

Abstract for ENHR 2018 “Collaborative Housing: More together?” Working group 1:

## Contemporary trends and motivations for constructing co-housing in Denmark

*By Anna Falkenstjerne Beck, Industrial PhD-fellow at Danish Building Research Institute, Aalborg University & Kuben Management*

Recently, co-housing as a collaborative housing trend has emerged in a number of countries. In Denmark, the interest of this kind of housing and way of social living has reemerged (or just developed), due to that co-housing has been built here ever since the beginning of the 1970s. As co-housing is formed as a group of dwelling units in combination with common areas and facilities, with a wish for a more social living, co-housing is at once both a private and common living arrangement. Based on qualitative case studies of four Danish co-housing groups in different stages of building up communities, this paper examines the trends and motivations for involving in, creating and finally moving into co-housing schemes today. The co-housing groups were followed over a period of approximately one and a half years, while they established (or failed to establish); three of the projects have by now been constructed, while one failed to establish. The cases are (or were supposed to be) located in the countryside, attracting people mainly from the cities, but very different in structure, tenure forms and size. However, the trends and motivations for involving in and creating these different co-housing projects have many similarities. The method used was a qualitative research, making interviews with future residents and professional stakeholders, and focusing on visual ethnographic fieldwork, obtaining photography while showed around in the areas and building phases of the co-housing schemes, participating at meetings, having informal talks with residents etc. As many co-housing groups are drawing on the digital era, using social media and collaboration software intranet for facilitating and encouraging people to join the projects, three of the groups in addition to the fieldwork were investigated through digital observations. Drivers for creating and involving in co-housing schemes are among others to live both socially and sustainably together. Some people are oriented towards technical sustainable housing solutions and very aware of the organic and co2-footprint of the community, whereas others are much more oriented towards creating socially functional communities, concerned about developing relationships among their coming neighbours, doing things together. Others are more centered about the new possibilities, this way of alternative living arises, e.g. building their own house or building up structures for common purposes and sharing cultures. A possibility to live together with own family members across generations is another field of attention. A diversity of interests, motivations and ways of doing co-housing are therefore present, which also is related to different organisation, tenure forms and size of the communities. Another key element is the distance to the city, where people come from and many still work. The paper will discuss these variable motivations and how the co-housing schemes have been developed from an actor-network theory approach, in order to understand this contemporary trend.