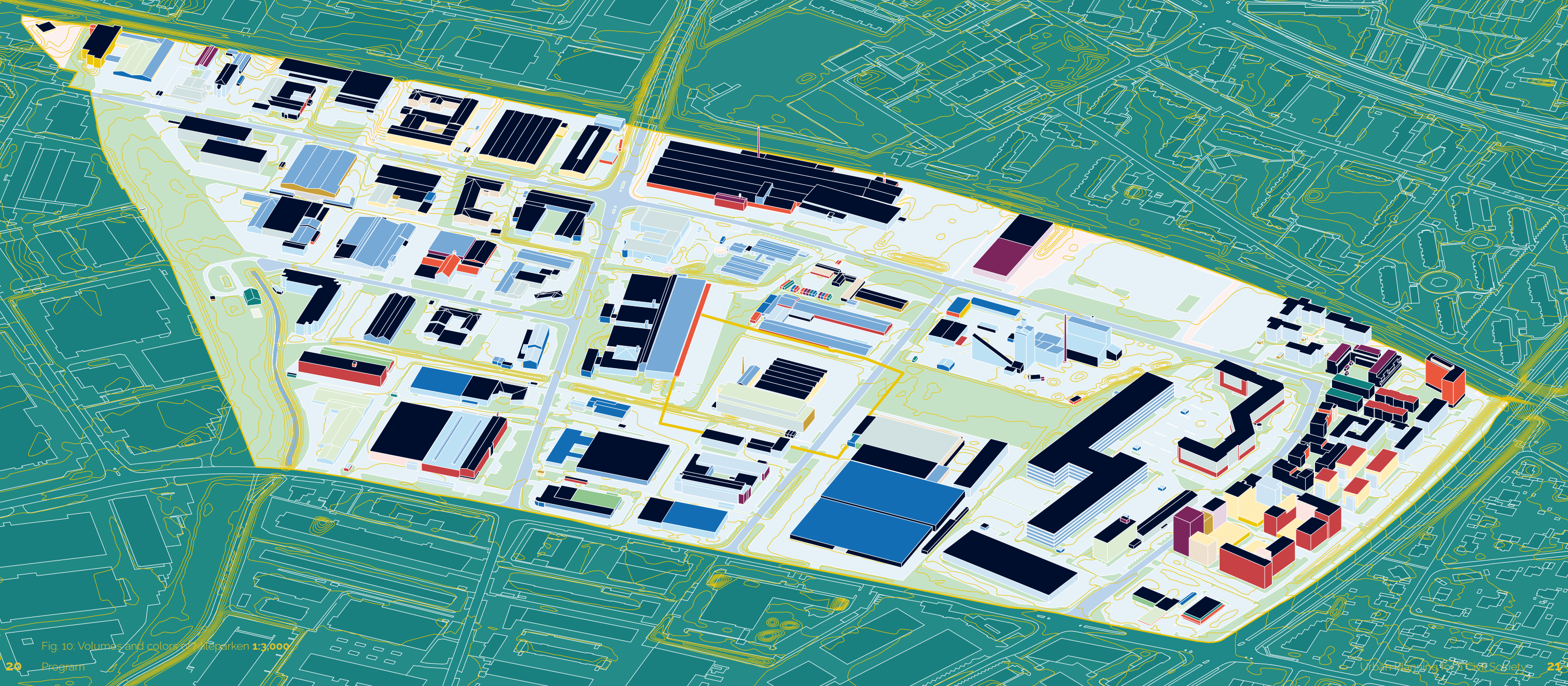


Fig. 10: Volumes and colors of Miterparken 1:3,000





Fig. 11: Industrial atmosphere on a snowy day.



*Especially the WeLadies Gym is interesting as a company engaging in a more social mission of giving a safe training space for women of all backgrounds.*

## Vasekær 6

The site at Vasekær 6 has been chosen as a focal point for a more detailed architectural investigation of the topics unfolded in this program.

It holds three major buildings – a shed-roof production/storage building, a concrete element office/storage block and a smaller brick building with a large chimney used previously as part of a fireplace production company. In that way the plot represents an archetypical industrial plot in a Danish context. In this way it can act as a prototype for other cases.

Today the plot houses a pharmaceutical supply firm, a moving company, a flag producing company, a gym, a logistics company, and a car rental company as seen on the map. On the plot there is also a temporary drive-in container storage area. This variety can be utilized in the future transformation of functions and architecture. Especially the WeLadies Gym is interesting as a company engaging in a more social mission of giving a safe training space for women of all backgrounds.

The placement of the plot in the middle of the industrial area makes it possible to set a new direction for the whole area. It also allows for a process that takes time, compared to a placement nearer to the station, where development is already pacing forward.

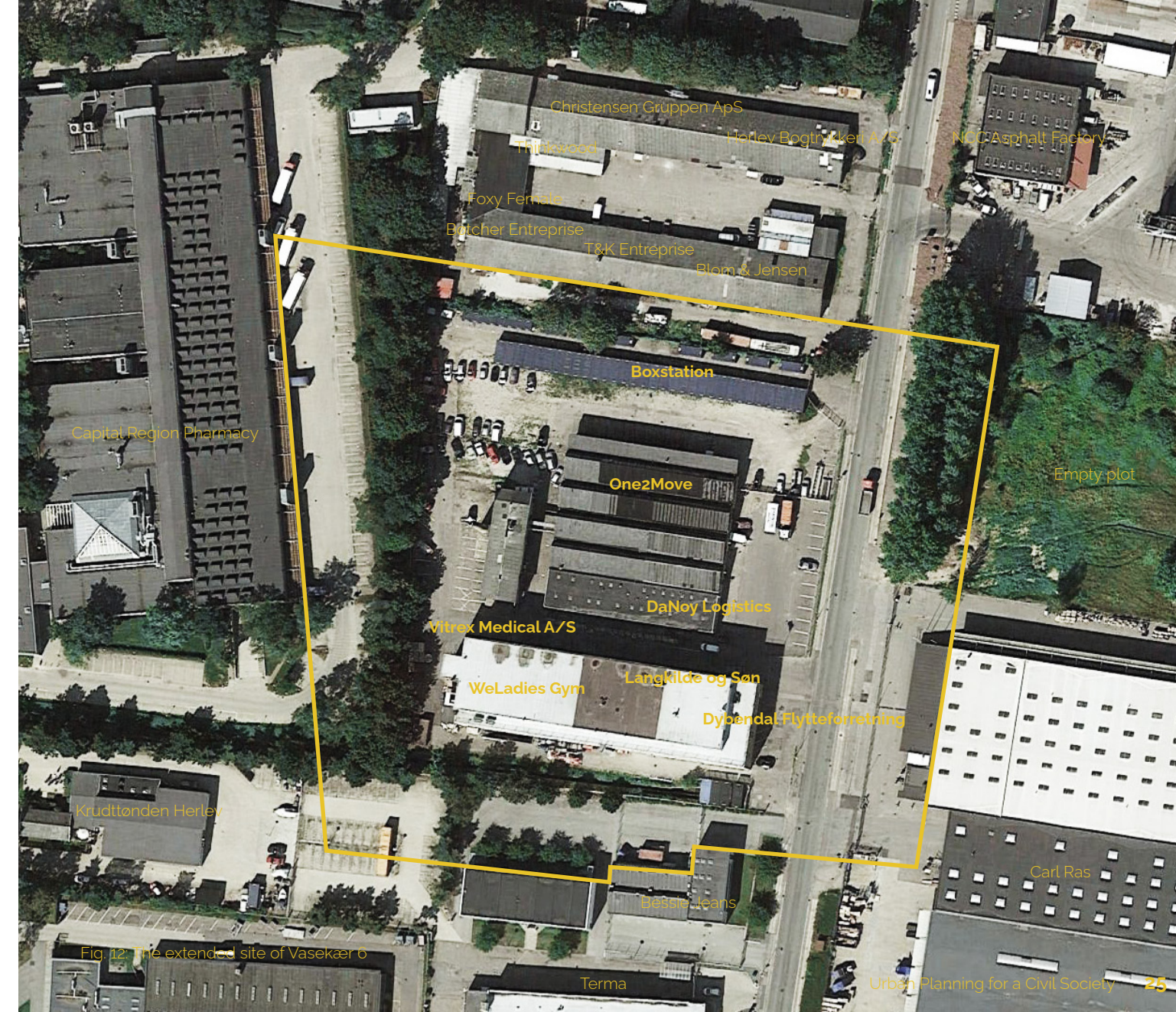


Fig. 12: The extended site of Vasekær 6



Several smaller interior adjustments have been made, within the limits of the structural grids of each building. This promises a possibility to work in a flexible way within the structural basics of the building.

## Industrial Heritage

The site as an industrial facility is very present with the many company signs and small left-overs from various workings. The companies vary in size, functional needs and how they affect their surroundings. Some needs rapid transports of goods in large trucks while others are mostly quiet offices and storage spaces. As such, some of the companies might still have a future on the plot, as they can co-exist with other uses.

The plot itself has seen several transformations – at one point a horse-shoe shaped building encircled the shed-roof storage space. Here, several smaller companies had workshops and showrooms. •

At one point, a fire also damaged part of the structures on the plot, but the damaged parts were repaired to their former condition. Furthermore, several smaller interior adjustments have been made, within the limits of the structural grids of each building. This promises a possibility to work in a flexible way within the structural basics of the building.

There have not been conducted any soil tests, but there is a suspicion that some of the former uses of the plot might have resulted in contamination, as there has been both plastic production, paint-shop, and auto-mechanics with spill-over risk.

Herlev Municipality Drawing  
Arhive, Vasekær 6  
last modified  
February 11, 2021  
Access granted  
by Herlev Municipality



Fig. 13: Life at Vasekær 6 with heavy tanks and containers 1:1,000





Fig. 14: Blue storage, yellow bricks, concrete elements and a chimney.

# Program



11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

**11.1** Access for all to adequate, safe, and affordable housing and basic services

**11.3** Enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning

**11.7** Provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces



16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

**16.6** Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels

**16.7** Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels



17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

**17.17** Encourage and promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships

The program has three layers of attention, from strategic to architectural. It is the intention that they all inform each other. The greatest emphasis is put on the architectural scale though.

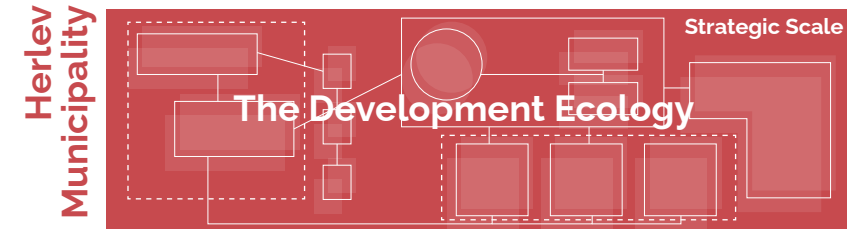
The suburban dream can be changed, to become sustainable, by making it a possibility to change the status quo through a strategic logic. The Development Ecology deals with an injection of new ideas into existing planning and law.

To make this dream desirable, a Prototype is envisioned to materialize what these new spaces of social capital building might look like. This will be at the architectural scale and be the focus of the thesis.

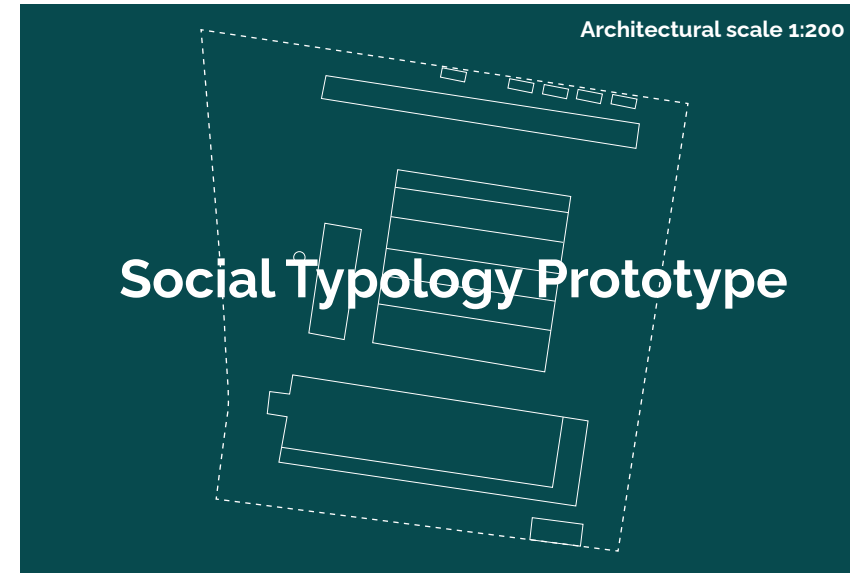
The implications of the Development Ecology and the Social Typology Prototype on the (sub-)urban condition will be examined as well.

At all levels of planning, designing and discussing, the UN Sustainable Development Goals will act as guiding targets, to work towards.

Fig. 15: The UN Development Goals



Vasekær 6



Mileparken

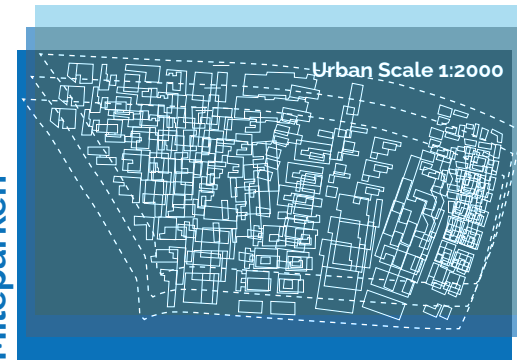


Fig. 16: The different scales of the project.



# A Development Ecology

To counter the environmental and social challenges of the suburbs, I envision a shift to a new strategy that will couple the civil society sphere with urban transformation processes. The Development ecology will propose how Municipalities can best utilize their money in this process. The strategy will use ecological principles as a way of thinking in non-linear modes to deal with the complexity of political, commercial, and social interests changing over time. As such, these will be the guiding principles:

- The timeframe is at least 100 years.
- The Ecology should deal with the interests of municipality, companies, citizens, and civil society organizations.
- Economic conditions and assumptions should be plausible.
- Both formal and informal social activities should be given consideration.
- The architect can never design everything.
- Citizens/organizations can and should participate in the construction and envisioning of certain parts.
- A critical approach towards citizen involvement.

Bekendtgørelse af lov om planlægning  
last modified February 10, 2021.  
<https://www.retssinformation.dk/eli/ta/2020/1157>

The outcome of this Development Ecology is a number of regulations, systems or ideas that can be translated into the common frameworks of planning such as 'Planloven', 'Kommuneplanen', 'Lokalplanen', or the Building Regulations. • as well as a proposal for a changed urban fabric.

## Status Quo Urban Development Scheme

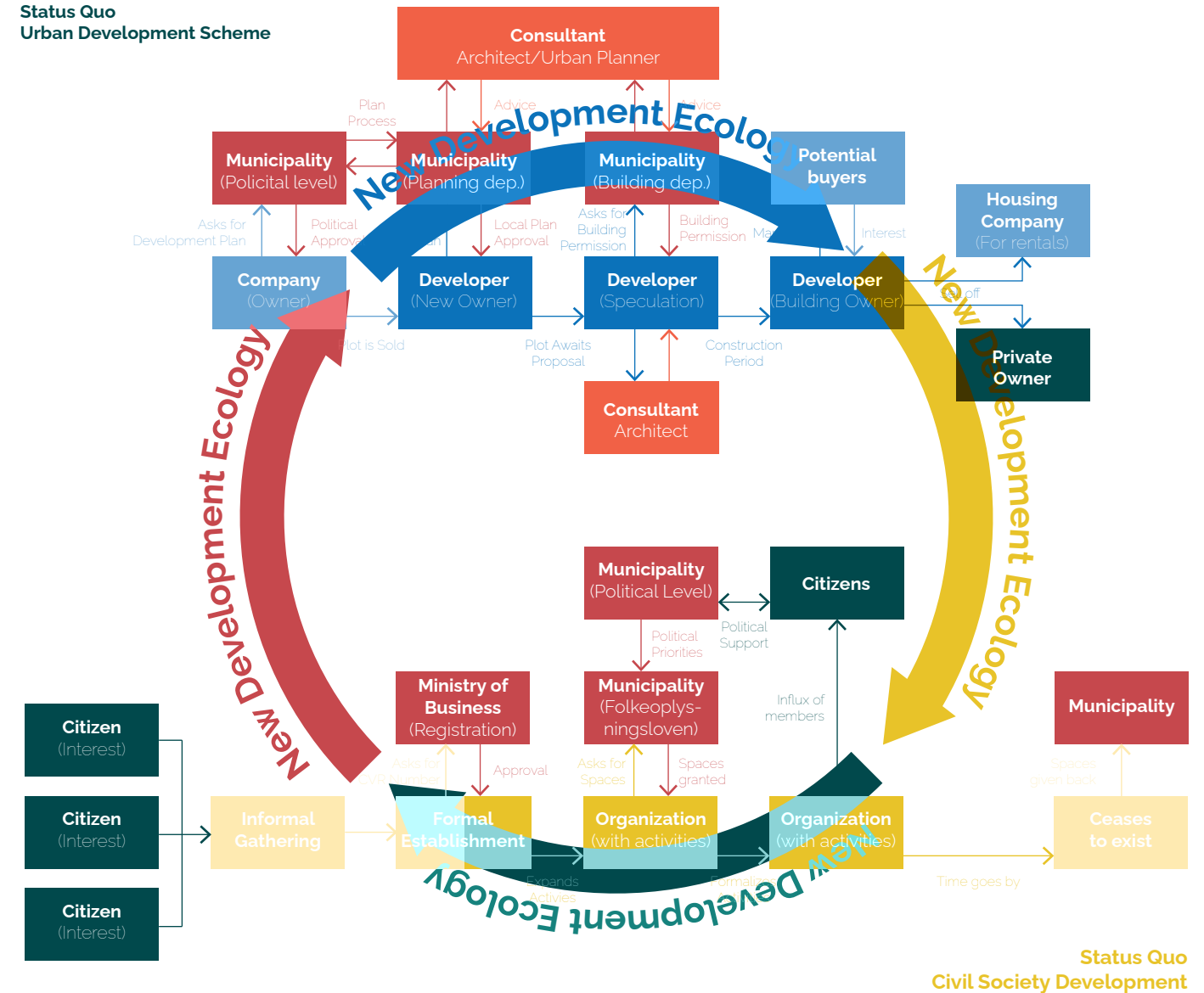
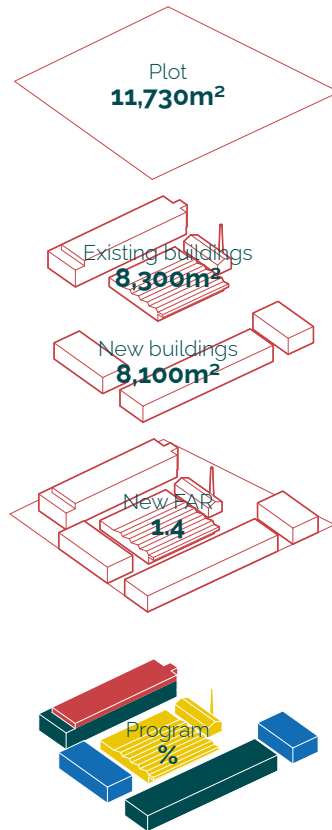


Fig. 17: Linear processes turning into ecologies.

# Social Typology Prototype



Developing a response at the architectural scale is needed to bring to life the overarching ideas of the Development Ecology. At the expanded site of Vasekær 6 in Mileparken, I propose and application of the Ecology with a program tailored towards that local condition. The FAR of nearby new developments informs how the same might be plausible here, albeit with a different architectural set of priorities and principles. The program seeks to identify the key stakeholders that could be at such a site, following the ideas brought forward in previous chapters:

- Future residents of the Typology with a diversity representing Herlev.
- Identification of companies in the existing buildings or surroundings who might stay and benefit from/contribute to the new Social Typology.
- Civil Society groups of all kinds who need spaces.
- Municipal welfare providers benefiting from a nearness to its users.

An emphasis will be put on finding stakeholders with a potential to take active part in social capital building.

Within these formal use cases, the following principles will be applied to ensure an environmental and sustainable life of the Typology:

- Transitions between spheres of privacy and common are crucial.
- Some places are public and inviting to strangers.
- The layout should support negotiations of space.
- The temporary nature of the programs is a constant.
- Formal programs should encourage informal activities.
- To make room for the social, the very private should be kept as such.
- Users are entrusted with responsibilities.
- Spaces allow for hybrid uses.
- The less control, the better.
- The Prototype should be able to adapt to different contexts.

The hopeful outcome of this architectural program, is to show a Prototype that is a viable and desirable alternative to the status quo.

Fig. 18: Preliminary volume studies

10-20% Civil Society

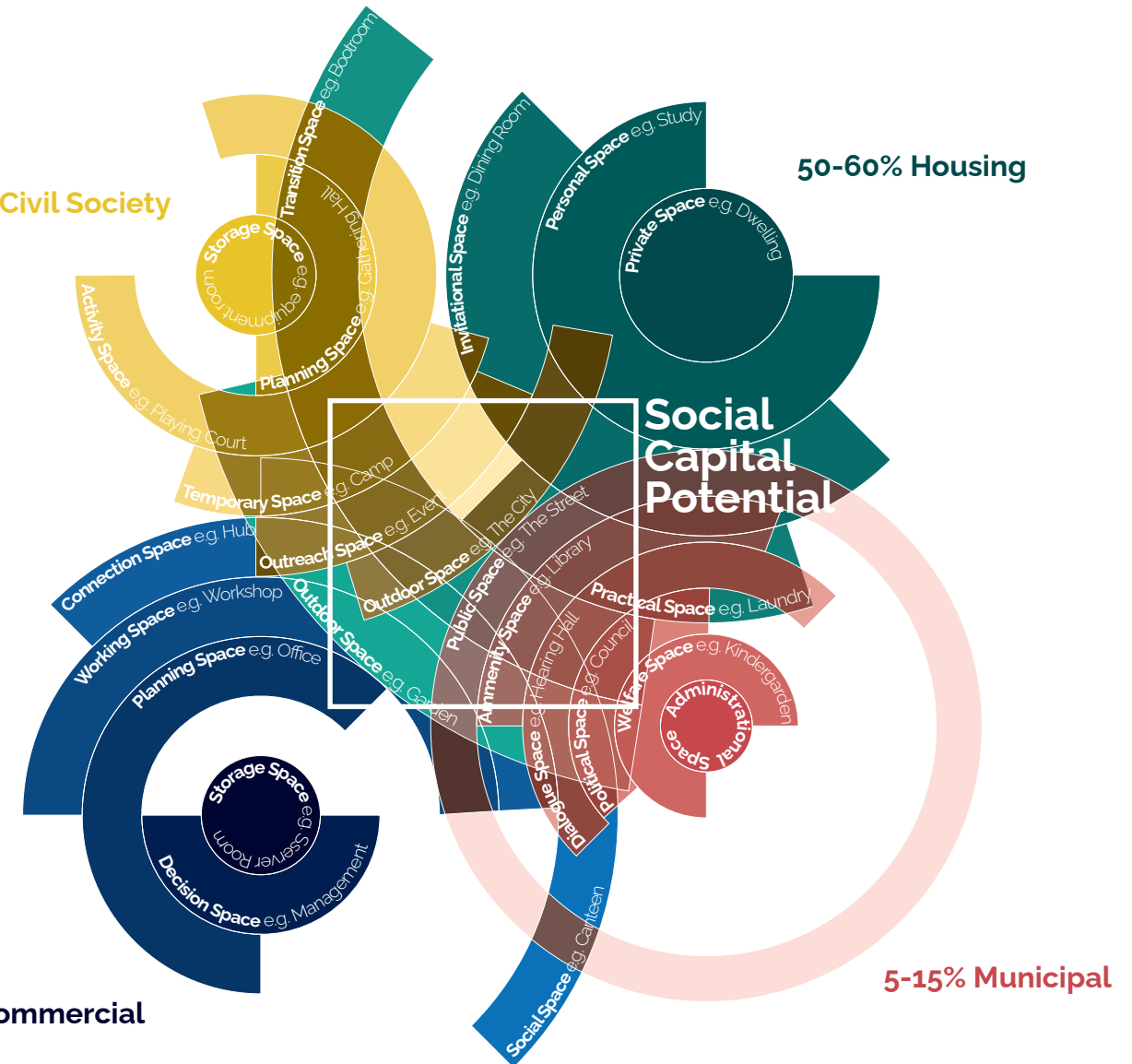


Fig. 19: The meeting point of negotiation, interests, and collaboration.

# Deliveries

In response to the program, this project will seek to unfold itself through this list of material deliveries. The list is preliminary and not exhaustive but acts as a guide.

Changes might be made due to the COVID-19 situation.

## **A Development Ecology** Strategic scale

This will be shown through a diagrammatic exploration and mappings on the implications in a strategic plan unfolded in a medium with the capability to express time.

## **The Social Typology Prototype** Architectural Scale

The Typology will be explored in an architectural scale of 1:50 - 1:200 in plan, section, visualization and model.



Fig. 20: Layers of time

# CV

## The Royal Danish Academy

Throughout my time at the Academy, I have investigated several topics in the realm of urbanism and landscape through projects on my bachelors such as 'The Living Monument' (looking at social housing as a monument on Refshaleøen) and 'Theatre of Health' (a combined health clinic and cultural center in Maputo, Mozambique).

On the masters level i did projects such as 'Roadblock!' (creating an affordable self-building scheme in Valby), 'Collective Production' (decentralizing production hubs in East Jutland), and 'When you Fall in Forest' (national 75% afforestation strategy with exemplification on a site in Skive).

## ETH Zürich

In this exchange semester I moved to Zürich for half a year and attended the 'Architecture of Territory' studio by Professor Milicia Topalovic dealing with large scale regional planning in the Lac Lemman region, with my project focusing on cross-border workers in the watchmaking village of Le Chenit.

## Tegnestuen Vandkunsten

At Vandkunsten I have been working on several 'almen' housing projects as well as shared living developments such as Ecovillage and Fællesbyg Køge kyst. Furthermore, I have worked on larger scale competitions such as Fremtidens Forstad (Future Suburb) in Sdr. Nærå near Odense and Bystævneparken in Copenhagen. Besides this, I have worked on several Municipal initiated local-plan proposals in Aarhus, Herning, Copenhagen and Roskilde.

## Arkitekt Knud Aarup Kappel

This small studio deals with urban planning and local plan developments for municipalities where I have worked on projects for Roskilde, Albertslund and Brøndby municipalities. I have also been involved in the urban transformation competition of Turku harbor front and the AAB competition for Skæring Bæk outside Aarhus.

## FDF Birkerød

In this organization, I have participated in all levels of planning, training and weekly activities for children and young people, with the ambition of giving them a common foothold through play, the outdoors, music and camps.

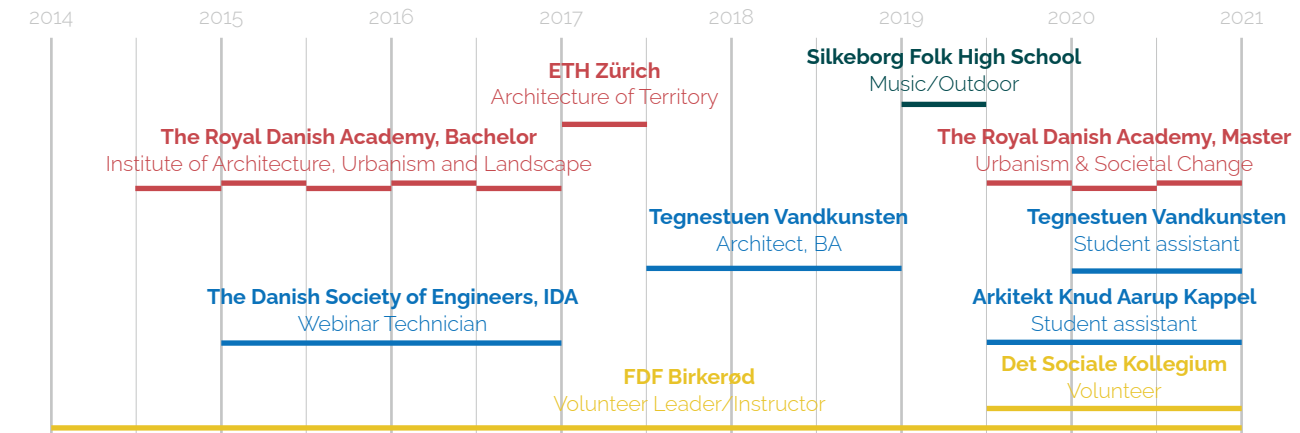


Fig. 21: Timeline of becoming an architect



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## Facts and numbers on Danish Volunteering

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## FOLK1A: Folketal den 1. i kvartalet efter område, køn, alder og civilstand

last modified October 16, 2020,  
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## Foreningsdatabasen

last modified October 3, 2020,  
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## GoHerlev organizations

last modified February 11, 2021  
<https://goherlev.dk/>

## Herlev Kommune Building Archive

last modified February 11, 2021  
Access granted on Request

## Herlev Kommune

**Facilitetsliste - Kultur og Fritid**  
last modified October 2, 2020  
[https://herlev.dk/sites/default/files/facilitetsliste\\_brutto\\_okt.2020.pdf](https://herlev.dk/sites/default/files/facilitetsliste_brutto_okt.2020.pdf)

## Herlev Kommune Meeting records

last modified February 11, 2021  
<https://dagsordener.herlev.dk/>

## Den Offentlige Informationsserver

last modified February 11, 2021  
<https://ois.dk/default.aspx>

**Robert D. Putnam** *Bowling Alone - The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (Simon & Schuster Ltd., 2000) 41-141

## World Population Density for Denmark

last modified February 11, 2021,  
<https://data.humdata.org/dataset/worldpop-population-density-for-denmark/re-source/066f05fe-1871-464c-8c81-73333d960297>

# Figures

**Cover:**

Linocut by Author *Mile Park*

**Fig. 01:**

By Author roughly based on excerpts from municipal documents on support through Folkeoplysningsloven.

**Fig. 02:**

Photo by Flemming Krogh

**Fig. 03:**

Photo by Peter Nørby

**Fig. 04:**

By Author based on data from Kortforsyningen, [data.humdata.org](http://data.humdata.org) and the report *Effects of changing population or density on urban carbon dioxide emissions*

**Fig. 05:**

Photo from Louv Snedkeri

**Fig. 06:**

Photo from [skraafoto.kortforsyningen.dk](http://skraafoto.kortforsyningen.dk)

**Fig. 07:**

By Author based on statistics from Statistics Denmark and Herlev Municipality meeting summaries.

**Fig. 08:**

By Author based on Kortforsyningen, Herlev Municipality meeting summaries and the individual websites of the organizations.

**Fig. 09:**

By Author based on imagery from Google Earth and data from Google Maps

**Fig. 10:**

By Author based on data from Kortforsyningen and site photos

**Fig. 11:**

All images by Author

**Fig. 12:**

By Author based on imagery from Google Earth and data from Google Maps

**Fig. 13:**

By Author based on data from Kortforsyningen and site photos

**Fig. 14:**

All images by Author

**Fig. 15:**

By Author based on <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

**Fig. 16:**

By Author

**Fig. 17:**

By Author

**Fig. 18:**

By Author with data from Kortforsyningen

**Fig. 19:**

By Author

**Fig. 20:**

By Author with images from <https://sdfe.dk/>

**Fig. 21:**

By Author



