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- results from a comparative Danish case study on territorial inequality and social cohesion

Abstract

Purpose: In the present article, we focus on how we are to understand a locally sensitive organisation of territorial cohesion in the Danish context. Public facilitation of the involvement of local businesses and civil organizations in securing territorial cohesion and local development is becoming ever more crucial. Traditional sociological concepts and standardized area-types used for administrative purposes have turned out not being very helpful for guiding this facilitation and in understanding the interrelation between inequality, urbanization and territorial cohesion. We argue for a processual and relational approach to urbanization.
Methodology: The present article is based on interview material and policy documents from three Danish case studies representing urban, suburban and rural forms of settlement. The case studies is part of a cross-European research project.
Findings: We show how territorial governance play a key role in the strategies of densification/de-densification facilitating shielding capacities of collective efficacy, and reversely that bottom-up innovations are crucial for the ability of territorial governance to mobilize territorial capital and mediate in effects of territorial inequality. Spatial imaginaries legitimize these efforts to organize cohesion. The spatial imaginaries work as common frame of reference for the interplay between strategies of (de)densification and collective efficacy, and they activate particular balances between growth agendas and everyday life.
Originality: These findings represent an original perspective on how and why urbanization impact on places in a more specific and variated way than often portrayed as it highlight how social capacities tied to place might work with or against existing social, economic and cultural structures shaping territorial cohesion.

Introduction

"We have a neighbourhood called Rundhøj where local citizens have contacted the citizens committee to get assistance to strengthen their area that has been struggling with shootings, closing down of shops, hash pushers, gambling and all sorts – an area in decline. This is actually an area that lies smug within a super resourceful area with villas and expensive apartments. In the square, they [the citizens of Rundhøj] wanted to tear down an old petrol station that had generated a bad atmosphere... They wanted to build a house on the square. So we hired an architect and made a "build and enjoy event" twice a week…after half a year we had a barmy little house made of two containers and a roof terrace…everyone had access to the key, and all summer it has just been open to residents also in the evenings…"(Interview with public authority employee, Aarhus, Urb_PA_11).

This is an example from Aarhus, the second largest city of Denmark, of how social innovation from below collaborate with municipal organisation in order to tackle territorial problems in a particular locality. Here a circle of stakeholders consisting of local businesses, headmasters of the local school and kindergartens, housing associations and local residents took the initiative to lift the area physically and socially. Territorial inequality and uneven life chances, as in the above locality, is in a European context places often addressed as a lack of territorial cohesion with close relations to uneven economic growth and consequences for spatial justice and democratic capacity (Barca 2009, Böhme 2011). However, what is meant by territorial cohesion and what cohesion does is fuzzy (Neergaard et al 2020). Part of the reason for the difficulties of conceptualizing territorial cohesion is

that the discussion often is stuck in a linear conceptualization of territory as neatly stacked boxes removing attention from human life in and interaction with places. Hence, examples like the one from Rundhøj might help us gain an understanding of the organisation of territorial cohesion that is connected to the organization of social life in places.

In the present article, we focus on how we are to understand the organisation of territorial cohesion in three Danish localities, Lemvig, Horsens and Aarhus representing different types of settlements and urban density (rural, suburban and urban forms). Here we conceptualize territorial cohesion as the interplay between territorial capital (Servillo et al 2012), collective efficacy (Sampson 2011, 2012) and territorial governance (Fallov et al. 2019) (see figure 1 below). This conceptualization indicates that territorial cohesion is the dynamic outcome of relations between structural forces and endogenous conditions and cultures (Bosworth et al 2016). Territorial cohesion depends on the relations between territorial assets, the political strategies for utilizing them, and the webs of social relatedness generating local solutions to what are conceived as territorial problems. Thus, rather than generalizing on social capacities of localities from urban forms we investigate the place specific patterns of social life and forms of organization. This investigation is based on the Danish case material from cross European EU Horizon research project COHSMO[1]. This project is concerned with how we in different parts of Europe deal with the urban paradox residing in cites as both motors of growth and as confronted with a range of territorial problems (Eurostat 2016:33). Thus, *whether* and *in what way* social inequality is growing between urban and rural areas vary, between different rural areas and between different urban areas within the same city/functional area of the same city (Eurostat 2016). The question of how territorial cohesion is organised relates to the way localities matter for patterns of inequality and thus quality of life leading to issues of spatial justice and democratic capacity in and across localities.

We begin by revisiting theories of the relation between urban environments and social life, relate this to critical urban thinking about variegated urbanization and territorial regulation (Brenner & Schmid 2015) and to theories of how density, de-population and suburbanization processes should be understood (McFarlane 2020, Keil 2018). After a short methodological section and presentation of the three case areas, we proceed with two sections analysing how the three case sites organize territorial cohesion and what role the mobilization of collective efficacy have for this. We argue that the three Danish cases indicate that existing spatial configurations, historical path dependencies and traditions for collective organizations play a role for how processes of urbanization play out, and that these variated conditions become more important than conceptual forms related to distinctions between urban, suburban and rural. We show how territorial governance play a key role in the strategies of densification/de-densification facilitating the shielding capacities of collective efficacy, and reversely that bottom-up innovations are crucial for the ability for territorial governance to mobilize territorial capital and mediate in effects of territorial inequality. We argue that the efforts to organize cohesion is legitimized by spatial imaginaries that mobilise particular balances between growth agendas and everyday life.

Theories of understanding and organizing the city

It has been a common assumption that urban concentration is the precondition for economic growth (Bala 2009) but city size is far from the main factor contributing to economic performance. This

[1] The Horizon 2020 project COHSMO (grant agreement No 727058). COHSMO is the acronym for a new trans-European research project on *Inequality, urbanization and territorial* ***Coh****esion: Developing the European* ***S****ocial* ***Mo****del of economic growth and democratic capacity* launched on 1 May 2017.

relationship is highly context dependent and seems to be dependent on the country's size and, many other factors, such as urban infrastructure, adequate level of governance effectiveness, territorial capital, and industrial composition play a non-negligible role in the economic fortunes of cities (Frick & Rodríguez-Pose 2017). Territorial cohesion relate to the interaction of economic, social and cultural cohesion, which maps out geographically variated. The benefits of increasing city size are not without limits because increasing sizes of cities not only concentrate human, capital, innovation, and so on, urbanization is also known to cause many problems that affects growth, innovation and welfare.

All the way though the history of urban sociology, there have been some divergences when it comes to what effects city life have on individuals and their social relations in the urban environment. Simmel (1903) and later Lois Wirth (1938) saw the city size as a condition for living that affects social life dramatically. The number of inhabitants in a settlement beyond a certain limit will affect the relation between them and the character of the city. Simmel emphasised reserve, indifference and blasé as devices for people to immunizing themselves against the personal claims and expectations of others (Simmel 1903). Wirth saw the urban individual gaining emancipation and freedom but loose the spontaneous self-expression, the morale, and the sense of participation that comes with living in an integrated society (Wirth 1938). Park and Burges did not regard these perspectives as being mutually exclusive and saw parallel developments within different neighbourhoods and zones of the urban environment (Park & Burgess 1925). Hence, the city was both home to vivid and mutually obligating social relations and a place that tended to cause or develop different types of social problems and crime. In itself, it was ground breaking to perceive the city as a conglomerate of very different places that were located in close proximity, but very different socially, culturally and in relation to mobility and turbulence (Jørgensen 2019).

Later Herbert Gans (1963) argued that inner city – "urban villagers" and suburbanites tend to maintain their pre-existing cultures and personalities when they move into a new area (Gans 1963). Thus, we cannot deduct alone from urban forms how social relations in particular places play out. Later urban sociology has primarily been concentrated on cities, especially big ones, concurrently virtually ignoring the other types of communities – suburbs, and rural areas in which a majority of most western countries live and work. Cities was increasingly analysed through territorial transgressive concepts indicating how urbanization processes become a dimension in the class struggle between global elites and territorially fixed groups (spaces of flow vs. spaces of places (Castells 1997), glamour zone vs. war zone (Sassen 2000), mobility (Urry & Sheller 2006), elective belonging vs. dwellers Savage, Bagnall, and Longhurst (2005)).

The solution to this long scholarly debate is to focus on how places are meaningful to individuals and local communities rather than clinging on to dichotomous categories or arbitrary administrative boundaries. We should analyse how social features tie to actual and specific places. Robert Sampson is one of the urban sociologist who formulated an alternative by insisting that the city despite urbanization and globalization processes remain place-based in character (Sampson 2012), and thus that neighbourhoods are persistent determinants in the quantity and quality of human behaviour (Sampson 2019). According to Sampson, places 'in late-modern societies sometimes constitute a community in the traditional sense characterized by shared values and tight-knit bonds; (and) in many cases, however, they do not' (Sampson 2011:233). Based on this, Sampson has coined the concept 'collective efficacy' as a link between mutual trust, shared expectations among residents and willingness to intervene and interact in this sense actually lived social relations and the expectations to them have an impact on neighbourhood and places (Sampson 2011). He shows in numerous empirical studies that collective efficacy has a shielding effect and impact on structural inequality, albeit not diminishing it (Sampson 2012, 2014, 2019). Collective action in pursuit of public goods and territorial development cannot be read directly off organisational density or levels of

participation, but depends moreover on the effects of how daily routine activities and the spatial organisation of services and facilities such as schools, shopping, bars, public transportation, residential areas permits variety in social interaction. Moreover, the capacity of collective efficacy to influence the direction of territorial and social development depends on how local social ties coalesce and make connections to non-profit organisation and the horizontal and vertical ties with institutions and local decision makers (Sampson 2012).

A relational geography of urbanization, suburban densification and spatial justice

If we want to approach territorial cohesion resulting from the interaction between the mobilization strategies of territorial assets and forms of collective action locally we have to find ways to connect structures of accumulation with everyday questions of organizing place in meaningful ways. Lefebvre managed to straddle across these perspectives in his insistence on the relevance of not only studying the struggle over the rights to the city, but also how the city and the urban fabric are generated through a constant *ouvre*, which connect economic structures to ideological, symbolical constructions and lived life in the city. The city is a product of regulated actions, processes of institutionalisation, symbolic codifications, and spatio-temporal materialities (Lefebvre 1991 1996).

Brenner and Schmid argue building, among others, on Lefebvre's perspective of territorialisation for a view of the urban as process rather than form (Brenner 2013, Brenner & Schmid 2015). A contemporary analysis of the urban problematique, and thus how processes of urbanization interacts with patterns of socio-spatial differentiation, variegated forms of capitalism accumulation and uneven development, must take account of the dialectic of implosion and explosion (Lefebvre 1996). Importantly, they argue that this dialectic is not something that is fought out in abstract terms, but in very practical struggles related both to political struggles over regulating territorialisation and in everyday life (Brenner & Schmid 2015). Along similar lines, McFarlane (2020) and Roger Keil (2018) are arguing for a relational geography as the relevant way to understand contemporary urbanization and historical processes of densification and de/re-densification. Forces of urbanization generate not only densification but increasingly sprawl. This changes the relationship between suburbia, urban areas and urban hinterlands. We have to move beyond dichotomies of urban-rural, suburban-urban to capture the complex processes of changing territorialisation. Suburbanization and peripheral urbanization challenge the urban centres as the main drivers of economic growth as suburban localities become multi-centred foci of urban development and state driven settlement (Keil 2018). Moreover, extended urbanisms pose transformations to "urbanism as a way of life" with the rise of suburbanism (Keil 2018) taking on distinct and urban forms, and the appropriation of rural qualities to the city.

A relational approach has the advantage of focusing not only on how social, political and economic processes influence and are influenced by urbanization, but also how processes of transformations and variations of densification, de-/re-densification and territorialisation influence these processes in turn (McFarlane 2020). Transformations of densification and territorialisation are not natural processes but tied to social, political and economic forces producing places and displacing populations. This is linked to Jones & Woods' (2013) argument for a new localism that investigate both the material coherence of localities as a basis of collective action and their dependence on an imagined coherence giving meaning and identity to locality. Valorisation of forms of density and the stories told that legitimize such transformation of densification and de/re-densification interact with powerful assemblages through with such transformations gain practical and material form (McFarlane 2020). They result in the production of new socio-spatial inequalities. Densification *pull together* commodified city space making it increasingly difficult for the urban poor and middle class to gain affordable living spaces in the urban arena. At the same time, urban commons and public realms *are pulled apart* by processes of de/re-densification posing challenges to the social forces that Lefebvre

(1996) was calling for and the protective shielding capacity that Sampson is investigating in Chicago (Sampson 2012). Thus to understand the *how* of territorial cohesion we must investigate the social, political and economic processes that hold the "disjunct fragments" of extended urbanization and suburbanization together (Keil 2018).

The structural causes of inequalities are produced at higher scales (regional, national and global economies) however, local governments have significant roles in managing, distributing and administrating unequal growth and segregation of life chances. The leeway for doing this are generated through the 'spatial imaginaries' (Sum & Jessop 2013) that legitimize particular changes, directions and preferred actors, the allocation of resources to support relative autonomy, and requisite variety. According to Tonkiss (2020), we have to look at the strategic capacity of local governments to move resources to people instead of simply displacing people. Thus, how we govern the city as a distributive system, its markets, its positioning in relation to growth agendas, and how these processes interact with the existential inequalities associated with the distribution of recognition and rights (Tonkiss 2020). This is what we in the above term their ability to mobilize territorial capital and collective efficacy.

Drawing this theoretical debate together, it generates an analytical framework for our analysis below of how the three cities of Lemvig, Horsens and Aarhus organize cohesion.

Figure 1

An analytical framework emphasising the interconnection between territorial cohesion and collective action and its dependence on how this coherence is imagined and relates to forms of social relatedness to place. We do this firstly by focusing on their organisation of processes of urbanization and suburbanization through planning for de-population and growth respectively. Secondly, we focus through selected examples on the mobilization of collective efficacy and how these efforts are anchored in spatial imaginaries that guide strategic selectivities, the cross-sectoral government alliances, and the room for deliberation and community action. First a few methodological points and more detailed description of the three cases.

Methodology

The article is based on material from the Horizon 2020 project COHSMO (grant agreement No 727058), a new trans-European research project on *Inequality, urbanization and territorial **Coh**esion: Developing the European **S**ocial **Mo**del of economic growth and democratic capacity* (2017-2021). The project includes seven partners across Europe: England, Lithuania, Italy, Austria, Poland, Greece and Denmark. The present article is based on policy documents (physical plans, strategy documents, specific policy documents) and the 88 qualitative interviews in total, 26 from Lemvig, 27 from Horsens and 28 from Aarhus, and 7 informants from regional and national administrations.

The different types of locations – rural, suburban and urban - has been utilized as a social laboratory for understanding social life in the light of the location-specific routines, traditions, network-density, patterns of exchange, segregation and organizational infrastructure (Sampson 2011). Robert Park (Park 1929) originally generated such a place-based social ethnography in order to understand social variations of Chicago neighbourhoods and especially the varied way that different social and ethnic groups were related to their neighbourhoods. In the COHSMO project, it was introduced in order to understand how and to which degree a certain type of social life is attached to the specific location as an *attribute of place* (Sampson 2011). How locals experience it and if it can explain why locations that are similar regarding socio-economic variables, age profile, type of location etc. can be very different when it comes to the level and composition of the social capacities of the area.

In each area, we began our research with desk research of a range of general documents related to demographic and settlement structures, problems and challenges facing each area, key strategic policy documents and any associated documents. On the basis of the document analysis we identified key local actors and their organizations. Having done this, we moved to the stage of carrying out interviews with active community actors, business actors, and governance and policy actors. The latter category covering local school leaders, local authority employees, higher executive civil servants, regional policy actors and civil servants from the national public administration. We also employed a snowballing technique to generate additional interviews. This strategy for recruiting key actors for result in a bias towards the stakeholders already active or included in some way or other in the planning and development process. This limits the space for the less powerful voices of citizens. However, the interviewed active community actors included non-professional citizens engaged in various community activities.

The interviews were conducted in most cases by one and in some case by two researchers. The vast majority of interviews were done face-to-face in the three localities and a few done by telephone. The time spent in each locality made it possible to get a sense of each locality and follow up on places mentioned or people highlighted. However, as this is a multi-sited case study with emphasis on planning strategies and relations between local government and local stakeholders, emphasis was on gathering perspectives across different actors rather than investigating particular local organizations as such – but still committed to reflexive dialogue with the interlocutors, between what Burawoy calls "local processes and extra-local forces" which again is understood through "a dialogue of theory with itself" (Burawoy 1998:5). In this sense the study is an adapted version of what Burawoy has termed Extended Case Method as there has been a pronounced degree of interaction related to the field study and a reflective process selecting the relevant keypersons in accordance with what was successively learnt during the field study. The strict focus on relations between local governments and local stakeholders does leave out particular local perspectives that could have been researched through classical ethnographic fieldwork in the case locations, but that is beyond the scope of the project. he interviews focused on identifying territorial assets and the governance of territorial problems, with particular focus on the structural forces of urbanization and unequal development. We asked the informants how they would describe the character of the local community, how local community and local businesses were engaged in territorial development, and the relations to surrounding localities and role of other scales of government.

Case study areas

The COHSMO case study focuses on three case municipalities within Central Denmark Region. The argument for selecting the 'secondary' growth region of Denmark (compared to the Capital region) is that this is a less radical case than the functional region of the capital, and that the Central Denmark Region demonstrates more innovative cases in terms of collaboration across civil society, business and municipality. In the project-design, focus for the cases was to capture different patterns of urbanization, their integration with changed demography, their capacity to organize cohesion and territorial development from below. The aim was to select urban municipalities covering core cities in the country. Suburban cases were characterised with: recent experience of population growth and/or urban sprawl; significant commuting to the core city of the agglomeration; domination of non-agriculture functions; internal diversification; and presence of social challenges. Finally, the rural cases were to be characterised by low population density, a tendency for out-migration and agriculture playing a central role for employment and economy.

Aarhus Municipality (just below 350,000 inhabitants) is the second largest city in Denmark. The operationalisation of the study of Aarhus was approached through focusing on particular neighbourhoods: (Aarhus Ø (middleclass area), Sydhavnen (regenerated harbour area), Gellerup (vulnerable neighbourhood), Business Park Skejby (business park with housing), The Agro Food Park (food innovation site in urban sprawl).

Horsens as the suburban case, with 90,000 inhabitants, represents a case of growth and spatial inequality. At the same time, however, some parishes experience population decline and a concentration of challenges in specific social housing areas (e.g. Sundparken). The overall growth thus seems not to benefit all inhabitants and all areas of Horsens. Furthermore, Horsens is a typical case of the suburban paradox of benefitting from the location near an urban centre, Aarhus, while at the same time establishing the city as an attractive alternative to Aarhus, offering educational opportunities and attractive residential areas.

The rural case, Lemvig, with 20,000 inhabitants, represents a peripheral municipality with challenges related to demography and local economy. The municipality experiences a shrinking population but at the same time boasts a high number of start-ups and business potentials, a diverse and active civil society, and a solid ability to break educational reproduction compared to other rural fringe areas. We will now turn to how our three case areas plan in relation to the consequences of urbanization, which in the case of Aarhus and Horsens refer to population growth and strategic positioning, whereas in the case of Lemvig it is a question of mediating and countering effects of depopulation trends.

Strategies of densification/de-densification in rural, sub-urban and urban places

In Aarhus, organizing cohesion is a question of strategically planning the densification process. This process, which pull together commercial and public sites, and pull apart particular parts of the urban common and urban fabric (McFarlane 2020). The population is growing rapidly leading to congestion in the inner city and around Aarhus (27% more cars and 11 % more people according to interview with municipal urban planner Urb_PA_7). From the 1990s, focus has been on turning previous industrial sites (former railway areas, harbour areas, big factory sites) in to urban development and housing areas, and previous single-family housing areas into multi-storey residential areas. Another planner working for the municipality explains how being an land owner is a strategic tool to realize the wanted urban development:

"*This means that the city council has the possibility to set agendas that are more difficult. For example in relation to Aarhus Ø, it has been demanded that 25% of the housing should be social housing" (interview with municipal urban planner, Aarhus, Urb_PA_10)*

This gives them the muscle to strategically plan for growth, and to initiate development facilitating private investment. Aarhus is segregated with affluent neighbourhoods to the south and north along the coastline, and socially disadvantaged neighbourhoods to the west of the city centre. An ambition for implementing the vision of Aarhus as a "City for All" (Aarhus Municipality 2018b) is to develop socially mixed city areas by building social housing units in the centre of Aarhus and private residential homes in vulnerable areas, such as Gellerup. The ambition is to build 400 social housing family units a year the next four years (Interview with municipal planner, Aarhus, Urb_PA_10, Urb_PA_8).

In vulnerable areas, such as Gellerup and Bispehaven, densification, supplements cross-sectoral interventions, such as 'Stairwell to Stairwell' concentrating administrative help and intervention, and 'Build up' that involves local residents in regeneration processes. After previous rounds of regeneration are conceived as not having changed social composition, the municipality now wants to reduce social housing to 30% in Gellerup (Aarhus Municipality 2018a), which is more than demanded in the national policy for disadvantaged areas (Regeringen 2018). Densification is in these areas a question of displacing the concentration of residents with complex social problems and poverty, and building other residential forms in between social housing units. In Gellerup, for example, 914 units are to be torn down and replaced with a mixture of private ownership and student housing. A central

planner explains that the municipal ownership of potential building sites mean they can promise housing organisations new social housing units in return for their collective responsibility for re-locating the displaced residents (Interview with municipal planner, Aarhus Urb_PA_10). It is uncertain whether this strategy of displacement and pulling apart parts of the city (McFarlane 2020) in the form of a strategic circulation of vulnerable social groups pan out as planned. Moreover, this pro-active strategy from the municipality have changed the collaborative environment that existed previously between housing organisations, citizens' democracy, and municipality potentially undermining how well marginalized areas feel included and thus the development of cohesion in the segregated city of Aarhus.

It is therefore a mixed picture in Aarhus as to how the municipality built on the *oeuvre* (Lefebvre 1996) of citizens, artists and community organisations in order to ensure social and territorial cohesion in the implementation of urban development plans. The close partnerships with businesses and investors result in different opinions as to the responsiveness and involvement of citizens in the municipal development plans, despite emphasis on collaboration and active citizenship (Interview with neighbourhood representative Aarhus Ø, Urb_COMM_2, Interview with active citizen South Harbour, Urb_COMM_4, Interview with NGO representative Skejby, Urb_COMM_3).

Densification and transition in Horsens

Horsens with its cheaper housing market benefit from a strategic position in the polymorphic city of Eastern Jutland, as the networked city territory stretching from Aarhus down all the East side of Jutland (Nielsen 2015). Albeit, Horsens does not have a large wealthy community. This means that urban development has to cater for what one of the interviewed urban planners calls the "grey middle class" and this makes it more difficult, relative to Aarhus, to attract investors (Interview with municipal planner, Horsens, Sub_PA_2). The successful transition from prison town to event city result in the urbanization of the inner city areas to cater for the incoming middleclass requesting entertainment, activities, and a vibrant city life, for example by regenerating the harbour (interview with municipal planner, Horsens, Sub_PA_1). In relation to the harbour, three goals are highlighted: being a city for everyone, being a frame for the good life and giving access to the water. These goals reflect a social democratic emphasis on balanced development and inclusive growth (ensured by the municipal ownership of the promenade).

Population growth leads to urban sprawl and that Horsens potentially 'running out of space in 2040' (Horsens Municipality 2018a:79, Interview with municipal employee, Horsens, Sub_PA_11)). There is a planning ambition to make the connection between place identity and densification strategies clearer, and "controlling growth" (2018, Suburb_29:79, emphasis added). Controlling growth here is not as much a question of delimiting growth as integrating business areas into urban areas, for example by letting Horsens grow more vertically. The new high-rises "Gejserne" (built on the previous industrial harbour front) are used as an example by several interviewees. On the one hand, their proximity to renovated barracks for more marginal groups is a sign of "differentiated housing policy" (Interview with urban planner, Horsens, Sub_PA_2). On the other hand, they are used as an example of how entrepreneurs, end up getting their own way despite public protests about their aesthetic qualities for the area (Interview with NGO representative, Sub_COMM_10, and Interview with local politician, Horsens, Sup_PA_23). Horsens is still struggling to increase the life chances of parts of its population. In relation to the National Strategy to Tackle Parallel Societies, mentioned above, (Regeringen 2018) Horsens has achieved a dispensation, which means that radical changes to Sundparken (vulnerable social housing area) is prevented by a densification strategy that move a local school. Thus, changing amenities in that way seeking to achieve a greater social mix (Interview with chief executive, Horsens, Sub_PA_21).

Strategies of de-densification in Lemvig

In Lemvig, the main impact of urbanization is depopulation. Young people move away to get an education and do not return. There is a focus on settlement and maintaining societal life even in the smallest villages of the municipality. In comparable municipalities in Denmark, it has become common to concentrate resources and services and prioritise resources to strengthen growth in one or two central towns. In Lemvig, however, the municipal authorities have chosen a more decentralized strategy for growth. There is a an experiment with cluster villages sharing facilities such as schools and child care facilities between villages, but the main strategy is to secure what Fertner et al (2015) term 'residential urbanism' emphasising support for social organization and leisure activities in all main villages, and not only in Lemvig town. Rural housing is in general losing value on the housing market, which affects Lemvig due to its remote location. Through funds from national 'rural development funds' cheap rental housing which attracts vulnerable and poor families, or houses abandoned and left to fall into disrepair, are torn down or fixed up to preserve villages' aesthetic qualities (Interview with planner, Lemvig, Rur_PA_7, Interview with municipal administrative manager, Lemvig, Rur_PA_14).

In a sense, the case of Lemvig represents a de-densification strategy that is to secure densification, and by changing layouts secure against attracting what is considered to be "unattractive" social groups. In both Aarhus and Horsens the densification strategies build on the belief that changing the physical layout, or pulling apart and putting back together the urban fabric (McFarlane 2020), will generate social mix, and that this will generate the needed social and territorial cohesion (Fallov et al 2019). However, just bringing different social groups into close proximity by changing the social composition of territories does not overcome the social distances originating from different habitus and their different strategies and tactics for urban living (Savage et al 2005). Whether current strategies of densification can overcome social distance becomes a pregnant problematique, especially with the emphasis on attracting investors, pleasing businesses and developing middle-class forms of urban living. Stress on social mix in existing social housing and new areas is a form of pre-distributive government interventions to tackle inequality (Tonkiss 2020), but they should be judged relative to the growth agenda, which potentially generate new forms of inequality.

Collective efficacy and organizing cohesion

The level and composition of collective efficacy (Sampson 2011, 2012) vary in the three case-locations and so does the local attempts to organize territorial cohesion. Such variations relate to the socioeconomic status of a given area, type of leadership, and cultural and historical traits for community and collective engagement. We see two interrelated elements decisive for the strength and type of collective efficacy. Firstly, we will argue that there is not a simple relation between degree of urbanization and place attachment, and if we are to understand how urbanization affects social organization, and the chances of collective action and development, we have to address variations in place attachment (Buchecker and Frick 2020, Fallov et al 2013, Jørgensen et al 2016). Secondly, the existence of a municipal "spatial imaginary" (Sum & Jessop 2013) works a common frame of reference for the relation between territorial capital, territorial governance and the mobilisation of collective efficacy. In Aarhus, it is the self-image as a 'regional driver for growth' and its balance with being a 'city for all' emphasising participation and civic engagement. In Horsens, it is the imaginary of how it is in the 'DNA of Horsens' that everybody are 'pulling together as a unit' and how this is fundamental to the mobilization of their territorial capital. In Lemvig, it is the idea of how a combination of 'mikropol' (Fallov et al 2019) as an international orientation couple with 'pragmatic entrepreneurialism' and strong collective efficacy help them do well despite peripheral odds (Jørgensen et al 2020). Such spatial imaginaries, or narratives of what is the 'local', shapes the direction of local leadership, and become hooks for the local formation of interlocking relations

between local communities, local businesses and local government, which again condition territorial cohesion.

In Lemvig engagement and participation is extremely high. Relations are tightly interlocked between community actors and actors within public administration and business actors. The general line is that everyone is aware of the fact that:

"...In this area we are not used to be given something. We have been used to provide it by our own efforts. You are not able to live here if you are not able to provide things yourself." (Interview with active resident, Lemvig, Rur_COMM_17).

The resonance of this mentality of collaborative responsibility for taking care of local problems underpins an agile territorial governance with changeable collaborations of actors. For example, a village association in the municipality of Lemvig have been proactive in changing the depopulation trend changing the place to be more attractive to potential newcomers and in order to make the place a convenient place to live for long-distance workers and commuters. Volunteers have been engaged in different projects: making several nature paths down to the fjord, applying for national funds to improve the internet coverage, and collaborating with the municipality of Lemvig and NGOs around housing Syrian refugees, and freeing up freeing up buildings for senior co-up housing. Even though the population of the village has increased in recent years, the village association is fully aware that they have to work constantly to attract people (Interview with community representative, Lemvig Rur_com_20). These activities rely on a tight cooperation with the municipality and potential investors. The village representative relays that the municipality meets their interests in boosting residential urbanism (Fertner 2015) putting emphasis on investment in liveability and the mobilization of collective efficacy as crucial for securing territorial development despite structural pulls of urbanization.

In Horsens, the level of collective efficacy is relatively high but the collaboration between different local actors seems to be more organized, formalized and systematized. The Horsens Alliance, a strong cooperative partnership between the municipality, local institutions, local private business, and NGOs, has been central to territorial development in Horsens. A chief executive in the public administration explains that it is important to mobilise local entrepreneurial resources and couple them with economic power (Interview with chief executive, Horsens, Sub_PA_20). The Horsens Alliance generates a common narrative for territorial development of Horsens, and it becomes a formalised framework for supporting innovative ideas and their actualization. Moreover, it becomes a framework for corporate social responsibility utilised in tackling social inequality in Horsens. The same chief executive in Horsens public administration explains that the alliance has been successful in bringing down a high unemployment rate and mobilise partners to become involved in projects for those furthest away from the labour market (Interview with chief executive, Horsens, Sub_PA_20). Thus, the Alliance has made possible a strong local connection between educational policies, the needs of the local labour market, and CSR that have positive effects on territorial cohesion and inclusion of vulnerable groups (Horsens Kommune 2018b).

Aarhus contains a wider range of local engagement, participation and collaboration between different types of actors, which sets the composition of collective efficacy apart from the two other cases. Thus, some neighbourhoods have tightly knitted networks in the traditional sense with mutual norms and a widespread community while others do not. The local authority aims to strengthen participation in the development of Aarhus through their 'citizen policy' (Aarhus Municipality 2016). One of the ways is to build neighbourhood community houses, and networks between these across the city, as anchor points for writing the disjoint fragments into the common narrative, and have experimental funds for community activities. It is important to the municipality that this is not a project for particular groups and not competing with the municipal funded intervention in social housing areas, but rather small budget and facilitation of co-creation where local residents want to generate a particular local

transformation. This was the case with the opening example from Rundhøj. In other neighbourhoods, they have worked with refugees, or with integrating vulnerable social groups in job training. The policy is an experiment where local authority attempts to mobilize collective efficacy in the shape of community engagement, participation and ownership, but also instating this as a condition of citizenship in Aarhus. Thus, local authorities experiment with how much local territorial governance they should organize and where they should leave things to happen by themselves.

Concluding discussion

Generally, the impact of urbanization in Denmark has changed the relationship between the largest cities, their hinterland, and the towns in the fringe areas. Organizing territorial cohesion as a result of urbanization requires a dual glance on structural forces coming from outside and on local societal and social forces stemming from local capital, traditions, cultures. The impact of urbanization on places is linked to the specific composition of these physical, symbolic and the social aspects of place. In this article, we have conceptualized territorial cohesion as the interplay between territorial capital, collective efficacy and territorial governance. We have shown how organizing cohesion in the three Danish localities is shaped by strategies of densification/de-densification, and the mobilization of collective efficacy. We have argued that a spatial imagery in the three places serves as a common frame of reference for the interplay between strategies of densification and de-densification and the mobilization of collective efficacy and strategic selection of governance collaborations and partnership, and hence legitimizing the coupling of liveability and growth in the three places. Consequently, spatial imaginaries have real effects, resonate in particular ways in local organizations and influence the prioritization of actors and agendas. Thus we have argued for a relational approach taking into account *how* transformations of densification, territorialisation are tied to the production of place by political and economic forces, as well as how the social capacities and meaning given to place shape such processes in turn.

Thus, we conclude from our study that the degree of urbanization does not necessarily in and of itself reduce cohesion, but it affects the way cohesion is organized, and especially the type of actors involved. In the segregated city of Aarhus, it is clear that cohesion is organized differently in different neighbourhoods equalling the variated social landscape and variated level of collective efficacy. In Horsens, cohesion is predominantly organized in collaboration between business-life and local government. This collaboration has succeeded in changing the physical, social and symbolic reputation of Horsens but has to a lesser degree grown from civil society actors. In Lemvig, cohesion is organised in an equal and transparent dialogue between governance actors, business actors and civil society actors. Initiatives is stemming out of local capital, traditions and cultures. The strategy of de-densification combined with the de-depopulation makes it a challenge that is shared across sectors, type of actors and across geography.

In Denmark, national policies to tackle issues of territorial cohesion focus on the placement of state services such as educational facilities or big administrative centres as possible drivers of local development, or in reducing concentrations of social housing in vulnerable neighbourhoods. The question of centralization of services continue to play a crucial role in how localities matter. However, our results indicate that the organization of territorial cohesion have to take point of departure in a variated and relational geography. To move the concept of territorial cohesion beyond being a fuzzy concept primarily emphasised in policy arenas, policy makers and planners need to take into account social life in places and how cohesion are imagined locally. Strategies of densification and de-densification pull urban commons together and tear them apart in order to secure development or mobilize territorial capital. The examples from the three case studies indicate that development stem not only from positioning or from attracting middle class residents to localities, but by mobilizing broad set of actors. We have shown that spatial imaginaries become a way to signal balance between

economic development and social and territorial cohesion, in some instances it become a means to legitimize a trade-off between the different forms of cohesion. While at the same time being a vehicle in generating spatial justice by bringing diverse agents together in localized collective organised ways that can generate social innovative ways to tackle inequalities.

Therefore, future distinctions within urban sociology should focus on *how* cohesion it is organised. Where the first to a large degree is a matter of the level and composition of collective efficacy, the latter relates to strategies of densification and de-densification and their connection to economic growth strategies. The social capacity to mediate in the impact of urbanization depends on the existing degree of territorial cohesion, thus if local challenges takes place within a social segregated territory, or an area dominated by shared perceptions of the specific territorial challenges. Segregated areas are not only pertaining to densely populated urban areas. The more symbiotic and relational the urban and rural becomes the more likely it is that social segregation appear in less densely populated areas (Lund 2019). New ways of defining standardized area-types using micro-areas instead of municipalities, regions, parish, LAUs, NUTs (Lund 2019) will push forward the discussion of the modification of the traditional urban sociological concepts, serving a relational approach to the complex dynamics between urbanization, inequality and cohesion initiated within in the present article.

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