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Unsettling the Copenhagen Finger Plan: Towards Neoliberalisation of a Planning Doctrine?

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Abstract
The Finger Plan has guided the spatial development of the Greater Copenhagen Area for more than 70 years, constituting a planning doctrine in Danish spatial planning. However, recently the Finger Plan has come under attack from the liberal Danish Government (2015-2019), who implemented a number of initiatives to deregulate spatial planning in Denmark, most significantly through a 'modernised' Planning Act. As part of this process, the Finger Plan was revised twice in 2017 and 2019. The latest version of the Finger plan was prepared as part of a larger policy package aiming at promoting growth in the Greater Copenhagen Region towards 2030. This paper argues that the recent revisions of the Finger Plan must be understood as part of the ongoing neoliberalisation of spatial planning in Denmark, but that the Finger Plan, at the same time, has remained 'immune' to a more widespread neoliberalisation in this process.

Keywords: Planning doctrine, Finger Plan, neoliberalism, strategic spatial planning, planning inertia

Introduction

International planning research has in the last decade exposed the many ways, in which spatial planning increasingly has become influenced by neoliberal ideology (Allmendinger & Haughton, 2012; Boland, 2014; Haughton et al., 2013; Olesen, 2020; Olesen & Carter, 2018; Swyngedouw et al., 2002). Guided by the understanding of neoliberalisation as a process, which evolves differently in different geographical settings at different times, planning researchers have analysed the many varieties of 'actually existing neoliberalism' in practice (Brenner & Theodore, 2002; Peck & Tickell, 2002; Larner, 2003). Whilst the differences between how neoliberalisation unfolds geographically may be significant, theorists continue to argue that these many examples share something in common (Peck & Tickell, 2002; Peck, 2013). Spatial planning has largely been transformed to adopt a stronger market supportive role with the aim of promoting economic growth in the globalised economy (Olesen, 2014). In the UK context, it has been argued that this transformation in the nature of planning has been so significant that spatial planning today can be considered a form of neoliberal spatial governance (Allmendinger & Haughton, 2012; Haughton et al., 2013). One could perhaps argue that spatial planning's primary concern with promoting economic growth, international competitiveness, investments in infrastructures etc. has become the contemporary planning doctrine in many places around the world.

This raises the interesting question of how the neoliberalisation of planning affects well-established planning doctrines. Are older planning doctrines abolished to make way for new ones, are older planning doctrines transformed to serve neoliberal aims, or are older planning doctrines able to resist neoliberalisation?

This paper will explore these questions in the Danish planning doctrine, the Finger Plan for the Greater Copenhagen Area. The Finger Plan for the Greater Copenhagen Area is highly regarded in

the international planning community as an excellent example of spatial planning, integrating urban development, transport infrastructure, and preservation of 'green spaces' for recreational use. The Finger Plan has also been recognised by the OECD as an important foundation for the competitiveness of the Greater Copenhagen Area (OECD, 2009). The plan, or at least the ideas behind it, has survived for more than 70 years, and constitutes today still the overall spatial framework for spatial development in the Greater Copenhagen Area. The Finger Plan has become an important part of, if not the very essence of Danish planning culture. In fact, in 2006 the Finger Plan was accepted into the Danish Ministry of Culture's *Cultural Canon*, and thereby officially recognised as an important part of Danish culture. In short, the Finger Plan can be said to constitute one of the great success stories of spatial planning in the 20th century.

However, more recently the Finger Plan has been the subject of considerable critique after the election of a liberal national government in 2015. The liberal national government (2015-2019) has revised the Finger Plan twice as part of a larger modernisation project, aiming at relaxing planning legislation and developing a more pro-growth and business-friendly planning discourse (Olesen & Carter, 2018). As part of this process, the Finger Plan has been loosened to accommodate municipal requests for urban development and economic growth. But perhaps more interestingly, the Finger Plan has survived this period of fierce political critique and call for fundamental changes in the planning of the Greater Copenhagen Area. The Danish planning doctrine has been weakened but remains otherwise intact. In other words, the Finger Plan has been 'immune' to a more widespread neoliberalisation.

This paper argues that there, at least in some cases, is an inertia in the traditional planning doctrines, which makes them rather 'immune' to neoliberalisation. Planning doctrines are in many ways raised above politics and constantly evolving, which allow them to adopt to changing circumstances (Faludi & van der Valk, 1994; Korthals Altes, 1992). On the one hand, this means that the planning doctrines may be neoliberalised from within, in the sense that they adopt neoliberal agendas in order to survive. In this case, planning doctrines are turned into hybridised neoliberal constructs. The Finger Plan shows some signs in this regard. On the other hand, the Finger Plan represents also an example of a planning doctrine, which has been strong enough to outlive the Danish government's 'modernisation' of planning. This paper argues that more attention should be paid to the inertia embedded in planning doctrines, and how older planning doctrines constitute important spaces of resistance in the ongoing neoliberalisation of spatial planning.

The paper is organised as follows. First, a theoretical framework is built for understanding planning doctrines as flexible, open to change over time, and able to adapt to new political winds such as neoliberalism. Second, the paper briefly outlines the evolution of the Finger Plan. Third, the paper analyses the recent two-staged revision process of the Finger Plan, and the Danish Government's latest large scale urban development projects in the Greater Copenhagen Area. In conclusion, the paper reflects on the complexities of how neoliberalisation has unfolded in the case of spatial planning in the Greater Copenhagen Area.

Neoliberalisation of a planning doctrine

This section builds a theoretical framework for understanding how the ongoing neoliberalisation of strategic spatial planning challenges well-established planning doctrines, and how at the same time, planning doctrines are able evolve over time and adapt to new political winds, such as neoliberalisation.

The neoliberalisation of strategic spatial planning

Recent research highlights how strategic spatial planning increasingly has been exposed to neoliberal concepts and practices, leading to an ongoing neoliberalisation of strategic spatial planning (Allmendinger & Haughton, 2012; Haughton et al., 2013; Olesen, 2014). Here, I use strategic spatial planning as an umbrella term for planning experiments seeking to impose a spatial order to the city or any larger spatial scale. The meaning of a spatial strategy has changed significantly over time (see Healey, 2007), but as I will demonstrate in this paper, some of the core ideas in the early planning experiments will live on as planning doctrines.

Whilst neoliberalism traditionally has been understood as a political-economic ideology seeking to roll-back all forms of state bureaucracy (including planning regulation), in order to promote a free(r) market and market-based forms of resource allocation, more recent theorisations suggest that neoliberalism itself has evolved to encompass state-led strategies of promoting economic growth and the competitiveness of particular key spaces in the global economy (Peck & Tickell, 2002; Brenner, 2004; Peck et al., 2018). This form of roll-out neoliberalism, in which the state plays a more active role in facilitating the accumulation of capital by intervening in the market, for example, through investments in transport infrastructure and urban (re)development projects, opens up for new ways of understanding how and in which ways neoliberalism affects strategic spatial planning (Peck & Tickell, 2002; Olesen, 2014, 2020). Rather than understanding neoliberalism as a theoretical and ideological end-state, Peck and Tickell (2002) argue that understanding neoliberalism as the process of neoliberalisation offers a helpful analytical framework for exploring the complexities of roll-out neoliberalism. This also implies that we need to move away from an understanding of neoliberalism as anti-planning and move towards an understanding of neoliberalisation as a process that fundamentally transforms the nature of planning (Allmendinger & Haughton 2012; Haughton et al., 2013).

There is a profound difference between neoliberalism in its abstract and ideological form and the 'actually existing neoliberalism' that can be observed in practice (Brenner & Theodore, 2002; Theodore et al., 2011; Peck et al., 2018). Neoliberalism has been adopted in different ways in different places at different times (Larner, 2003). Neoliberalism has not been implemented on a blank canvas or wiped away all regulatory mechanisms of the previous policy regime (Theodore et al., 2011). Neoliberalisation involves a 'necessary hybridity', in which neoliberal ideas mutate with existing policies and programmes and seek to transform these from within, producing hybrid policy constructs (Brenner et al., 2010b; Theodore et al., 2011). Theodore et al. (2011: 17) highlight that 'neoliberalism tends to exist in a kind of parasitical relation to other state and social forms', and it is in the interplay between these contradictory political ideologies that neoliberalisation unfolds. This also means that the process of neoliberalisation is strongly path-dependent shaped by inherited regulatory arrangements, institutional practices, materialities and policy discourses (Theodore et al., 2011; Carter et al., 2015).

Carter et al. (2015) have used the metaphor of a planning palimpsest to highlight how the neoliberalisation of spatial planning in Denmark is conditioned by 'previous discourses and practices sedimented as layers of meaning and materiality through time and over space' (Carter et al., 2015: 1). The hybrid and palimpsest-like features of actually existing neoliberalism mean that analyses of neoliberalisation must be sensitive to the local context. Here, it is important to recognise that cities, regions or countries are not just 'victims, dupes, recipients, or targets of neoliberalism' (Lovering, 2007: 357). The process of neoliberalisation is shaped by both extra-local as well as intra-local forces (Peck & Tickell, 2002; Peck, 2013).

Olesen (2014) has argued that the increased interest in strategic spatial planning in Europe in the beginning of the 1990s must be understood in the context of roll-out neoliberalism. Strategic spatial planning was increasingly seen as an activity for positioning cities and city regions in the European competitive landscape of a single market and a global economy (Albrechts et al., 2003). Strategic spatial planning was geared towards facilitating economic growth and competitiveness, among other things by channelling public investments into major cities and urban regions in order to promote these as key sites for economic activity. As part of this trend, cities embarked on large-scale urban development projects aiming at boosting the city's global appeal (Swyngedouw et al., 2002). Spatial strategies adopted entrepreneurial attitudes in the attempts to attract well-educated citizens, global companies and investment capital, thus cementing a growth-first attitude in strategic spatial planning (Harvey, 1989; Peck & Tickell, 2002).

Inspired by Keil's (2009) notion of roll-with-it neoliberalism, Olesen (2014) argues that strategic spatial planning in the 2000s has entered a second phase of neoliberalisation, in which neoliberal practices and concepts are becoming increasingly normalised, resulting in increasing pressure on existing regulatory frameworks and planning doctrines. In the former strongholds of strategic spatial planning, such as Denmark and the Netherlands, the traditional planning doctrines have been challenged by neoliberal rationalities (Olesen & Richardson, 2012; Waterhout et al., 2013).

In this phase of deepening neoliberalisation, spatial planning is increasingly navigating in a post-political era, in which the neoliberal growth agenda has become so ingrained in spatial planning that other policy agendas, if recognised at all, are reduced to a 'lower order' (Allmendinger & Haughton, 2012; Brenner et al., 2010a). Boland (2014) has argued that spatial planning increasingly is guided by the dangerous obsession of promoting economic competitiveness in the belief that this will lead to some kind of 'economic nirvana'. In other words, neoliberalisation has fundamentally 'reworked the nature of planning itself' (Haughton et al., 2013: 232). We should therefore not only assume that spatial planning has become neoliberalised but understand spatial planning as a form of neoliberal statecraft (Peck & Theodore, 2019).

It would, however, be naive to assume that spatial planning has become 'fully neoliberalised', as this would neglect the notion of actually existing neoliberalism as a hybrid construct. This also implies that some aspects of planning remain more resilient to neoliberalisation than others. McGuirk (2005) has for example warned against too simplistic readings of neoliberalisation as a shift from one policy regime to another, or a shift within neoliberalisation from roll-back to roll-out. Contemporary processes of deep neoliberalisations involve both processes of rolling back and rolling out, as well as elements of resilience (McGuirk, 2005). It is this 'more murky reality' of actually existing neoliberalisation that I seek to explore in the case of planning doctrines (Theodore et al., 2011: 17).

Strategic Spatial Planning and Planning Doctrines

In many Western European countries, the first experiments with strategic spatial planning emerged after the Second War World in attempts to rebuild cities and control processes of urbanisation. These strategies were often guided by a particular principle of spatial organisation and the use of metaphors to communicate and visualise the principle. Some of the most prominent examples include the Green Belt around London, the Green Heart of the Netherlands, and the Finger Plan for Copenhagen. The ideas embedded in these plans have often 'lived on' and shaped the planning culture of the particular country. In some places, the ideas have almost become synonymous with

planning, representing universal truths of what constitutes 'good planning'. The Finger Plan for the Greater Copenhagen Area is a case in point, as the plan was influential in shaping the subsequent planning legislation in Denmark (Gaardmand, 1993).

In the Dutch planning literature, these universal truths about what constitutes good planning, have been conceptualised as 'planning doctrines' (Faludi & van der Valk, 1994). Faludi and van der Valk (1994) define a planning doctrine as 'a body of thought concerning (a) spatial arrangements within an area, (b) the development of that area; (c) the way both are to be handled' (Faludi & van der Valk, 1994: 8). A planning doctrine consists of two main components; the 'principle of spatial organisation' and 'planning principles' (Faludi and van der Valk, 1994: 8). The principle of spatial organisation refers to planning concepts that seek to define how an area should be organised spatially, whilst planning principles refer to how the plan should be prepared, its form, and how it is intended to work.

A planning doctrine has two roles (Faludi & van der Valk (1994: 22). First, it acts as a vehicle for consensus. The doctrine consists of a number of taken for granted truths, which despite different positions and interests of the actors shaping the doctrine, remain uncontested. Second, once adopted, the doctrine assumes the role of the planning subject's conceptual schema. In this way, a planning doctrine contributes to bind actors together in a planning community, whilst at the same time playing a strong legitimising role for planning. In this way, 'planners (and the public at large!) are socialized into believing in certain ideas' (Faludi & van der Valk, 1994: 5). Another important feature of a planning doctrine is that it is able to cut across political ideologies. Faludi and van der Valk (1994) highlight how it sometimes appears as if the planning doctrine constitutes 'an "objective", technical solution to commonly recognized problems' (Faludi & van der Valk, 1994: 18). In many ways, a planning is 'raised above' political ideologies, resting on emotional components which in some respect prolong the doctrine's longevity (Faludi & van der Valk, 1994).

Whilst planning doctrines usually are understood as 'fixed', several researchers argue that successful, long-lasting planning doctrines have been able to accommodate significant changes over time (Korthals Altes, 1992; Faludi & van der Valk, 1994). Faludi and van der Valk (1994) have coined this phenomenon 'doctrinal change', drawing on Imre Lakatos' distinction between negative and positive heuristics within paradigms. Whilst 'a negative heuristic does not allow the "hard-core" research programme to change', a 'positive heuristic encourages development of a "protective belt" of theories and models elaborating the core' (Faludi & van der Valk, 1994: 23). These theories and models may change over time in order to maintain the paradigm. Faludi and van der Valk (1994) therefore introduce the idea of an open planning doctrine, which is open to change over time.

This idea is supported by Korthals Altes (1992), who has researched how the Dutch planning doctrine evolved in the 1980s in a period of crisis and emerging planning critique. Korthals Altes (1992) stresses that the Dutch planning system was not abandoned due to a number of shortcomings, instead considerable effort was dedicated to rethinking and improving Dutch planning. In this process, the planning doctrine of the Green Heart was maintained at the centre of Dutch spatial policies (Korthals Altes, 1992). Roodbol-Mekkes et al. (2012) reach a similar conclusion in their study of Dutch planning two decades later. In parallel with Korthals Altes (1992), they conclude that whilst important changes have been made in the planning principles, the principle of spatial organisation has remained largely unchanged. However, as Roodbol-Mekkes et al. (2012: 390) point out 'the changes have not made the spatial planning doctrine stronger'. The weakening of the planning doctrine eventually led to the abandonment of the Green Heart doctrine in Dutch national spatial policies in 2011 (Korthals Altes, 2018).

In sum, this section has grounded the understanding of a planning doctrine as an integral part of a country's planning culture. On the one hand, a planning doctrine remains consistent over time and 'immune' to changing political ideologies. On the other hand, a planning doctrine evolve over time and take onboard new ideas in order to maintain the paradigm. In this case, the planning doctrine could be neoliberalised from within, as neoliberal ideas and practices are adopted as part of the evolving doctrine. In the following sections, I analyse the evolution of the Finger Plan doctrine, and how the Finger Plan has evolved in the context of neoliberalisation.

The Finger Plan as a planning doctrine

The Finger Plan for the Greater Copenhagen Area was originally prepared as a private enterprise spearheaded by the Danish Town Planning Institute and the Regional Planning Office (*Egnsplankontoret*). The plan was published in 1947 under the title 'Draft for a Regional Plan for the Greater Copenhagen Area' (*Skitseforslag til Egnsplan for Storkøbenhavn*) (Regional Planning Office, 1947). The plan was purposively published as a draft with a rather dull looking grey frontpage (see figure 1), so that it would not cause too much controversy at the time (Jensen, 1991). The plan was presented in a very thorough, factual and detailed manner, filled with examples from Denmark and abroad, which bear witness to the great amount of work that was put into its preparation (Gaardmand, 1993). Notwithstanding these attempts to downplay the significance of the plan, the plan quickly gained recognition and was nicknamed 'the Finger Plan', due to its frontpage illustration of a hand with spread fingers, see figure 1. The plan proposed that future urban development in the Greater Copenhagen Area should be located in the palm of the hand and along the fingers, supported by a S-train network. The web between the fingers should be reserved for agricultural and recreational use. It was precisely the metaphor of the hand and fingers, which was easy to remember and understand that contributed to the recognition of the plan. However, the plan itself was never officially adopted. Nevertheless, the ideas of the plan have developed into a planning doctrine and continued to shape spatial planning in the Greater Copenhagen Area for more than 70 years.

The ideas of the Finger Plan have continually been challenged and reworked throughout this period. Already in the end of the 1950s, it was recognised that there was a need to revise the Finger Plan in order to accommodate the growth-fixated projections, suggesting that the population in the Greater Copenhagen Area would increase by 1 million inhabitants towards year 2000 (Gaardmand, 1993). As a response, the Finger Plan from 1960 introduced the idea of new towns of 250,000 inhabitants along a motorway corridor towards the west of Copenhagen. The plan was heavily criticised both politically and in the planning community, and as a result the Regional Planning Secretariat responsible for the plan was closed down (Gaardmand, 1993).

In 1966 the metropolitan body the Regional Planning Council (*Egnsplanrådet*) was formed, and in 1968 the first official Regional Planning Office was created (Gaardmand, 1993). This office published a draft for a regional plan in 1973, drawing on the same population projections as the previous draft (Gaardmand, 1993). In order to accommodate the expected growth, the plan proposed the development of decentral urban nodes, which were to take the growth pressure off the hand's palm. Again, the plan was heavily criticised for being overly optimistic in terms of its projections for urban development. In the end, only one decentral urban node was established in Høje Taastrup to the west of central Copenhagen. The plan was finally approved in 1975 by the Greater Copenhagen Council (*Hovedstadsrådet*), which had replaced the Regional Planning Council in the meantime (Gaardmand, 1993).

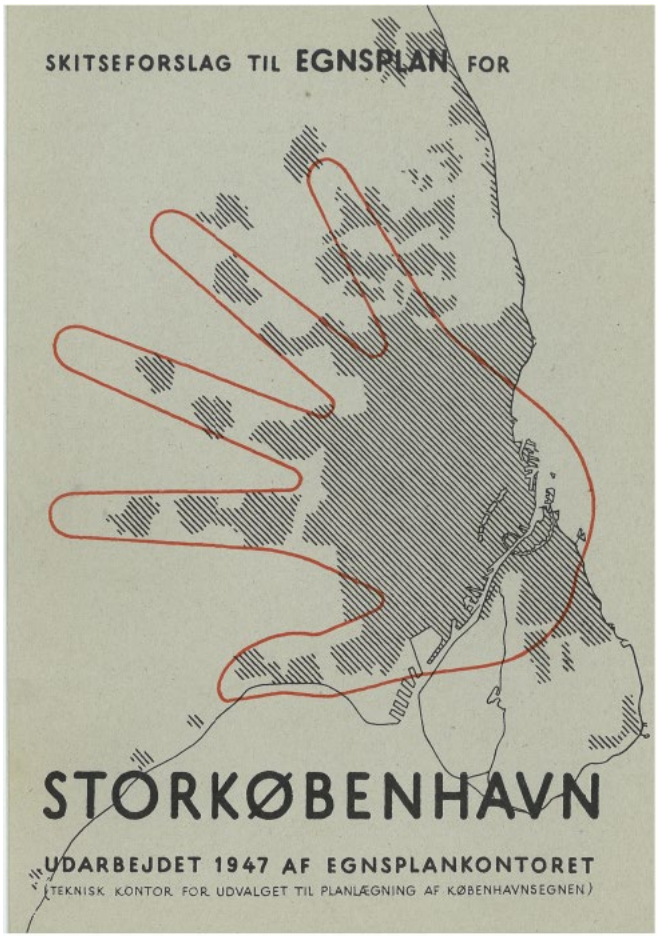

Figure 1: Frontpage of the original Finger Plan (Regional Planning Office, 1947)

In 1988 the Greater Copenhagen Council published its last regional plan, before the authority was abolished at the end of 1989. The plan's motto was 'better city, not more city' (Gaardmand, 1993). The plan represented a significant break with the previous decades of growth-fixated planning, and a return to the original principles of urban development within the hand. In addition, the principle of station proximity was introduced, stressing that new urban (re)development projects must be in close proximity of a train station. The break with the growth philosophy was, however, short-lived. In 1991 the Danish Government presented its plan for Ørestad, the biggest urban development project in modern Danish planning history. The new city district of Ørestad, which was not part of the 1989 Finger Plan, was built on a protected green area on the island of Amager in an attempt to boost Copenhagen and the Øresund Region's international competitiveness, and as a means to finance a much-desired metro system in Copenhagen (Jørgensen et al., 1997; Majoor, 2008). It can be argued that the Ørestad project represents one of the first clear examples of neoliberalisation of spatial planning in Denmark.

In 2000 the Greater Copenhagen Authority (*Hovedstadens Udviklingsråd*) was established in another attempt to introduce a metropolitan body. The body, which only lasted six years, published two regional plans in 2001 and 2005. The Greater Copenhagen Authority was a rather weak metropolitan body, and its regional planning contributed to a watering down of the Finger Plan principles (Olesen, 2011). As part of a governance reform in Denmark in 2007, the responsibilities for regional planning for the Greater Copenhagen Area were split between the municipal and

national level. Approximately one-third of the guidelines from the regional plan were converted into a national planning directive, entitled 'Finger Plan 2007', the remaining guidelines were transferred to the municipalities (Olesen, 2011). In addition, it was written into the Danish Planning Act that the Greater Copenhagen Area must be planned according to the principles of the Finger Plan.

This indicates that the Finger Plan ideas were gaining stronghold and becoming fully institutionalised by being written into planning legislation. In many ways, the Finger Plan 2007 constituted a stricter spatial framework than had been practised in the past. In this sense, it can be argued that the Finger Plan, at this point, was raised above party-politics and had developed into a planning doctrine. In the 'Finger Plan 2007', the Ministry of the Environment stressed the importance of preserving 'the family silver' and the need to continue the 60 years of planning tradition encapsulated by the Finger Plan (Ministry of the Environment, 2007: 12).[1] The Ministry of the Environment published a revised Finger Plan in 2013, focusing primarily on the green areas' importance for climate adaption. An overview of the evolution of the Finger Plan doctrine is presented in table 1.

Table 1: The evolution of the Finger Plan doctrine

Year	Prepared by	Legal status	Principle of spatial organisation
1947	Regional Planning Office	Draft, private enterprise	Urban development in palm and fingers The web as green areas Public transport as the backbone of urban corridors
1960	Regional Planning Secretariat	Draft, not approved	Introducing the principle of new towns
1973	Regional Planning Council	Regional plan, approved at metropolitan level	Introducing the principle of decentral urban nodes
1989	Greater Copenhagen Council	Regional plan, approved at metropolitan level	Return to the original principles 'Better city, not more city' Introducing the principle of station proximity
2001	Greater Copenhagen Authority	Regional plan, approved at metropolitan level	The original principles Weak political body
2005	Greater Copenhagen Authority	Regional plan, approved at metropolitan level	The original principles Weak political body
2007	Ministry of the Environment	National planning directive, approved at national level	Strengthening of the original principles
2013	Ministry of the Environment	National planning directive, approved at national level	Focus on the green areas and climate adaptation
2017/ 2019	Ministry of Industry, Business and Financial Affairs	National planning directive, approved at national level	Deregulation – adjustment of the original principles

The Finger Plan as a barrier for growth

The liberal national government elected in 2015 implemented a number of initiatives, which have been interpreted as a further neoliberalisation of spatial planning in Denmark (Olesen & Carter, 2018). First, the responsibility for spatial planning was moved from the Ministry of the Environment to the Ministry of Business and Growth. This was part of a larger political strategy to align spatial

planning more closely with policy objectives of promoting businesses and growth, rather than its more traditional role of protecting the environment. Second, the government revised the Planning Act, implementing relaxations of the national planning framework, in particular for rural areas, and revised the aim of spatial planning to include the aim of creating good conditions for business development and growth (Olesen & Carter, 2018). Third, the government announced the need to revise the Finger Plan. The revision(s) of the Finger Plan must thus be understood as part of a larger political project to make spatial planning in Denmark more business and growth friendly. In general, this phase of neoliberalisation of spatial planning in Denmark has been characterised by an anti-planning rhetoric, in which the government on several occasions has referred to planning as 'a barrier for growth' (Olesen & Carter, 2018). But as I will demonstrate in this section, attempts to roll-back planning legislation have been combined with roll-out initiatives, such as the announcement of two large-scale urban development projects towards the end of the government's term.

The analysis is based on document analysis of the Finger Plan 2017 and 2019 together with supplementary documents such as background reports, press releases etc. In addition, national policies or statements referring to the Finger Plan in the period 2015-2019 have been examined. The analysis draws also on written material outlining the initial plans for the government's large-scale urban development projects, *Lynetteholmen* and *Holmene*.

In November 2015, the government announced its policy *Growth and Development in the Whole of Denmark* (Danish Government, 2015). The policy outlined a number of initiatives aiming at promoting (economic) growth, including the need for thorough analyses of the Finger Plan's effects on urban development, infrastructure and location of businesses. In practice the need for 'thorough analyses' was soon turned into a need to revise the Finger Plan. As the responsible minister argued in a press release:

> With about two million inhabitants, the capital area is a dynamic metropolis in rapid change. The municipalities' planning cannot be constrained by antiquated frames or lack of flexibility, which is hampering possibilities for realising the capital area's great growth and development potential. (Minister of Industry, Business and Financial Affairs, 2016)

The revision process was implemented in two steps. Step 1 was designed as a 'fast-track', where the municipalities were invited to suggest amendments to the Finger Plan that were 'urgent for the municipalities in the work with securing growth in the Capital Area' (Ministry of Industry, Business and Financial Affairs, 2016). In total 152 suggestions were submitted by the 34 municipalities in the Greater Copenhagen Area (Danish Business Authority, 2017). 59 of the suggestions were either fully or partly accepted (sometimes on additional terms). In general, most changes can be characterised as smaller amendments. However, in other cases the changes were more significant, such as planning permission for a new transport and logistics company (Danish Business Authority, 2017). The amendments from step 1 were formalised in the Finger Plan 2017.

Step 2 was designed to implement greater and more fundamental changes, in order to streamline the Finger Plan to the government's new planning mindset of business development and growth. As in step 1, the municipalities were asked to propose amendments to the Finger Plan. In step 2, 150 amendments were proposed, out of which 80 were accepted and included in the Finger Plan 2019 (Ministry of Industry, Business and Financial Affairs, 2019b).[2] In many ways, the Finger Plan 2019 represents a continuation of the existing spatial framework, just in a more relaxed form. Some of the more significant changes in the Finger Plan 2019 include extensions of the urban fingers

and relaxation of the principle of station proximity in the five towns at the end of the fingers. However, in other areas, the Finger Plan 2019 sets out to challenge some of the basic principles by designating three new areas for knowledge intensive companies (outside the finger logic), and in general by opening up for more development in the rural parts of the city region (reflecting the new planning act). In addition, the Finger Plan 2019 introduces the idea that green areas in the web between the fingers can be exchanged with green areas of a higher recreational value that are currently not included in the green web (Danish Business Authority, 2019; Ministry of Industry, Business and Financial Affairs, 2019c). These amendments will most likely result in a less clear spatial structure, and thereby potentially undermine the basic ideas of the Finger Plan over time. However more interestingly, the government's ambitions of implementing more fundamental changes in step 2 never materialised. Despite heavy critique from the responsible minister, the Finger Plan had come out of the two-staged revision process surprisingly intact. In this respect, it can be argued that the planning doctrine has been 'immune' to a more widespread neoliberalisation.

The Finger Plan 2019 was announced as part of a larger government policy package entitled *The Capital 2030* in the beginning of 2019 (Danish Government, 2019b). The main aim of the policy package was to boost the economic growth in the capital through a number of initiatives, framed as a 'vitamin injection' by the government.

> The Government wants a strong and attractive capital. Therefore, we present today more than 100 initiatives as a huge vitamin injection to the entire capital area from Helsingør to Køge and Roskilde. (Ministry of Industry, Business and Financial Affairs, 2019a)

One of the main challenges underpinning the government's *The Capital 2030* policy package has been how to accommodate and plan for the expected population growth of 200,000 inhabitants towards 2030. Whilst part of the answer to this challenge has been to relax the Finger Plan, the other part of the answer has been the government's imaginative proposals to construct new islands in the Øresund. The idea of constructing the island of *Lynetteholmen* was presented in October 2018 by the prime minister and the lord mayor of Copenhagen (Danish Government & Copenhagen Municipality, 2018). The island was to be constructed with excess soil from the metro construction and other major development projects in Copenhagen. According to the plan, the 2 km^2 island would be home to 35,000 inhabitants and 35,000 workspaces when fully developed in 2070 (www.lynetteholmen.com). In the agreement between the government and Copenhagen Municipality, it was stressed that

> Growth and development in the Capital are not only benefitting the city's inhabitants, but also the Øresund Region and the whole Denmark. And even though the Capital today is strong in the international competition with other Northern European cities, the competition is extremely fierce. If the Capital is continuously to be competitive, space must be made for more citizens and companies, and better mobility must be created through investments in infrastructure. (Danish Government & Copenhagen Municipality, 2018: 1)

In practice the development of *Lynetteholmen* will be managed by a public-public partnership owned by the Danish state and Copenhagen Municipality. It is argued that the island will be "cost free", as it is constructed from excess dirt.[3] Furthermore, it is expected that the sale of plots on *Lynetteholmen* will cover the construction costs of the necessary transport infrastructure to the island, including a metro connection and an underground motorway tunnel (Danish Government & Copenhagen Municipality, 2018). The latter is an infrastructure project that has been on Copenhagen Municipality's wish list for a number of years. In addition, the project has been framed

as a climate mitigation measure preventing flooding of Copenhagen. At the press conference, the prime minister framed *Lynetteholmen* as a 'Kinder Egg' – a project that would be able to solve three challenges in one (*Berlingske*, 2018).[4] The project has become one of the most controversial urban development projects in newer Danish planning history, with outspoken critique from red-green political parties, citizen movements, environmental organisations, the professional planning community and Swedish authorities.[5]

In the beginning of January 2019, another island project was launched. This project involves the creation of nine artificial islands at Avedøre Holme in Hvidovre Municipality, south of central Copenhagen. The islands with the title *Holmene* (the Islets), are to be developed as a business and industry area housing approximately 380 businesses (12,000 workspaces) (www.lynetteholmen.com). When the islands are fully developed in 2040, they will cover an area of 3.1 km^2. The Danish Government's ambition is that *Holmene* will become 'one of North Europe's biggest and most well-functioning business areas' (Danish Government, 2019a). One of the nine islands has been nicknamed 'Green Tech Island'. According to the plan, the island is to house the wastewater treatment plant currently located at the island *Refshaleøen*, located in close proximity to the proposed location of *Lynetteholmen*. The relocation of the wastewater plant will open up for more extensive use of the *Lynetteholmen* and potentially a redevelopment of *Refshaleøen* itself.

The case of the Finger Plan 2019 and the Capital 2030 displays several interesting features of how actually existing neoliberalisation unfolds in practice. On the one hand, the Finger Plan 2019 constitutes a more relaxed spatial framework. On the other hand, the Finger Plan, as a planning doctrine, has survived and proven to be remarkably 'immune' to a widespread neoliberalisation. At the same time, the national government has initiated two large-scale urban development projects, which in their rationale and governance setup share a lot of similarities to the Ørestad-project, that is, a strong belief in the market and the assumption that increase in land value can easily be captured to finance transport infrastructures. Contemporary processes of neoliberalisation of spatial planning in the Greater Copenhagen Area are thereby characterised by both processes of rolling back the overall spatial framework, and processes of rolling out peculiar state-led urban development projects with a strong neoliberal agenda. At the same time, the overall spatial framework for the Greater Copenhagen Area has proven to be remarkably resilient against the national government's outspoken desire to significantly reform the Finger Plan. In the concluding section, I will try to make sense of this murky picture of how neoliberalisation has unfolded.

Conclusion: neoliberalisation of a planning doctrine?

The Finger Plan represents an interesting case of a planning doctrine, which on the one hand has been exposed to neoliberalisation, whilst on the other hand has remained resistant to more widespread neoliberalisation. This reflects the complexities of how neoliberalisation unfolds, and the need for planning studies to pay attention to how neoliberalisation evolves in particular geographies at particular times. In the case of the Finger Plan doctrine, the following points summarise this paper's conclusions.

First, it is worth highlighting that it is not a new phenomenon that spatial planning is preoccupied with planning for growth. Earlier versions of the Finger Plan from the 1960s and 1970s challenged the basic principles of spatial organisation of the original Finger Plan in attempts to accommodate growth-fixated population projections. Spatial planning's obsession with growth is thus not a new phenomenon and thereby an indicator of neoliberalisation per say. The growth-

fixated approach to planning has, however, always been controversial, as the case of the Finger Plan clearly demonstrates.

Second, the national government's large-scale urban development projects can on the other hand be interpreted as signs of neoliberalisation. The projects have been conceived outside the Finger Plan framework and bypass in several ways institutionalised planning practices of democracy and transparency. Whilst one should be careful not automatically to judge large-scale urban development projects as neoliberal (Sager, 2015), the latest government prestige projects do, even at this early phase, follow the same neoliberal planning model that was institutionalised in the Ørestad project. The Lynetteholmen-project follows a market-driven self-financing rationality based on the assumption that increases in land value can easily be captured to finance transport infrastructures. In addition, both *Lynetteholmen* and *Holmene* have been framed as important strategic projects aiming at boosting Copenhagen's international competitiveness. It is exactly the rationality of having to stay in front in the global competition that runs through both projects. The Danish Government stresses in *the Capital 2030* policy that:

> In international benchmarks the capital is strong, both in terms of life quality and conditions for growth, and the capital area is very important for Denmark's economy. This is however no natural law. We only have to go back a few decades until the image was completely different – where the development had almost stopped with a decline in inhabitants, rundown infrastructure, and where businesses and investments were moving out. If it is to be attractive to live and do business in the capital in the future, it is necessary to address a number of challenges early. (Danish Government, 2019b: 5)

Here, it is worth noting how the imaginary of the rundown Copenhagen of the 1980s is used to legitimise the grand political prestige projects of 2019. The neoliberal discourse has become so ingrained in the political argumentation for planning projects that it constitutes a taking for granted set of truths about what must be done to stay ahead in the competitive race (Keil, 2009). In this way, Danish spatial planning suffers from the same obsession with economic competitiveness that commentators have noted elsewhere, and which also in a Danish context has led spatial planning into a postpolitical condition (Boland, 2014; Allmendinger & Haughton, 2012).

Third, it is also evident that the national government's increasingly neoliberal mindset has had a significant influence on the recent revisions of the Finger Plan. The Finger Plan is struggling to maintain its legitimacy in a political climate increasingly concerned with spatial planning's role in facilitating business development and growth (Olesen & Hansen, 2020). The Finger Plan is increasingly articulated as a barrier for local (municipal) growth. In order to compensate, the Finger Plan has been 'fixed' (or hacked!), by allowing the municipalities to propose amendments to the plan. In this way, the Finger Plan has (so far) maintained its political legitimacy. But as the case of the Dutch planning doctrine illustrates, the continuous amendments of the planning doctrine might weaken the doctrine (Roodbol-Mekkes et al., 2012). There is a risk that the inbuilt contradictions resulting from the continuous 'given in' to local development aspirations might eventually undermine the planning doctrine itself.

Finally, the Finger Plan, as a planning doctrine, has not only survived, but remained surprisingly intact, despite the recent political critique of the plan and initiatives to roll back planning legislation. On the one hand, this illustrates the flexible nature of planning doctrines and their ability to evolve in order to maintain political legitimacy. However, one could question to what extent the Finger Plan is able to guide the future spatial development of the Greater Copenhagen Area in any meaningful way, as the national government continue to launch large-scale urban development

projects outside the spatial framework. In this sense, the Finger Plan constitutes a neoliberalised planning doctrine. On the other hand, *the Finger Plan 2019* also indicates that there is an inbuilt inertia in planning doctrines, which (at least in some cases) is able to resist or mitigate the effects of neoliberalisation. The Finger Plan has proven to be 'immune' to a more widespread neoliberalisation. Whilst this might reflect the hybridised and contradictory nature in which neoliberalisation unfolds, this paper suggests that more attention should be paid to the inertia embedded in planning doctrines, and planning doctrines' potential for acting as spaces of resistance in the ongoing neoliberalisation of spatial planning.

Notes

1) It is worth noting that the governance reform and *the Finger Plan 2007* were prepared by a liberal-conservative national government.

2) Additional 23 suggestions were subjected to further analysis, as they involved planning related to new transport corridors or projects in close proximity to Copenhagen International Airport.

3) Construction costs have been estimated to 20 billion Danish kroner (www.lynetteholmen.com)

4) Reference is here made to the Italian chocolate company Ferrero's official commercial slogan for Kinder Egg or Kinder Surprise that it contains three things in one egg (the chocolate, a toy and the surprise).

5) It is outside the scope of the paper to go into detail with this critique. The main critique includes questioning of the financial aspects of the project, the environmental impact assessment which only included the construction phase, and the main (neoliberal) rationality of the project.

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