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## Younger industrial areas as free zones for urban experiments

**RHD working title: Uncertain conditions - Spatial strategies for transformation of newer industrial parks.**

**GLOBAL** **LOCAL** **THE LARGER CITY**

**Research design**

**PHD structure**

**Part 1** Framing the project: Introduction, State of the art, Positioning, Research questions, Research design and methodology

**Part 2** Empirical work: Case studies and interconnections  
Portraits, Classifications, Strategy catalogue, Exemplifications

**Part 3** Five chapters discussing findings in a broader urban perspective  
Urban, Resilience, Reconnection, Uncertainty, Quality, Multiple strategies

**Part 4** Closing reflections

Walks, mappings, and interviews show that the activities in younger industrial areas in Denmark are much more complex than the mono-functional activities planned. The areas represent a legacy of the functionalistic paradigm, which creates the morphology of the urban landscape built from the 1950s onwards but is not considered a part of the cultural aesthetic understanding of the city. The current transformation is rooted in social, political and economic dynamics, difficult to predict, often shaped on a global level, yet with a strong local impact.

The mappings are inspired by the five objectives developed by Tom Neuman, Thomas Claemmenen, and Morten Daugard in the article: Qualifying urban Landscapes (2016): Appropriation, collaboration, diversity, connectivity, and porosity. They are conducted in three different urban situations and reveal the areas different qualities and a diversity of people, activities, biodiversity and local entrepreneurship that may not be seen at first glance and would be difficult to find space for otherwise.

The idea is that portraying the actual situation of the areas and qualities are a crucial aspect in the transformation process. It also focuses on dynamics between the actors (human and non-human) and the possibility of creating collaborations between the actors with a focus on future urban common qualities. This can be a way to address uncertainty and open the opportunity of the areas to become an important asset in that future (spatial) reconnection of nature and economies of towns, the labor market, innovation, and urban diversity.

This presentation will try to develop a deeper understanding of one of the preliminary findings. The one that these areas seem to give spaces for new kinds of entrepreneurship and experiments. Awareness of this capacity addresses the question of how to plan for these areas in the future.

The findings learned through three case studies created through site-walks, mappings, and interviews. These data show that the area's activities are much more complex than just traditional production. The registered activities are diverse and include e.g. dance projects, karate clubs, senior communities, yoga and massage, a used good market, a fitness center and a local brewery. This kind of change of industrial areas from being areas of production to new kinds of neighborhoods is seen before. Other changes are initiated by artists, and later the area goes through gentrification establishing it as a new stable area in the city. But unlike these former examples, the younger industrial areas have something else at stake. It is not attracting artists or the creative class, but rather a wide range of local entrepreneurs with broad background and profiles. Also, instead of being appreciated, these initiatives are often regarded by the planning authorities as mistakes and need dispensations from the regulations as the areas are designated for more traditional production. However, taking this position might miss that these areas have already changed and that they could be seen as a free zone for experiments for local citizens and entrepreneurs with everyday dreams.

It is therefore not just relevant to create a portrait of the current actual situation, but also to discuss why this seems to happen here. The arguments take the point of departure in Michel Foucault's notion of heterotopia, which is later developed by Graham Shane's with contemporary urban examples and the notion of porosity developed by Paola Vigano.

**...the boat has not only been for our civilization, from the sixteenth century until the present, the great instrument of economic development (I have not been speaking of that today), but has been simultaneously the greatest reserve of the imagination. The ship is the heterotopia par excellence. In civilizations without boats, dreams dry up, espionage takes the place of adventure, and the police take place of pirates.**

Foucault: 1976 p.9

**Illustration 1**

**Illustration 2**

**Heterotopia (Michel Foucault)**

Foucault opens in this lecture from 1976 that heterotopias are to be found in most cities. He describes them through five principles and the space of otherness. These spaces are important for transformations and mirror the host system in a condensed way. They hold both utopian and dystopian, history building and fear (prisons and cemetery). The five principles are:

1. Space for crises
2. Changes in the heterotopia mirror changes in society
3. A microcosmos of the surrounding society
4. The neutralization of time or temporality
5. Limited access

Graham Shane uses and translates Michel Foucault's notion of heterotopia into contemporary urban theory. Among other examples, he describes how the use of abandoned places and structures remote from the normal society (e.g. old military sites and industrial areas) have generated new kinds of urban areas and societies.

It is the assumption that the principles of otherness that gives space for activities that might be unwanted in the 'normal' society, but only not be lost out in the heterotopia.

Interviews have documented that the cheap rent, lack of rules and norms and the building structure providing large spaces is what attracts the new activities. They also show that these activities cannot take place in what we usually understand as the city. Furthermore, the mappings illustrate a wide range of activities, attracting a diversity of different kinds of people. They therefore both mirror the host system and provide a real space for otherness (dreams and fear). Understanding the industrial area as a heterotopia with these capacities opens for a discussion how these areas can be seen as a new kind of zone in the urban where new types of experiments and activities can take place and entrepreneurship can flourish.

**Porosity (Paola Vigano)**

Porosity is described by Paola Vigano described as the ability of "different structures to absorb movement and change". It is developed from her work with different metropolitan zones among these the completion La Garra Paris and divided into five categories, that point towards important values in the urban landscape:

1. The density of meaningful places.
2. The capacity to hold water structures.
3. The porosity of open spaces.
4. The capacity to absorb spatial and constructive transformation.
5. Accessibility.

The mappings here has weight on the number of open spaces and the capacity to hold water and constructive transformation. In the notion of porosity makes us see and understand the areas, not as areas being to meet the digitally intended program areas have produced new kinds of urban areas and societies. (Illustration 1 and 2). It can also be noted that number of these new activities also can be found in the category of otherness, which as they attract a number of different people, that feel attached to it.

Secondly, illustration 3, shows that the area today is experienced as detached from the city, but also that it is possible to penetrate the area using the green open spaces and passages. Connectivity is usually a high value in the urban fabric, but here the feeling of otherness and exclusivity might be exactly what makes the area a 'boer' and a place for dreams and imagination. Opening the area might have to be done with care and in a way that both give access and keeps the feeling of otherness.

**References:**  
Neuman, Tom on the Space of In-between: entitled "One Danish Actor," and "Mapping the In-between: from Architecture, Measurement, Criticism to Urbanity," 1986, see the book of lectures given by Michel Foucault in March 1987.  
Foucault, Michel: "Of Other Spaces," in *Architecture of Knowledge*, London, 1986.  
Vigano, Paola: "Porosity: A New Urban Quality," in *Journal of Urban Design*, 2016.  
Shane, Graham: "The Heterotopia of the Twenty-First Century," in *Journal of Urban Design*, 2016.  
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## Younger Industrial Areas as Free Zones for Urban Experiments

This article will discuss the potential of urban areas in an uncertain state as free zones for urban experimentations.

The argumentation takes its point of departure in a case study of three younger industrial areas in Denmark. The study is part of the Ph.D. project. These industrial areas are built as enclaves from the 1950s onwards. They represent a legacy of the functionalistic paradigm, which creates the morphology of the urban landscape found in many western countries. They consist of prefabricated storehouses and outside storage spaces, building sites, abandoned buildings, newly refurbished offices and high-end production facilities. They function as isolated enclaves and are not a part of the cultural aesthetic understanding of the city.

However, Case studies created through site-walks, mappings and interviews show they are now more complex. The registered activities are diverse and include e.g. dance projects, karate clubs, senior communities, yoga and massage, a used good marked, a fitness center and a local brewery.

This transformation of areas of production to new kinds of neighborhoods is seen before. Often the changes are initiated by artists, and later the area goes through gentrification establishing it as a new stable area in the city. Unlike these, the younger industrial areas have something else is at stake. It is not attracting artists, but a wide range of local entrepreneurs. A free zone for experiments with everyday dreams.

As these changes can be seen a number of places and it is not just relevant to create a portrait of the current changes, but also to discuss the potential of the areas' current uncertainty and heterotopias character as a valuable part of the urban fabric.

In the article, this potential is discussed through Graham Shane's interpretation of Michel Foucault's term heterotopia in an urban setting and the notion of porosity developed by Paola Vigano. The discussion is developed and unfolded through a description of the typology (the role of architecture and the relation to the city), the planning acts regulation/dispensations (the planners practice) and the atmosphere of the area (the social-aesthetic experience and identity).

The findings are created through maps, diagrams and drawings and the initial conclusion will be presented in a power point presentation, supported by posters with the illustrations.