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# “Welcome in my back Yard” – the role of affective practices and learning in an experiment with local social integration in Hjortshøj, Denmark

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## *Abstract*

This article is about how to understand community action and development of the commons can play a key role in societal integrative processes in increasingly segregated Scandinavian societies. More specifically it relates to the residents' integration of sixteen young adults with intellectual disabilities in Hjortshøj, what we might call a Danish intentional community. What might be learned from the example of Hjortshøj is, that it is not the segregation of residents in an ecological village, which alone accounts for the success of the experiment, nor is it solely due to the altruistic orientations of the existing residents. Rather, the integration process is dependent on inter-related affective practices of belonging, relating to the dimensions of local attachment, a common good, and normalization. Thus, integration is dependent on complex forms of relationality and how these affective practices form an affective subject characterized by emergence, flexibility, and diversity. By applying a conceptualization of Hjortshøj as a learning machine (McFarlane 2011), the article provides insights to the complex assemblage of materiality, spatiality, and relationality in the local community of Hjortshøj, underlining how communities become machines for learning acts of citizenship.

*Keywords:* social integration, commons, local community, young adults with intellectual disabilities, sustainable living, urban learning machines.

## Introduction

This article is about how to understand social integration processes as these relate to the integration of sixteen young adults with intellectual disabilities in an local community. More specifically, the article is based on an evaluation, undertaken by the authors of an experiment with social integration of people with developmental disorders and learning disabilities in a suburban ecological village cooperative called Hjortshøj (hereafter Hjortshøj), north of Aarhus, the second largest city in Denmark (Jørgensen and Fallov, 2017). While other localized social integration projects are initiated from above, and suffer from the effects of neighbourhoods not wanting to assimilate social deviants in their local area (Not in My Backyard) (Jørgensen 2006), this experiment is built around a resourceful village welcoming the young adults in an attempt to develop the village as whole. Therefore, as a direct response to the NIMBY-effect the villagers named this experiment “Welcome in my backyard”. The young adults form a new residential group (group 6) who joined seven already established residential groups each formed around a common house and each with their own aesthetic expression.

The empirical material of this study consists of semi-structured qualitative interviews with the residents in Hjortshøj that has been conducted within two periods (2012 and 2013). The first round was conducted when residential-group 6 was under construction whereas the second round was conducted after the residential-group 6 has been in Hjortshøj for a year. This means 18 interviews with the neighbours to the new residential group through two rounds of interviews. The informants are sampled so that they represent residents from all residential-groups.

In comparison with the Camphill villages, now found in twenty-five countries, and which are built around offering people, and especially children with learning and intellectual disabilities, other possibilities than institutionalization (Snellgrove 2013), Hjortshøj started primarily as an ecological village built around the principles of “living-apart-together”. The village was initiated by the first residential group in 1992 and presents itself as a laboratory in sustainable living. The village is, therefore, not built around the anthroposophical philosophy of Rudolf Steiner (see for example Steiner 2004), although some of these principles guide the village self-understanding. It should, therefore, be understood rather as an intentional community, taking on further social integrative tasks. Intentional communities are here understood as people living together sharing some common resources on the basis of explicit norms and goals.

There are 350 inhabitants in the co-operative society in Hjortshøj approximately 200 of whom are adult inhabitants. The houses of the area vary from terraced houses, twin-houses and single-houses which is the most common type of houses. The ownership range from rental houses related to a social housing association over co-operative dwellings to private ownership which again is the most common form of ownership in the co-operative society in Hjortshøj. The socioeconomic status of the inhabitants in the co-operative society in Hjortshøj is quite typical for a Danish middleclass suburban area. The general picture is one of resourcefulness in terms of educational background and socio-economic background as well as local engagement. But the way the inhabitants have joined in the co-operative society are quite untraditional or unusual for a typical Danish middleclass suburban area. When it comes to lifestyle, sense of community, ecology, resident democracy the co-operative society has clear ideals. They want to live and build in a sustainable way ecologically as well as

socially. At the same time they want to balance between personal freedom and the needs being a part of a community. We will return to the significance of these ideals below.



Figure 1 Area of the residential groups in Hjortshøj



Figure 2 Houses in residential group 6



Figure 3 Houses in residential group 1

This is an interesting example of community work and action, because it can be used as a launching pad to discuss how local communities can play a key role in societal integrative processes. What we want to draw out in this article is the way in which the affective practices of neighbouring are decisive factors for the success of this integration project. Affective practices relate here to practices of belonging, affinity, care and identification. although the village of Hjortshøj is also interesting from the point of view of residential patterns in an ever more urbanized world. Moreover, we want to emphasize how these affective practices are key elements to how we can understand this and similar local projects as “learning machines” (McFarlane 2011) for dealing with what could be termed “the urban crisis”. McFarlane conceptualize urban environments as urban learning machines because of the density and intensity of the urban experience. Here we argue that the aspect of what he terms urban learning machines similarly can be used to explain and analyze processes in a more rural setting.

The urban crisis is borne from the twin processes of reconfiguring welfare states pushing responsibilities for dealing with social integration and social problems to local, urban and regional levels, on the one hand, and, on the other, an urban pattern formed by processes of segregation making reducing our everyday experiences and encounters with “otherness” in different forms. Here related to how we deal with the perceived “otherness” of people with intellectual disabilities. Thus, although the empirical material, here, relates to a specific Danish village, the tendencies exhibited there mirror international patterns for urban change and community action that promise a broader learning potential for future handling of social integrative tasks. This is the focus of the first section, while the second section elaborates on the importance of the affective practices of neighbouring. In the third section we discuss how this relates to the idea of the village as a learning machine before the concluding reflections.

## **The dilemma of governing through communities with increasing urban segregation**

Not only is there a general process of urbanization that concentrate populations in ever growing urban areas, but urban areas themselves are becoming ever more segregated (Andersen 2005). In the socially differentiated and segregated cities, social and cultural groups live geographically close to each other but without much mutual interaction. Settlements in traditional societies were characterized by social diversity, while settlement in the modern society tends to create socially and culturally homogeneous areas. Social-spatial segregation brings together people with similar social background in determinate locations, and the part of the population, which is dependent on different forms of help and support, is no longer socially integrated in a local community, which they have historical or tradition based connections to. They are, as anyone else, settled among socially similar residents. This often means public housing with cheap rental accommodation, or publicly funded institutions separated from the rest of society.

For the well-off, and for those who are strongly attached to the labour market, the problems of segregation are less threatening. For these groups issues arising out of segregation concentrate on lacking local participation in associational life. For those who have a weak or non-existent connection to the labour market, and who find themselves in challenging situations, the consequences of social spatial segregation are different as it matters greatly not only where they live but also in which type of housing (Samson & Andersen 2010). From a welfare state point of view, increasing social segregation also means lacking moral imperative for the well-off acting and taking responsibility for other sections of the population, as they have little everyday knowledge and interaction with social groups not similar to them. Therefore, social segregation is not only a question of increasing general inequality; it is also a challenge to social cohesion at local, national and supra-national levels (Böhme et al 2011, see also COHSMO website). Strong social cohesion and trust in relation to state institutions are the condition of possibility for the principles of equality and a strong public sector which is the foundation of the Scandinavian welfare states (Hutichinson 2009). These relations of trust enable community work to develop, in a Scandinavian setting, not in opposition to but in collaboration with public authorities.

However, collective strategies for dealing with social problems is under pressure across Europe, and even in the Scandinavian countries there is a call to engage active citizens and other sectors in the welfare mix (Sjöberg et

al 2016). Governmental intervention aims to boost local and individual responsibility for social and health related problems by enhancing public engagement and community involvement (McDermott 2014, Breivik & Sudmann 2015). Partnerships are in the Scandinavian setting based not only on increasing engagement of non-state actors but on a mandate which relates social problems to collective responsibilities (Fallov 2013, Hutchinson 2009). Therefore, even though trends towards responsabilization and relying on partnerships are similar to many other Western European experiences (Rose 2000), Government play a more direct role in funding and facilitating partnerships and community initiatives in a Scandinavian setting and especially in Denmark (see Turunen 2009 for differences between the Nordic countries). The partnership between the community in Hjortshøj and Aarhus municipality and the private foundation Real Dania is an example of this rationality, were the municipality, as part of the broader national deinstitutionalization strategy, empowers local communities to take an active part in and to partly take responsibility for the social integration of the 16 young adults with intellectual disabilities.

In the case of Hjortshøj, the local community defined the initiative as socially and practically valuable for themselves from the beginning and this project were therefore less prone to the common dilemma of mediating between the interest of the surrounding society with that of the local community. This means that the community was already there and that residents were fully aware of societal challenges as well as individual challenges and needs of young adults with intellectual disabilities and had some idea how both could be reworked to become aligned with the ideas, wishes and needs of the community of Hjortshøj. The question of insecure funding and the quality of the community work is also a well-known dilemma (Henderson and Glen 2006) and it is a central issue to which the so-called self-help, provide a substitute for, or accompaniment to, community services and challenge mainstream ways of working (Blackshaw 2013). It is also common to worry if this gives local authorities excuses to under-invest in services (Shaw 2014).

The collaboration between the community in Hjortshøj, the local authorities and Real Dania is a powerful triumvirate that implies local endorsement, financial and professional support and also the development and distribution of knowledge and experiences of the project. Therefore, what is at stake in this experiment is not power struggle over resources or rights (although such issues always loom in the background) but ways to understand how communities themselves take on board integrative tasks. This role of the community is related to ideas of the commons (Shaw 2014) , understood here as the way the residents deploy and become elements of a human made resource system (Van Laerhoven&Barnes 2014). Moreover, the residents of Hjortshøj perform in this experiment not only active citizenship in their self-governance of the commons, but through their partnership with the Municipality of Aarhus they take on board social integrative tasks that expand the commons beyond issues relating to land management and sustainable living ecologically to issues relating social responsibility and care for vulnerable groups.

In this experiment, active citizenship become tied to capacity development; that is the development of competencies, common understandings and resources for action (Fallov 2010). Cruikshank argues that this form of capacity development aimed at empowering neighbourhood communities is part of what she calls 'technologies of citizenship'; discourses and programmes and other tactics aimed at making individuals and collectives who are capable of self-government (1999). This raises three central points for the present

discussion: Firstly, that technologies of citizenship work *through* the subjectivities of citizens: by moulding motivations and interests they seek to maximize particular types of action (Cruikshank 1999). Secondly, that citizens are imagined as bound to communities through ties of allegiance, moral obligations, affinity and recognition, and as acquiring identities through these identifications with community (Rose 2000). Thirdly, that the urban is not simply the background for the development and acting out of citizenship but is a constitutive part of the forming of social groups. At the same time, the acts, tactics and strategies of citizenship and the struggle for citizenship are played out materially and become part of the urban assemblage (Isin 2002).

In what follows, these three points about citizenship form the background for an exploration into how, through the local example of Hjortshøj, we can understand and describe the processes involved in integration of vulnerable groups. They are relevant because they emphasise the role that identification and belonging play for performing these dimensions of active citizenship, and the way that assemblages of relationships and materialities play in these. Developing this form of commoning, as is the case in Hjortshøj, emphasizes the importance of conviviality, friendliness and liveliness, not only as demarcating a difference to pure state intervention, but also as important often overlooked dimensions of such types of active citizenship (McDermott 2014). Moreover, it becomes an exploration of how we do this not by a politics of seclusion but by developing local community around the integration of such others. In this way, this example becomes an exploration into ways of understanding the relationship between community development and the development of the commons.

## **Affective practices in Hjortshøj**

The importance of affective practices of belonging, affinity, recognition and identification are important but often overlooked aspects of developing active citizens. Most research is concerned with the problematic related to the development of social capital (Kay 2006; Taylor 2002), the politics of exclusion in building the entrepreneurial citizen (Kenny 2011; Andersen and Pløger, 2007; Brenner, Marcuse and Mayer, 2009), or the disciplinary practices related to acts of normalization concerned with participation in the labour or housing markets (Corbett and Walker, 2013; Blokland 2008; Mckee 2009; Levitas 2012). Fortier (2010) is one of the few exceptions in that she dwells upon the forming of the affective subject of the good neighbour as a constitutive part of the politics of dealing with multicultural encounters and ensuring social cohesion. In this section, we will explore the affective practices involved in establishing and maintaining local community in Hjortshøj. The conjunction of these practices form affective subjects, which are central to the integration process of the new residential group of young adults with intellectual disabilities. We suggest that there are at least three different overlapping dimensions to the affective subject, worthy of consideration:

- A. Belonging
- B. Relating to a common good
- C. Normalization

A) Belonging: Feelings of local attachment and local belonging together form an important dimension of the affective subject, because these feelings are constitutive elements of calling the community into being.

Moreover, integration becomes contingent on these feelings of attachment as they form the community that the new residents should become part of. When asked what the best thing about living in Hjortshøj is, most informants refer to neighbour relations as what matters most to them. The neighbourhood is characterized by a dense web of social relations stretching from interest groups oriented towards the many activities involved in the up keep of the local community to relationship oriented groups formed around common meals and other social activities. Social relations formed around labour intensive activities, related for example to maintaining the farm land or the common heating system, turn into friendships, which sustain feelings of local belonging. Moreover, new inhabitants get to know existing residents through joint activities. Local social relations are sustained and underpinned by regular festivities and local traditions that also form the identity of the community in relation both to the outside world and the inhabitants themselves.

Inhabitants emphasize that what characterizes a good neighbour relation is *'that if you know that the other is having a hard time, then you knock on the door and say; should we not have a cup of coffee or go for a walk'* (resident of Hjortshøj). They emphasize relations of mutual care, and that this care not only involves attention in good times, but also attention and flexibility when life becomes difficult. Neighbour relations are thus both central to and the vulnerability of the local community. The relations offer both possibilities of friendship and social capital for the inhabitants, but at the same time these benefits do not come for free, because they are followed by a range of obligations that demand both time and energy of residents. These are similar to findings in other forms of intentional communities (Christie 2002), and within community development more generally (Blokland & Savage 2008, Warr & Robson 2013, Jørgensen & Mølholt 2007).

Many studies of neighbour relations emphasize that people seek out others similar to themselves in terms of socio-economic background and educational attainments, maybe not always out of conscious or reflexive choices, but because residential and social preferences are formed by the socio-economic background and general habitus (Bourdieu 1999, Mazanti 2005, Wacquant 2010). Contrary to this, what are emphasized by the inhabitants of Hjortshøj are values relating to diversity in terms of tolerance, flexibility, and acceptance of difference. *'The best thing is the diversity here, it is all from the buildings that are varied to that we ourselves are diverse, and that is one of our decisive qualities'* (resident of Hjortshøj).

Another resident underlined that *'in relation to the common single owners home or flat I would say that we are more tolerant'*. The informants express that the main difference between this area and general suburbia is the tolerance towards people who have different kinds of needs, or are vulnerable in different ways. Where the surrounding society considers the residents from the new residential group as people in marginal positions, they are in Hjortshøj considered to be people with different types of resources. This emphasis on tolerance might, of course, stem from the fact that many residents of the area have an upper middle class background. Our suggestion is that the emphasis on tolerance is also related to the motives for moving to this area in the first place. Our informants report that all residents, except those assigned there by the municipality, have actively chosen to move to this particular local community, often with the motive of wanting to engage with their neighbours and to live among others with similar social preferences.

B) Relating to a common good: Principles of social and ecological sustainability are values characterizing the understanding of the common good in the local community in Hjortshøj. Many residents had a connection to ecological lifestyles before moving to Hjortshøj, but many have also changed preferences after moving there. Ecological preferences were, therefore, not the decisive factor for all, and for many their principles have changed and modified during their residency. What is characteristic for this community is a pragmatic approach to the principles of sustainability, where there is room for different approaches ranging from political orientations to spirituality, and where ecological principles have to be weighed against available resources. The important point for residents in Hjortshøj is to see results and to get their hands dirty, so to speak, and not reduce principles to words exchanged in endless meetings. Contrary to many intentional communities which are built around dogmatic principles, then, what is important in Hjortshøj is to convince each other through good ideas and good examples (actions speak louder than words). Consequently, the importance of ecological sustainability is not so much a question of changing the world as ecological missionaries but, rather, of what feels right generally and in private everyday relations. One of the residents frames this as follows:

*'...there are some for whom it is a fundamental vision of living here. I do not need to expose it so much, I do what I do, because I live here, and because it important to me now. Then [when it comes to] the example of the integration of residential group 6 [the young adults with intellectual disabilities] this could be an example for others to follow'.*

We want to argue that the principles of ecological sustainability function as a regime of justification (Thevenot 2001) that shapes affective practices within the local community and the way they engage with newcomers. Furthermore, that the pragmatic orientation to the ecological principles underpin the social values of diversity and tolerance, and that such values shape the expectations towards the young adults with intellectual disabilities, and consequently the integration process. What is reported in the interviews with residents of Hjortshøj, is an expectation to be more than just the person living on the other side of the fence of the new residential group. *'...We want to see the value of all people, and this is also what I hope will happen when we get these people with intellectual disabilities out here... that we can measure each other directly with the heart'* (resident of Hjortshøj). The existing residents want to become an active part of young adults' lives in residential group 6. The new residents are therefore met with expectations rather than feelings of insecurity. They expect that the new group will bring more "immediacy" and "warm-heartedness" to the area.

In his classical work, Schutz argues that our meeting with "the Other" is shaped by the systems of classification we use to orient ourselves in the world with (Jørgensen 2006, Schutz 1976/1964). The expectation to form we-relations on behalf of the residents becomes part of their orientation towards their new neighbours. This is an orientation towards neighbour relations that move far beyond the anonymous relations characterized the classical understanding of urban social life. The values associated with social responsibility underpin particular integrative practices that do not seek to annihilate the strangeness of the newcomers (Bauman 2000, Bauman 2001), as what is often the case in community development, but to let the meeting with strangers, in the form of young adults with intellectual disabilities, shape both partners. Thévenot (2001) argues that the regimes of justification include different moral and value-based regimes addressing different aspects of the worlds that can be described as a kind of cultural perception defining disposition and action in the social world. A

component in the total number of regimes of justification is the domestic world and the civil world. Justification in these worlds is related to familiarity; that is, how we shape familiarity out of local milieus, use the surroundings for capacity, and relate the surroundings to personality (Boltanski and Thévenot 2006). In the examples from Hjortshøj, there is a clear conjuncture between the pragmatic principles of ecological sustainability and the ethics of social responsibility that governs their interaction with new experiences, such as the integration of the new residential group, and how such input and new relations are integrated into their regime of familiarity.

To ensure a social balance that does not solely rely on idealism, compassion and gratitude and in order to ensure that the project facilitate the development of self-esteem among the residents with developmental disabilities, there was an element of exchange and interdependence incorporated in the project from the very beginning. In the community, the new residents are involved in the running of a common farming project with cattle and the growing of ecological vegetables and an ecological bakery. The products coming out of these activities are sold to inhabitants of the community and nearby neighbourhood. This kind of exchange-relation is based on what Boltanski and Thévenot describe as the possibility to achieve a position and obtain value depending on the specific regime of justification that exists in a given context (Boltanski and Thévenot 2006). In Hjortshøj working with the surroundings as a common resource creates not only an exchange of goods and services, but relates the material surroundings to personality in ways that sustain the regime of familiarity (Boltanski and Thévenot 2006). Dignity and worthiness is achieved for all members of the community by sharing benefits and burdens connected to the maintenance of the community, socially and practically and the young with developmental disorders are no exception to this. Following Mies it is exactly this type of exchange relationship which form Hjortshøj as a commons and sustain the relations of community that sustain it (2014).

C) Normalization: Normalization is here used to refer to the process in which residents become attuned to and member of the community in Hjortshøj (Jørgensen and Fallov 2017). What is particular is that the community is constantly emerging and changing. Normalization is, thus, in this case not a question of the inculcation of common norms, but rather a complex process of becoming. Learning to handle the balance between engagement in the local community and personal freedom is an important dimension of the affective practices in Hjortshøj. There are many activities and relations in the local community, and many residents report that becoming part of the local community is also about finding the right balance between proximity and distance (Fallov 2015, van Eijk 2012). This is not only a question of social proximity but also the question of physical proximity, as the residencies are built closely together: as one resident puts it, *'it is like the local community pours in as soon as you open the window'*.

There is always something going on or someone who would like to interact with you. Closeness and interdependence creates disagreement and conflict but, at the same time, and as a consequence of the social and physical proximity, withdrawal is difficult. This is the ambivalence of the local community; on the one hand, it is a quality of the neighbour relations that they are engaging through values of recognition, diversity, and openness, but, on the other hand, it is a challenge to handle this closure without being totally engulfed (Scheff 1997). The value of flexibility on behalf of community expectations becomes central to handling this ambivalence. That is to say, the local community is characterized by movement and change rather than stasis.

Members have different path of participation that follow life events and life courses change. While some have a constant engagement and activity level, for others it is necessary to withdraw from community activities from time to time. This is reported as a quality by residents, because there is constantly some that have the energy to engage, and because the community is then constantly fed with new energy, which prevents inertia. The freedom associated with the local community is therefore not simply associated with the sharing of competencies and resources that present new opportunities and shield against the demands of the outside (Bauman 2000), it is also related to the ability of the members to negotiate between engagement and withdrawal, proximity, and distance, and so forth. In relation to the integration of the young adults with intellectual disabilities, the emergent character of the local community means that there is not a pre-given unit or norm of participation that the new residents should normalize and adhere to. Rather, their own paths of participation (which in some instances have meant full participation, whilst in other instances this varies) form constitutive elements of the community itself.

### *Hjortshøj village life as a learning machine*

If we think of an integration process as something that combines and merges individual elements into a collective, then the affective practices outlined above becomes of central importance as they shape the encounter between elements. Moreover, the different dimensions of the affective subject form constitutive parts of the community. What can be said to be central to all three dimensions is their *emergent* character. The affective practices in Hjortshøj are characterized by constant reinvention and dynamism. In that sense, being part of this local community is not a static membership but a constant learning process, and even more so when we think of how the new residential group have not only to become members of the community but also to change the character of this community in that very process. Local community processes as acts of citizenship are not simply something you have to learn to become part of, but something *through which learning is generated*. When we think of the social responsibilities associated with the integration of the young adults with intellectual disabilities as act of citizenship, it might be useful to follow Colin McFarlane and think of the local community as a learning machine. McFarlane argues that:

*'...cities – as spaces of encounter and rapid change, of concentrations of political, economic, and cultural resources, and of often perplexing unknowability – are constantly sought to be learnt and relearnt by different people and for often very different reasons, from coping mechanisms and personal advancement to questions of contestation and justice. It is in this very concentration and demand of and for learning that the city is cast as a learning machine'* (McFarlane 2011:362).

McFarlane foregrounds learning not simply as a question of knowledge diffusion, but rather as something that has to be understood as a distributed, material and spatial relationality. His conceptualization is useful in the present context, because his understanding of learning mirrors the complexity and relationality of what is going on locally in Hjortshøj. He proposes that learning involves the three aspects of “translation”, “coordination”, and “dwelling”. Due to considerations of space, we will not go into detail here with the theoretical arguments underpinning each of these three aspects. Instead, we will briefly relate each of the three aspects to the

example from Hjortshøj. Through this appropriation of his conceptualization, a certain element of reformatting takes place, but probably one that is in line with the ethics of his idea concerning dynamic learning.

The aspect of translation involves, among other things, that learning is positioned as a constitutive act of world making, that learning is related to practice, and that various forms of intermediaries play constitutive parts in the processes of learning (McFarlane 2011). In relation to Hjortshøj, we previously outlined how the local community has a pragmatic approach to the principles of ecological sustainability and social responsibility. In relation to learning, we would propose that this pragmatic approach represent a translation in relation to the local practice. Rather than a dogmatic diffusion of a moral regime of justification, their approach becomes a conjuncture emerging from the practical engagement with buildings, materials, and ideas. This allows the local community to displace any predefined procedures in their evaluation of their encounters with the new residential group, and thus provides room to develop through their integration rather than for it.

Coordination refers to the functional systems that work as functional tools in relation to domain shifts involved in learning, and enables learning as a collective agency (McFarlane 2011). In relation to Hjortshøj, there are several interesting aspects of coordination important for understanding the learning processes within the local community, but also how we might learn from their experiences with the integrative process. Internally, the residential groups function as coordinative systems in several senses. Firstly, they allow the domain shift between public and private spheres and thus the balancing act between individual freedom and the demands associated with the obligations of the wider local community. Secondly, each residential group has their own system of coordinating information and labour intensive activities, and within the local community all residential groups are represented at the general assembly. The young adults with intellectual disabilities have their own residential group, materially represented by the patterns of the buildings and their own communal building. This layout functions both as a meeting point between the new residents and existing residents, but also as a boundary tool to maintain balance between public proximity and privacy; there are periods when this building is closed to others. Learning is coordinated externally by exchanges with other ecological villages and interactions with national and international networks, through the residents offering courses and tours presenting their experiences with the new residential groups and their ecological principles to the outside world.

The practical engagement with the lived-in environment is what is referred to in the aspect of dwelling. Here the focus is on how ways of seeing is related to ways of inhabiting (McFarlane 2011). In Hjortshøj, flexibility in terms of social relationships is underpinned by recognition of variations in the material aesthetics. There is not a search for perfection and many buildings and infrastructures appear unfinished or in process. Each residential group has their own look and paths between buildings are unpaved and unlit. This physical infrastructure shapes residential identification by marking differences to surrounding suburban areas, and to the physical and social conformability associated with them. Moreover, the material infrastructure shape encounters and everyday routes, since it induce a sense of informality and immediacy. In relation to the introduction of the new residential group, this entail a greater acceptance of other more immediate ways of approaching people in the local environment, which, for example, short-cut normal ideas of courtesy. Moreover, the new residential group is not integrated in a predefined space, but have, with their special needs and ambitions, changed the

infrastructure of the local community, bringing with them new buildings and facilities such as a workshop and a bakery.

These three aspects underline the dynamic, material, and relational character of learning in the local community in Hjortshøj. Furthermore, the affective practices involved in the process of integration form part not only in the constitution of the community itself, but also in how village life in Hjortshøj function as urban learning machine.

## Concluding reflections

In his book about the intentional communities in Norway, Nils Christie (2002) argues that the advantage of such intentional communities in terms of the integration of people with disabilities is that they allow these groups to live relatively independent lives, and that through the interdependencies of village life they experience recognition of the resources each has as a person. In that sense, Christie argues, voluntary segregation similar to that of the enclave allows for integration. What might be learned from our example of Hjortshøj is that it is *not* the segregation of residents in an ecological village, which alone accounts for the success of the experiment of integrating young adults with intellectual disabilities, nor is it solely due to the altruistic orientations of the existing residents. Rather the integration process is dependent on inter-related affective practices of belonging, relating to belonging, a common good, and normalization. Moreover, these affective practices form an affective subject characterized by emergence, flexibility, and diversity. The pragmatic orientation of non-dogmatism is, therefore, one of the keys to the success of the Hjortshøj experiment. By applying McFarlane's conceptualization of the aspects of translation, coordination, and dwelling we have come one step closer to providing insights to the complex assemblage of materiality, spatiality, and relationality in the local community of Hjortshøj, underlining how urban communities become machine for learning acts of citizenship. Lastly, the example of Hjortshøj indicates moreover, that new forms of social integration are possible which are not simply an extension of municipal or state power, or private initiative but something different. Even though the resourcefulness of the residents is a contributing factor to the success of the experiment, it is not the sole explanation. The dimensions of translation, coordination and dwelling can be replicated in other contexts, and although they might have different outcomes than in Hjortshøj, it entails the promise of ways to expand the commons with social integrative task without dismantling welfare.

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