

Zones of belonging

Experiences from a Danish study on belonging, local community and mobility¹

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Abstract

In this paper we investigate the connections between population development, socio-economic status and the sense of belonging, in the understanding of social life in places. The article is based on a mixed-method study that includes register-based demographic data on inhabitants in the municipality of Aalborg in Denmark, survey data, and findings from fifty qualitative ethnographic interviews. We argue that local belonging is important to people, although increasingly complex and varied across local neighbourhoods. The conceptualization of the relations between demographic change, neighbourhood development and belonging is influenced by the Human Ecology (Park & Burgess 1925) that offers useful but also premature theoretical contributions in this field. Thus we argue that this perspective need to be expanded in order to pay attention to the varied meanings ascribed to place and discuss the possibility of mapping out zones of belonging in the contemporary society.

Keywords: Belonging, place attachment, local communities, neighbourliness, demographic zones, mixed methods.

1. Introduction

There is a growing need to understand how and why places differ as social and cultural units. Urbanization seems to be unstoppable in most areas of the world, which has serious consequences for social life both in cities and in the countryside. In urban environments, we see increasing social-geographical segregation (Maloutas & Fujita, 2012), which is a threat to

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social tolerance, urban community and social equality. In rural areas in Denmark, as well as in other Western European regions, large areas are suffering from depopulation, lacking economic growth, decreasing mortgage credit and lacking welfare services (Nørgaard, 2009).

The social and cultural differences between places seem to be growing. Political and economic relations are probably part of the reason behind these differences, but local social interaction, historical, symbolic, and traditional attachment to local communities and places play an important, but often ignored, role in causing these differences. There is a need to understand how local social interaction generates attachment to place and feelings of belonging, and to identify organizing principles behind this. Therefore the paper aims to contribute towards research literature to better understand if late modern societies are socially and culturally clustering into a conglomerate of sub-communities, and if so, how the question of belonging are related to this clustering. In this way we want to expound on the relation between socio-demographic zones, socioeconomic status and sense of belonging.

Aalborg is an interesting setting for the study of the social consequences of modernity and late modernity, because of its condensed history of transformation. Aalborg has changed from being a heavy industrial town to an economy based around knowledge, high technology and research within a very short span of time. Moreover, the city and the rural hinterland are situated in close proximity creating a site to study the dynamic between urban and rural settlement and forms of belonging.

2. Perspectives on community-related dwelling

The question of local community has been dividing research in urban sociology from its origins. Pessimism was expressed from the very beginning of urban sociology in the analysis of urban life. The core issue and concern was the lack of long-lasting social relations, and community and mutual responsibility in urban environments (Simmel, 1998/1903; Tönnies, 1996/1887, Wirth, 1938). With the development of the human ecology perspective in 1925, Park and Burgess (1925) launched a more shared vision for the city and the urban community. They introduced a differentiated approach, suggesting the so-called concentric zone model, in which the city is seen as consisting of a large number of different sub-societies rather than one single environment.

Community studies after WWII focused on the conjunction between neighbourhood and community showing that neighbourhood was not simply a place that people from the same background lived, but is a living place for dense webs of relations of friends and family (Young & Willmott 1957). Later, the question of living neighbourhoods was pushed to the back by the focus on political and economic concepts of capital and power (Saunders 1981). At first, the discussion focused on territoriality, in which local belonging was seen as a function of

ethnocentrism and anxiety towards the increasing internationalization (Tonboe, 1993). The following period focused on globalization and the increasing inequality in the information/network society (Castells, 1997; Sassen, 2000). Place-attachment was analyzed as a matter of power-relations that separated people into two parts; those who cannot manage to be a part of the (highly mobile) information society, and those who take part in the information society as highly mobile and un-attached globetrotters (Castells, 1997; Sassen, 2000; Bauman, 2002). The latter were described as an exterritorial elite who are on the run from obligations relating to all types of community (Bauman, 2002). The Bourdieu-inspired engagement with urban sociology was an attempt to prove how general social relations such as class, power, and cultural dominance can be found in different localities (Bourdieu et al., 1999). This point of departure led to the idea that different social groups are residing without reference to local community. Thus, in accordance with Pierre Bourdieu, Loïc Wacquant argued that residents of deprived areas are stigmatized to an extent that they are making an effort to distance themselves from each other by exposing their dissociation with the place where they live (Wacquant, 1996). These mechanisms of distancing tend to undermine local social cohesion and solidarity. Savage, Bagnall, & Longhurst (2005), who are also influenced by Bourdieu, have argued that the middle classes also tend to dwell without reference to the local community. In this case, the perspective is tied to aestheticization and the way in which the middle class is using place as a part of the creation of a legitimate life biography that shows mobility and global attachment. Place of residence becomes a distinction demonstrating status, lifestyle, and (global) symbolic power. Middle class residents tend to look down on “dwellers”, who are less educated, less mobile, and immersed in the local community together with their kin and neighbours (Savage et al., 2005).

Several studies on local community in deprived areas, middle class areas, traditional working class areas, rural areas, and in residential areas for the social elite demonstrate a strong orientation towards neighbours and neighbourliness (Fallov, Jørgensen and Knudsen, 2013; Lewicka, 2011; Jørgensen, 2010; Ottesen 2009; Jørgensen and Mølholt, 2007; Gustafson 2001). Both stigmatization and aestheticization were found, but were not opposed to local community. Within contemporary sociology, dominant perspectives have concentrated on power, economic inequality, dominance, repression, social exclusion, and symbolic power (Savage and Bagnall and Longhurst, 2005; Yuval-Davis, 2006; Bourdieu et al., 1999; Sassen, 2000; Bauman, 2002; Castells, 1997). These perspectives all represent necessary contributions to (urban) sociology but seem to obscure the contribution of mutual relations and local everyday social interactions that tie people to places and provide attachment and feelings of belonging (Fallov, Jørgensen and Knudsen, 2013). Although studies also show how class preferences can be many and varied across neighbourhoods (Butler 2008), we still need a better understanding of the mechanisms of belonging that cannot only be read of class position.

3. Belonging and population development in urban neighbourhoods and rural environments

A model for different types of urban place-attachment at a general level was formulated by human ecologists that form part of The Chicago School of Sociology. This perspective allows for a differentiated perspective on places, as well as on residential preferences of different social and cultural groups in urban environments.

In this perspective, urbanization is a move from traditionally located dwellings towards dwellings among socially and culturally comparable others (Park, 1952). Tradition-bound belonging in a rural environment was linked to a diverse and heterogeneous demography where socially different (by tradition united) individuals lived in close proximity as members of a shared community (Tönnies, 1996/1887). Urbanization offered new conditions for social life and created new behaviour. Both competition and the quest for community were clearly manifested in the urban environment; the sub-divided city should be understood as a result of both residential preferences formed by the wish for protection from harsh urban competition and an orientation towards contributing to the local community (Park, 1952:180). This did not mean that local communities decreased but that they were characterized by social and cultural homogeneity within the small sub-worlds of the city (Park and Burgess, 1925). The city as a whole represented a pronounced diversity, but as this diversity was segregated into small sub-worlds, urbanization represented, at the same time, a significant tendency to homogenization with consequences for social life in the city (Park, 1925).

In the Human Ecology perspective, belonging is a process characterized by differences related to economic resources, age, mobility patterns, cultural, and in some cases ethnic backgrounds; it is linked to overall processes of growth, stability, and decline of different urban neighbourhoods. This has several consequences for the understanding of belonging. Firstly, belonging is affected by demographic and socio-economic processes of change in cities and by how these processes have varied results in different neighbourhoods. Secondly, if belonging is related to movements in and out of neighbourhoods, as well as change of residential status, then some people are closely connected to their place of residence, while others are living in a stage of transit (this point was also raised by Hummon (1992) and Buttimer (1980) in their writings on belonging and place attachment). In Fallov, Jørgensen and Knudsen (2013) we developed an understanding of belonging as more than just a question of psychological processes of place attachment, symbolic associations with home, or the existence of a local community. We argued that belonging is a product of the relations between the dimensions of people, place, and mobility and demonstrated how belonging is related to different patterns of mobility, immobility, and potential for moving. In the present article, we want to investigate whether different levels of demographic change in urban neighbourhoods and suburban areas

coupled with socio-economic status can be seen as an ordering principle for different forms of local belonging. Moreover, we want to examine whether Park and Burgess' conceptualization of the relation between demographic change and neighbourhood characteristics are useful points of departure for this investigation in a modern day setting, keeping in mind that their conceptualization needs supplementing as they did not pay systematic attention to micro experiences of belonging.

Park & Burgess (1925) use the concepts of "invasion", "succession", "dominance", and "zone in transition" to draw lines of social and demographic demarcation within the city. Each of these concepts refers to patterns of demographic change in urban neighbourhoods or to different phases, since, in this perspective, neighbourhoods are moving between "destabilized" and "organized" communities".

- Invasion is defined as "...an invasion that disturbs the biotic balance, thus tending to undermine the existing social order. Under these circumstances, forces and tendencies formerly held in check are released, and a period of intense activity and rapid change ensues, which then continues until the cycle is completed and a new biotic and social equilibrium is achieved" (Park, 1952:229).
- Succession is defined as change that falls in temporal and spatial series. Each series incorporate, carry forth, and reinforce the effects of the one preceding each wave of change (Park 1936:177).
- Dominance is defined as a phase of equilibrium or stability (Park, 1952:161).
- Zone in transition is defined as "the port of first entry" for incoming racial and immigrant groups, and as a place from which the most enterprising members are seeking to escape because of bad housing and its many accompanying social problems (Burgess, 1928). The zone in transition has two different types of mobility: the mobility caused by the flow of inhabitants in and out of the area, and the mobility caused by the many people who come to the area from other parts of the city to visit the entertainment places located in the zone (Burgess, 1928).

Now, the interesting question is whether these concepts can be a first step in the process of developing a better and more accurate understanding of how and why localities differ socially and culturally, and how such differences are related to forms of belonging in the contemporary society. We are aware that the urban patterns of contemporary modern urban forms are quite different from the city of Chicago in the 1920s, but we want to apply their conceptualization to signify that different types of demographic change or stability result in different neighbourhood characteristics, and thus in different conditions for local community and belonging. Originally these concepts aimed at processes of change related to class, population development and geographical location. Hence, rate and pace of population turnover, what we

here term inbound and outbound migration, have been used to create demographic zones in the city of Aalborg, Denmark and variables about class (education, income and position) and age-variables have been related to these zones.

The municipality of Aalborg is located in north Jutland in Denmark and has 205,407 inhabitants (as of 31st December, 2013). Until the late 1980's, Aalborg was one of the most dominant industrial towns in Denmark. During the 1990's, this situation changed, and Aalborg now hosts a large service industry and a number of educational institutions, among others, Aalborg University with 19.000 students, which makes the university the third largest in the country. Aalborg was chosen as the place to study the relation between local interactions, belonging, and social-geographical differences for a number of reasons: Firstly, the municipality has a differentiated social geography, especially since the expansion of the municipality in 2007 with the national municipal reform. These range from very wealthy neighbourhoods, a large number of middleclass neighbourhoods, and socially deprived residential areas, to a variety of small villages and towns stretching from so-called commuter-towns to depopulated areas in the periphery of the municipality. Secondly, over the relatively short time- span since the 1980s, Aalborg has undergone an extensive process of gentrification changing from being a declining industrial town to being a knowledge-based town (Faber et. al., 2012). Taken together this makes Aalborg a relevant laboratory for the study of the interplay between belonging, mobility, and local community.

In the following two sections, we will clarify how we tried to model different zones of belonging by combining different forms of data.

4. Material and methods

In order to investigate whether it is reasonable to perceive attachment to place as differentiated in such a way that it makes sense to speak about "zones of belonging", we use a mixed-method approach and have combined data on population development and socioeconomic status with results from surveys on residential preferences and data from ethnographic in-depth interviews.

A combination of population register data and data from the Geographical Information System (GIS-data) are used for the depiction of the neighbourhoods, where after aggregated individual register data on the resident population are used to characterize each area at an aggregate level. Subsequently, we supplement with information from two local surveys. The latter results provide information on sense of belonging among the residents in specific areas of the municipality and elucidate the geographical differentiation regarding residential preference. Finally, the qualitative in-depth interviews go deeper into residents' sense of belonging in selected areas.

Through this mixed-method approach we combine not only different methods but also findings of different character in order to approach a more complete understanding of the various dimensions of the types of zones than would have been achieved by only applying one method (Bergman 2008).

First, we identify and characterize the small areas to be considered as neighbourhoods in the study by links between data from the Geographic Information System (GIS-data) and register data on households of individuals living in Aalborg. These data are retrieved from national population registers in Statistics Denmark, comprising information on each individual with a residential permit in Denmark (Eurostat/Statistics Denmark 1995). As a consequence of this procedure, the geographical characteristics play an important role in the identification of the areas, which is performed by use of a specific algorithm in which the heterogeneity or homogeneity of the population in areas are not a priori taken into consideration.

The individual register data include annual data on all inhabitants in the municipality of Aalborg as of January 1st through a 30-year period (for most of the data since 1980). By use of the unique personal identification number information has been retrieved on a number of characteristics of which the following individual data are used in the present analysis: Achieved educational level, socioeconomic status, taxable income and Danish, immigrant or descendent background. Based on the data on inhabitants in an area, aggregated values are calculated for each area, and used to characterize the area. In addition, the mode of population development (size and direction of growth; increasing, decreasing or varying pattern throughout the study period) are taken into consideration. The unit, household, includes all individuals (adults as well as children) officially registered as living at a given address (apartment or house), and is identified by a specific and unique household code. In this study, this code is used as the key by which the position of the household has been linked to GIS-coordinates. Due to confidentiality reasons, Statistics Denmark has defined lower limits of number of residents and households in each square in the GIS-grid. Subsequently, socio-demographic characteristics of inhabitants in the identified neighbourhoods are aggregated to neighbourhood level, identified as clusters of squares and used as characteristics of the various neighbourhoods (Knudsen et al. 2015).

Second, we introduced residential experiences, but still at a general level by introducing results from two survey studies conducted in the municipality of Aalborg. The first was conducted by the local authorities of the North Denmark Region in 2010, including 4,358 respondents in Aalborg (Sundhedsprofilen 2010; 2012); the second was conducted by Kuben-Management in 2012, including 2,400 respondents (Boligundersøgelsen). From these two surveys, we use the results from survey questions which address local attachment in two ways, firstly measured as proportion of respondents in the areas feeling strong attachment to their

local areas, and secondly measured as the proportion of respondent for whom neighbourliness/local community had been important when choosing their present place of residence. The outcome is that information on preferences and experiences related to the question of belonging are added to the fundamental demographic zones, thereby adding more dimensions to the characterization of the zones.

Third, we conducted fifty qualitative in-depth interviews to challenge the zones modelled on demographic data and survey-results by seeing how these zones related to micro experiences of belonging. The interviewees were selected from areas representing variations in demographic change (increase/decrease) or stability in order to test the human ecology concepts of invasion, succession, zone in transition, and dominance. In this project, we have operationalized these concepts by the degree of population decrease, increase, stagnation, and turbulence. Furthermore, the selection of interviewees was based on representing different urban-rural locations, with a distribution of 14 interviews in the countryside, villages or small hinterland towns and 36 in the city of Aalborg. The interviewees were asked about their residential biography, their connections to neighbours, and local acquaintances, their everyday habits and patterns of mobility, and to characterize their sense of attachment to place, if relevant to them. The interviews has been conducted "on location" in the homes of the interviewees.

4.1. Demographic Zones

The empirical investigation on zones of belonging will now proceed in three steps. The first step in the investigation of zones of belonging is focused on the analysis of population development in the municipality during the thirty years of observation. If the human ecology perspective makes sense, the demographic development gives us a very rough outline of the prevalence and conditions of local communities; immigration and emigration tells us something about the possibilities of local social bonds. This does not provide any unambiguous information about the quality and the meaning of the different local communities, but it does provide us with an idea of different conditions for establishing and maintaining locally bound communities.

We have added two more demographic categories to the four developed by human ecology to capture some of the characteristics that cannot be related to any of the original conceptualizations. The "jumpers" are neighbourhoods that are shifting relatively often between the four original categories; "in-betweeners" include neighbourhoods that in the past thirty years never belonged to any of the four original categories. These added categories are based on pragmatic considerations in order to create consistent and internally homogeneous categories, and because present day patterns of demographic change cannot fully be captured

in Park & Burgess' original conceptualization. We have illustrated the distribution of these demographic "zones" across the municipality of Aalborg in figure 1:

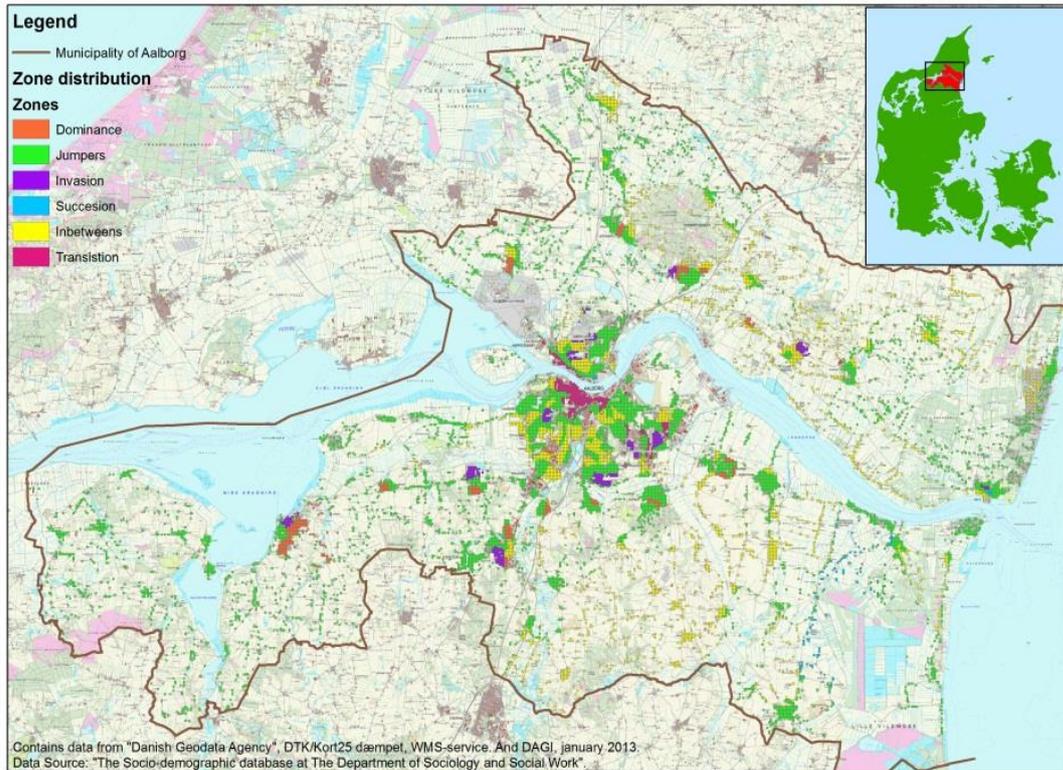


Figure 1. The distribution of the demographic zones across the Municipality of Aalborg.

Figure 2 defines the zones by presenting the combination of the percentage of emigration (X-axis) and immigration (Y-axis) on a yearly basis throughout the 30 years of observation. Figure 3 and 4 illustrate examples of the life trajectories of two neighbourhoods: The lines connecting the dots represent a mapping of the past 30 years of migration in neighbourhoods 309 and 402, respectively. Neighbourhood 402 belongs to the new category of "in-betweeners" and is located in between the four original categories, representing neighbourhoods with almost equal immigration and emigration; this is not enough to move into the zone of transition, and is too much to be in a state of dominance. Neighbourhood 309 is in constant transition characterized by very high rates of emigration and immigration, where at least 20% of the population in the neighbourhood has changed every year for the past 30 years.

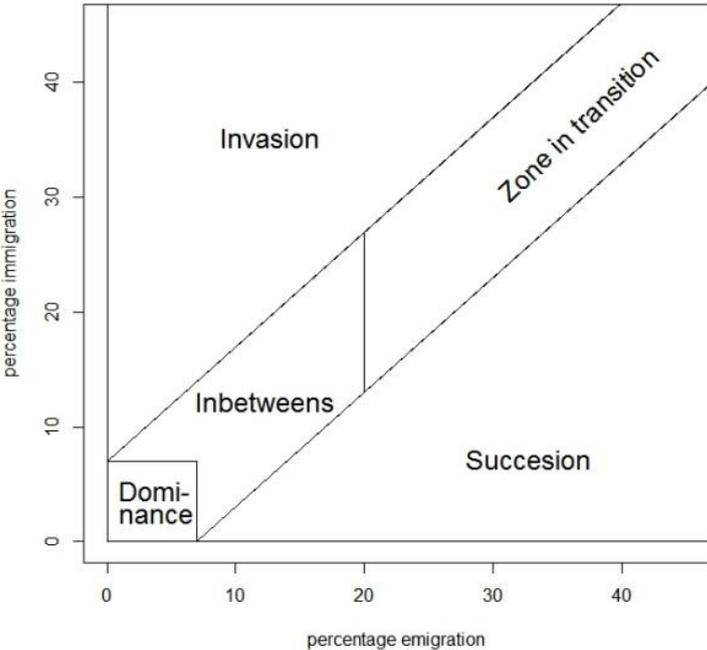


Figure 2. Demographic zones defined from percentage of immigration, emigration.

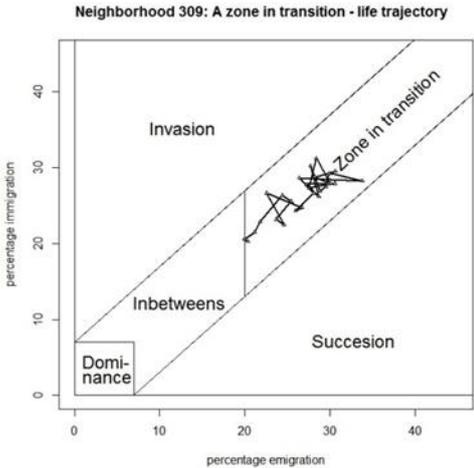


Figure 3. Neighborhood 309: A zone in transition –life trajectory

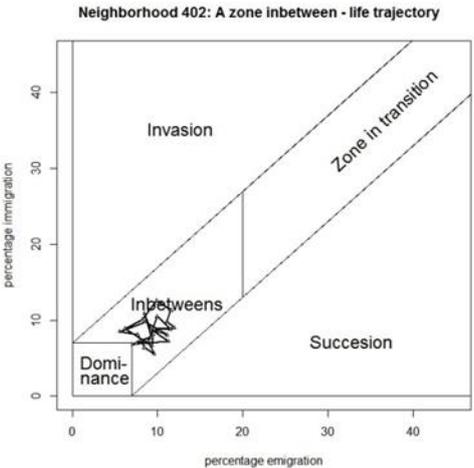


Figure 4. Neighborhood 402: A zone in-between –life trajectory

If we proceed with the income and education socioeconomic variables, we find that the "zones" characterized by demographic change, turbulence, or stability map on to the distribution of income and educational levels throughout the municipality. Figure 5 shows the distribution of income related to the municipal average. Here it becomes visible that the wealthiest live in the Western and South-Western part of the city. Figure 6 illustrate the distribution of the ratio between high and low educational levels. From figure 6 we can see that the lowest levels of education map onto the lowest levels of income in the Eastern parts of the city.

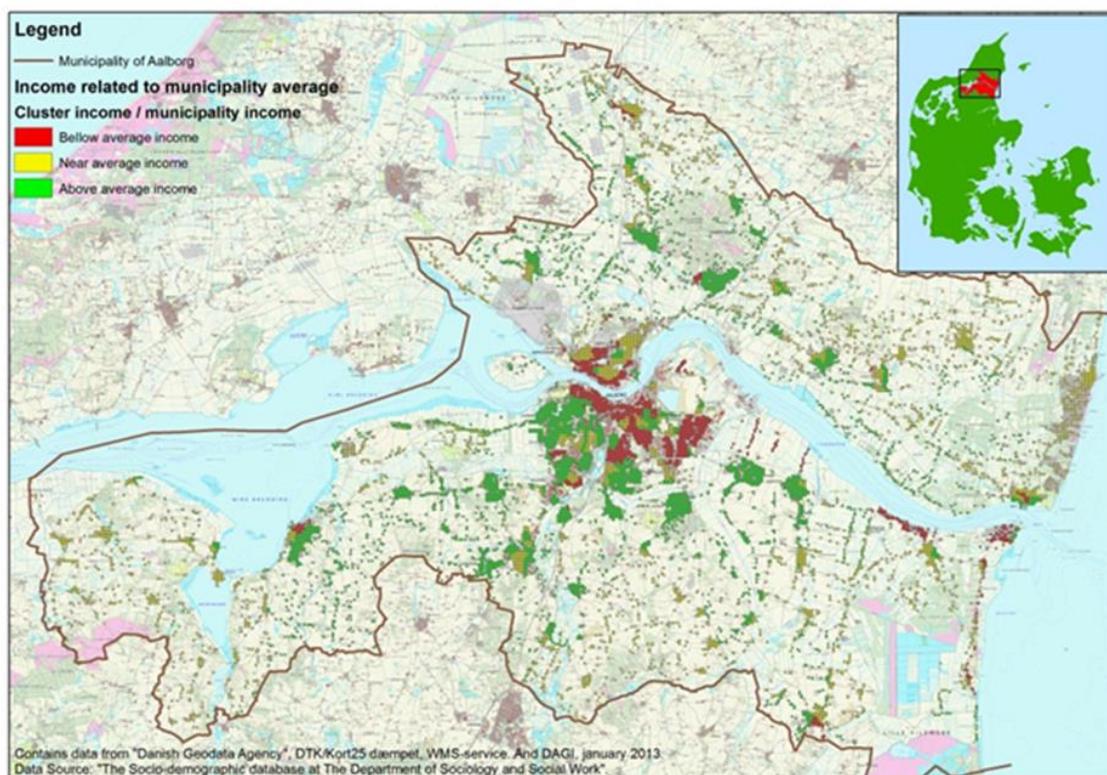


Figure 5. Income related to municipality average

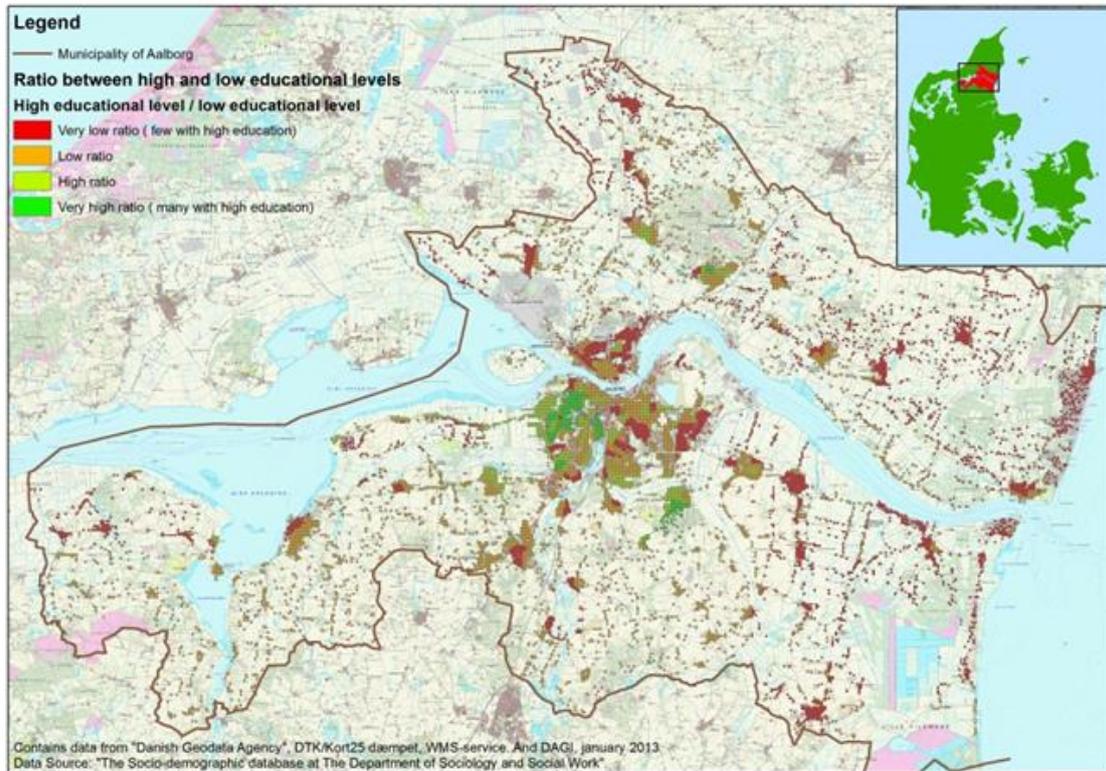


Figure 6. Ratio between high and low educational levels

5. Survey results on belonging

The data from the health survey conducted by the local authorities of the North Denmark Region and from the residential preference survey by Kuben-Management indicate that residents have high levels of local attachment to their place of residence, and that, in general, they value neighbourliness and local community highly. This raises the question as to what the motives and reasons are for this. In figure 7, we have presented the results from the Regions survey with regards to the answers to the question "do you feel attached to your local area?"

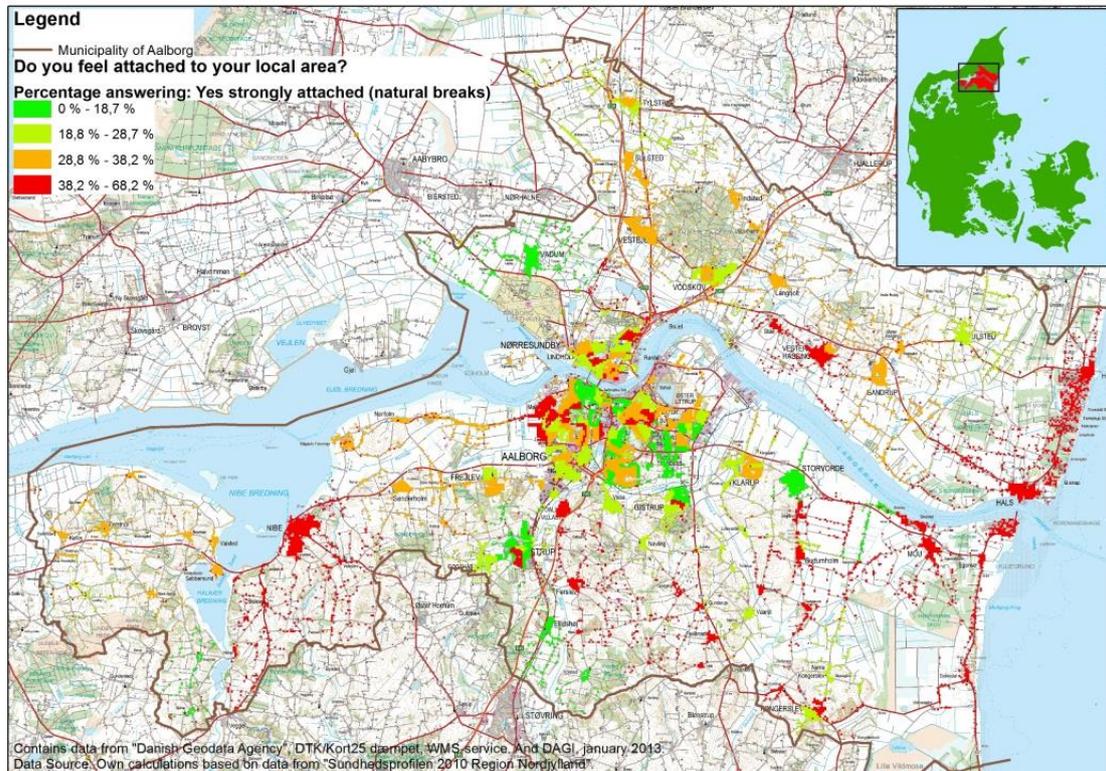


Figure 7. Distribution of strong local attachment

We find the strongest sense of local attachment in the western part of Aalborg, in almost all small towns in the hinterlands, and sporadically across the northern part of the city, called Nørresundby. When compiled with the results presented in figures 5 and 6, we may tentatively conclude that there is a correlation between local attachment and of being a part of either the socioeconomic elite or to a group within the lowest levels of socio-economic status.

If we approach the residential motives and preferences uncovered by the survey conducted by Kuben-Management, we find that there is a general and strong orientation towards neighbour relations and local community, except with regard to the residents of the city centre. Mainly residents on the fringe of the municipality specify local attachment as an important element of residential preferences. However, this tendency is most pronounced in the western and northern parts of the municipality. Figure 8 illustrates the distribution and levels of preferences for good neighbourliness/local community for choosing place of residence.

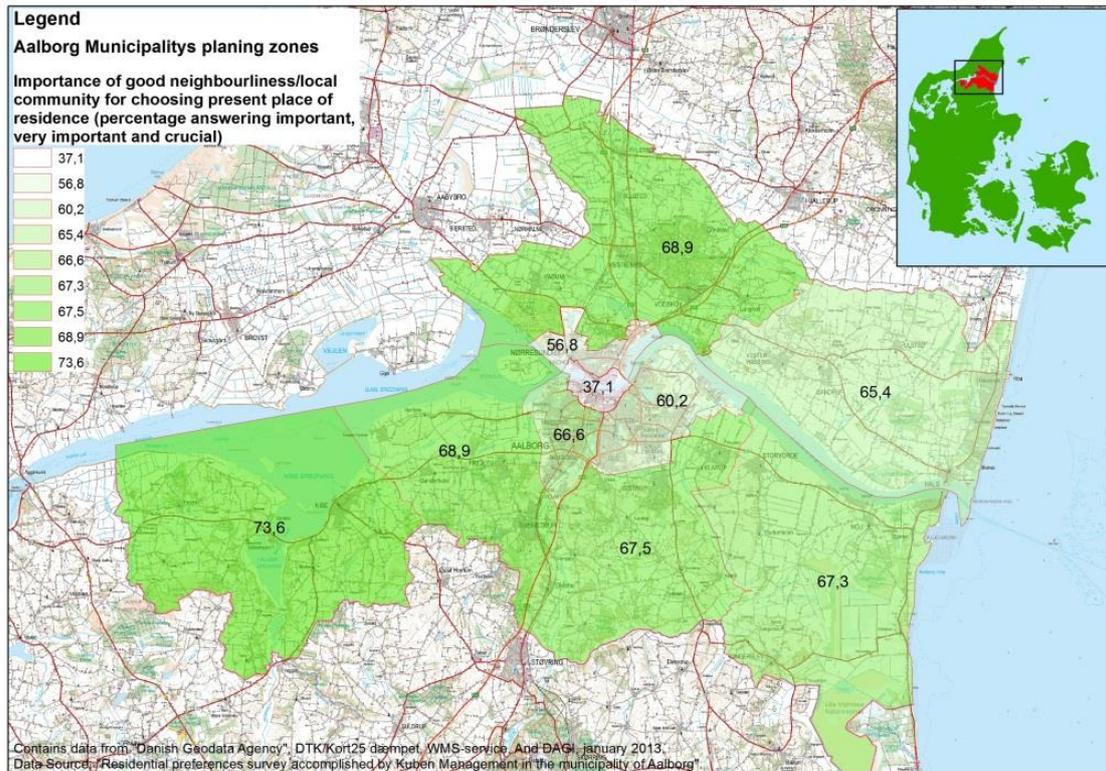


Figure 8. Distribution of preference for good neighbourliness/local community

This indicates that preferences for neighbourliness and local community are widespread in areas with middle-to-high socio-economic status. In summary, social differences seem to be connected to different types of attachment to place. It seems that the respondents in the highest and lowest socioeconomic positions display the strongest connection to place, and the strongest preference for neighbour relations and local community. This finding differs from dominant theoretical links made between low socioeconomic status and being locally orientated, and conversely high socioeconomic status and being mobile, exterritorial and unattached to place -voluntary or enforced (Watt & Smets 2014; Savage et al. 2005; Bauman 2002; Sassen 2000; Castells 1997). Our next step is to investigate the possible conjunction between the demographic zones, the survey based zones, and the experiences that we have collected through in-depth interviews. This should provide more knowledge on the variations in local forms of belonging.

6. Experiences of belonging to different demographic zones

Except for young adults living in the city-centre and residents in depopulated fringe areas, it is a consistent point made by our interviewees that they feel attached to their places of residence. Regardless of class affiliation and geographic location in the municipality, they mention neighbourliness and local community as part of the reason for being attached to the place where they live. However, variations do exist as regards intensity, motive, and experience of preferences towards neighbourliness.

The distinction between traditional settlements, which Savage, et al. (2005) refer to as "dwellers," and elected settlement, which Savage, et al. termed "elective belonging," is helpful but not sufficient in order to understand our data-material. We have identified six different forms of belonging: elective belonging, project based belonging, relation based belonging, rootedness, consumption based belonging and alienated. Elective and rootedness types of belonging are almost similar to Savage, et al. (2005), but with the addition that in our study, both these types of belonging are clearly oriented towards local social relations.

In the present study, we find that the different forms of belonging can be distinguished in relation to their preferences toward either living near people similar to themselves (homogeneity) or preference for living in diverse social environments (heterogeneity). Moreover, what distinguishes the different forms of belonging is the degree to which they are oriented toward their local area. In theoretical terms, this would refer to the scale characterising their "centering" between home and reaching out (Buttimer 1980, Fallov, Jørgensen and Knudsen 2013). In Figure 9, we have illustrated these dimensions of belonging by mapping them on to two forms of continuums, the first goes from heterogeneous to homogenous preferences, while the second concerns the continuum between local and global attachment. In what follows, we will elaborate on each of these forms of belonging.

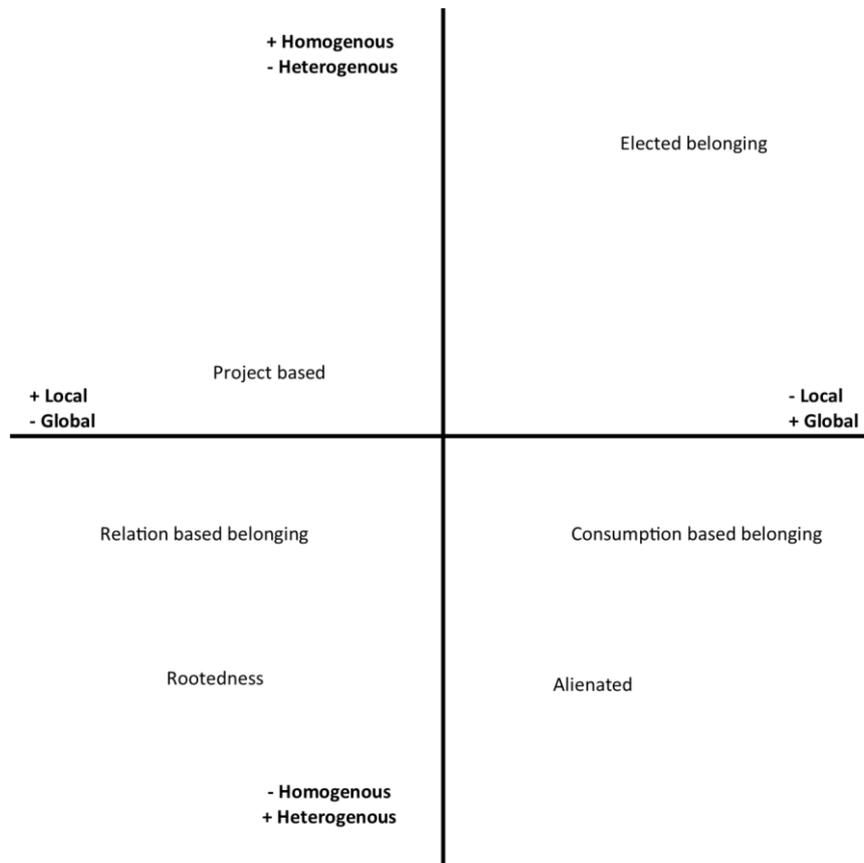


Figure 9. Forms of belonging

We begin this investigation by looking more closely at the form of belonging we have conceptualised as rootedness (bottom left corner of Figure 9). Interviewees representing this form of belonging are attached to their place of residence through history, tradition, and family. This form of belonging is similar to what Savage, et al. (2005) characterize as "dwellers" in Manchester. However, in our study, these residents have deliberately settled in the area where they were born and bred, and they intend to remain there. One of our interviewees residing as the 8th generation on a family farm says:

"It can be a disadvantage to be a real stay-at-home, but it can also be a great advantage. When I was born, I knew that I was going to be a farmer here. Today, no one knows what they are going to do when they are born. I am so pleased to be here, to work here and to live here. I am happy to be able to copy the old lifestyle of my family where husband and wife work and live together every day. And all the newcomers here have added a lot of

good things to the town. They have initiated a lot of the associational life here. We are not just rednecks and hillbillies, we are equal residents, and people from the village come here to see our animals and are very happy about it and interested in our farm.” (IP 5).

The interviewee describes this rooted connection to a place as an advantage since it offers both a place to live and a historical connection to place and family. This form of belonging has a strong local attachment but also a preference toward heterogeneous social environments. The population inflow to the village is not related to distance as the interviewees from this area report a certain respect for residents who represent the traditional lifestyle and that their rootedness is seen by new comers as something that lends quality to village life. There are also interviewees from other more suburban locations that report many of the same motives and preferences relating to rootedness, but which have stronger preferences towards homogeneity. Residents report that they moved to the place when they were young and chose to stay after their children left home because of the good and close neighbour relations and because of the local leisure facilities. Initially, they moved to the place to settle down in a residential area suitable for children and families and because of the possibility to build their own house exactly as they wanted.

Residents, representing the elective form of belonging, feel attracted to their neighbourhood because of its practical location and for aesthetic reasons. This preference is not opposed to a preference for neighbour relations and local communities. Such relations are given priority as a possible benefit over time after they have already moved in and settled. Interviewees with an elective form of belonging point to the importance of neighbours representing shared values and preferences concerning the architectural expression and the standards of order and cleanliness in the neighbourhood. This form of belonging thus has preferences towards homogeneity (top right corner of Figure 9). Moreover, easy access to urban facilities in relation to everyday activities such as jobs, schools, shops, and cafes, as well as the nearby airport are important to the elective form of belonging.

Project-based belonging is a type of modern re-interpretation of the traditional rootedness to place in the sense that there is a preference for a strong relation between place and community. One of our interviewees says:

“There is a special culture here – it is like people want to socialize and appreciate togetherness, as we say. It is a community; it is like an old village community, just in a more modern version” (IP 6)

This type of belonging seems to imply a preference for a socially differentiated local community, as one of our interviewees puts it:

"The village is very diverse. Many different kinds of people live here, and really the area is very complex. In this town we had a socially funded project where those who were mentally impaired worked in the village grocery store. They had the experience of being important because their work had a huge impact on the everyday life of the village. It was typical of this village to accommodate these people. "(IP 6)

Local joint projects can apparently create greater social tolerance and promote greater social variation within the specific residential area. Individuals are attracted to these specific projects and choose their residence in order to be able to join these projects, which, in our study, were represented by an inn with folk music and organic food, a grocery based on voluntary work and by the employment of people with mental challenges, or by an extended cohabitation with joint ownership of land and communal houses. These types of joint projects require different skills and resources and this could be one of the reasons why interviewees who live in such places talk a lot about the quality of social diversity. Communities hosting such projects are more likely to be socially differentiated along lines of political affiliations and length of residency.

In some sense, this type of project-oriented community is based on cultural equality emerging from a shared project in everyday life. Tönnies (1887) described traditional and non-reflexive relationships, but the project-based type of belonging contains both the differentiated type of social integration and clear preferences for being settled among socially equals. The informants who are related to this type of belonging told us that they moved to this particular locality to be part of a particular project or a particular group, but over time they have become more aware of the importance of social diversity in the wider local community. Therefore, we have placed them close to the centre of Figure 9, since they represent a form of belonging with preferences for both homogeneity in term of being with people with the same cultural interests, but also preferences towards heterogeneity in relation to valuing social diversity.

At the beginning of this section, we mentioned two forms of belonging, which are not affiliated with local community or neighbourliness, we have termed these consumption based belonging and alienated.

The city dwellers representing the consumption based belonging emphasize availability, the pulse and rhythm of the city as their most important reason for living there. They do not know any of their neighbours and they do not participate in any local community activities. A young medical doctor doing part of his training in Aalborg phrase it like this:

"Well, these are flats that you can only rent while training to be a doctor, so it is a temporary contract. So...this temporary contract, well, it means that you know that at some point you have to move on, and then you do not feel quite as attached in some way..."(IP9)

Typically, these informants have no orientation towards community, and their motives are connected with the multiple and heterogeneous facilities and offers available in the inner city.

We have found the alienated form of belonging among residents in the depopulated outskirts of the municipality. These interviewees stress the possibility of being anonymous in the small towns. In contrast to earlier when more people lived in the countryside, today some of these small towns are socially disconnected with less or no social control. One of the interviewees living in a small hinterland town says:

*"You can be anonymous here. You can be yourself. If, for example, you live in Hasseris in Aalborg [a socially affluent neighbourhood] the neighbours may be a little busy about what it looks like and how you behave. I do not know, but this is my feeling. You can do as you like here and that's great."
(IP 4)*

Moreover, they live there because houses are cheap, and thus, in this sense, they do not feel particularly closely connected to their homes or to the location of the property. Rather, they represent a global attachment as they prioritize keeping housing cost at a minimum in order to be able to go abroad several times a year. In other cases, they report that they feel more attached to many of the other places they have lived or would want to live, than to their present location (see Fallov et al. 2013). The small towns where people settle apparently offer anonymity although there is a rather small population. This corresponds with Spanish findings in the so-called "Rural Melting-pots" (Oliva, 2010) suggesting that due to mobility, migration, and structural changes many small towns and rural areas have become more similar to what was previously associated with urban environments.

Belonging in social housing areas is described as relation based forms of belonging. On the one hand, the residents feel connected to relations in place and to local community; On the other hand, they struggle with the territorial stigma associated with living in these neighbourhoods. These residents often feel insulted by terms like "socially deprived area" and "ghetto", which are commonly used in the public debate, as they are experiencing their neighbourhood as a good and friendly place to live. A woman living in an area with social housing in the eastern outskirts of Aalborg reports:

“All those negative things said about Aalborg East – the ghetto in the east and so on - annoy me. It annoys me because they do not know about life here. I really think our relationships out here are caring” (IP 10).

These interviewees live in areas of low socioeconomic status located on the eastern and northern outskirts of the city feel connected to their local community. Local attachment is related to and strengthened by close neighbourhood networks and the interactions, friendships, and resources gained through these. Residents value the type of local relations, which are characterized by heterogeneous age, race and cultural backgrounds. This is a crucial point, as residents can, at the same time, be socially disadvantaged, struggle for recognition, and feel attached to the place they live. The symbolic violence of territorial stigma does not necessarily lead to local disassociation (Jørgensen, 2010; Jensen & Christensen 2012; van Eijk 2012).

7. Discussion - drawing together findings on zones of belonging

Returning to our initial questions relating to whether modern Danish society is clustering into a conglomerate of sub-communities and to how we can understand the relation between socio-demographic zones, socioeconomic status and sense of belonging, it is now time to evaluate these on the basis on our findings presented above. We took as our point of departure Park & Burgess' conceptualization of different phases of demographic change or stability and how this resulted in different neighbourhood characteristics, but we also argued that this conceptualization needs to be modified in order to include the meanings and experiences people attach to place.

This is particularly pregnant when we look at the Zones in Transition, which we have identified demographically in two different types of localities; the inner city and the areas dominated by social housing. Rather than viewing zone in transition as a consistent zone of belonging, we have found two different forms of belonging in these two areas; consumption based belonging and relation based belonging, which have similar traits but relate to different categories of people when taking into account age, income, education, and types of residency. The elements of low economic status and a high degree of demographic turbulence have very different impacts on the connection to local community, whether these are attached to young students in the inner city who are transit residents or to residents in low socioeconomic residential areas with a higher average age but a lower level of education. The young residents in the inner city stress the “pulse of the city” and not their neighbours and local community when reflecting on the qualities of their place of residence. On the contrary, interviewees who represent relation based belonging feel connected to local community. Zone in transition in our contemporary urban experience refer to two distinctively different types of belonging and neighbourhoods. This can partly be related to the fact that social housing areas, which still

serves as the first port of entry for many immigrants, are located not in the inner city, as in Park & Burgess' Chicago, but in the outskirts and suburban fringes of Danish and other European cities. Demographic transition is therefore not enough to demarcate homogenous zones of belonging, although it has an important impact on meanings ascribed to place and local attachment.

The jumpers, in-betweens, and invasion zones are middle class residential areas with a relatively high socioeconomic status. The interviewees from these locations all represent the elective form of belonging. This would at first glance indicate that rather than three different zones, we could talk of one zone of elective belonging covering a large part of the municipality of Aalborg and that most residents are middle class to some extent. But that would conceal the differences between the areas, which are related not only to their degree of turbulence, but also to the residential preferences and motives for moving to these places resulting in different orientations toward local community. So where, in the case of zone in transition, we called for the zone to be divided in two, we are here highlighting the fact that the conceptualization of elective belonging needs to become more differentiated to capture the specifics of different forms of middle class belonging.

Invasion zones are areas with newly built houses. This zone is home to the kind of residents that the municipality of Aalborg has gained in the transformation process. They represent a high socioeconomic status in terms of both level of education and economic capital. The form of belonging represented by interviewees from these locations relate to elective belonging in their preference toward aesthetic expressions and material distinction. However we find a strong connection to local community, and especially a strong wish to create a safe and nice place for children, with a large number of sport activities and recreational facilities. We need a new concept for this form of belonging as it is less global oriented than what is conceptualized by Savage, et al. (2005), and much more oriented toward local community.

In-betweens are the places with an ongoing and relatively high degree of demographic turbulence. This zone is home to "first time buyer" on the housing market. Aalborg has as many Danish provincial towns prices on the housing-market that allows young newly established families or/and young adults that recently entered the labour market to buy a relatively cheap and often temporary house in the peripheral areas of the town. This is very different from the area of Copenhagen (or similar metropolitan areas), where prices on the housing market are extremely high. These areas are mostly of a suburban nature, but are also found in the hinterland. We find a strong preference for the physical location and the way in which infrastructure and location facilitate the "day-to-day" routines regarding the maintenance of work, family, and friendships. In the hinterlands, these preferences are replaced by a strong preference for combining the low cost of housing with the obtainment of

other goods and amenities. In both urban and rural in-betweens we find middle to low socioeconomic status. More than aesthetics this zone is dominated by a pragmatic form of elective belonging.

The demographic pattern of Jumpers has changed quite considerably during the 30 years of observation. These areas have been affected by different demographic phases in which inbound and outbound migration have shifted. In the demographic zones of Jumpers we find pockets of different forms of belonging. There are areas related to what we above conceptualize as rootedness. We have interviewees that match what Watt (2009) and Watt and Smets (2014) terms selective belonging. These are small pockets of residents with relatively high socio-economic status, with high preferences for the aesthetic expression and social order of their immediate neighbours, but who show little or no attachment to the wider neighbourhood. Moreover, we find examples of the alienated form of belonging in different locations in the Jumpers zone. Examples of these are found both in villages in the depopulated fringe of the Municipality and in suburban areas. We also have little pockets of project based belonging, although these are not localized geographical in the same areas. Project based belonging relate to a stronger local attachment and orientation towards local community than both selective and alienated forms of belonging. More work is needed in order to differentiate the demographic character of the Jumpers, as this category has not shown to be particularly helpful in relation to demarcating zones of belonging.

Dominance was only found in one small place within the city of Aalborg; whereas we found it in many of the small towns in the hinterland. Interviewees from these areas represent the rootedness form of belonging, but with preferences toward homogeneity. There is a strong preference towards local community. Socioeconomic status is middle-to-low as regards education, but relatively high in terms of economy.

Succession was only identified in two locations in the municipality of Aalborg. These are places of continuous depopulation and a low socioeconomic status, and also places with residents aged above the average of the municipality with preference toward an informal type of community, valuing phenomena like quietness, darkness, and the sound of nature. Typically it is in relatively old summerhouses along the coastline (Limfjord) occupied usually by senior citizen, as a Danish law permit retiree use their summerhouses as permanent all-year residents. We have too little data on this form of belonging to display it clearly within the dimensions of figure 9.

8. Conclusion

In relation to the human ecology perspective, we can conclude that it provides inspiration in its ambition to grasp the totality of the diverse ways in which residents belong to places.

Moreover, that the perspective indicate the diverse reality of age, migration, mobility, socioeconomic status, and geographical characteristics which have to be taken into account when developing more general models of belonging and connectedness to place. However, no city quite conforms to such an ideal scheme. The perspective needs to be modified in its application to specific social-geographical conditions influencing demographic developments and local preferences. Moreover, the perspective suffers from a lack of concepts with which to investigate whether micro experiences match the general idea of different social and cultural localities. In this study, we have tried to take this into account by introducing both survey data and qualitative data. The qualitative interview-data gave us access to micro experiences about how and why residents feel attached to the places they live. But it remains a problem to verify or falsify the demographic zones solely on the basis of individual reports, as individuals often have a limited idea of the demographic profile of their residential area. In order to meet this problem we have introduced survey data, which although not solving the problem offer one way of addressing it. The available survey data tells us essential points about the prevalence and the geographical distribution of strong local attachment to residential place, and that social relations, neighbourliness, and community are important residential preferences.

To sum up our experience with using the Human Ecology perspective as a point of departure: On the one hand, it has some inadequacies with regards to explaining modern forms of belonging. On the other hand, it has forced us to explore how place affect (and generate) social life and local communities differently on different locations as opposed to subsuming these differences under all-encompassing concepts and thus apply wide-ranging social theory to gain an understanding of the specifics of place in modern cities. The question of belonging cannot only be read of class position. It must be approached as the totality of demographic composition, race and pace of population turnover, socioeconomic status and mapped on to specific local conditions. This has to be systematically combined and related to residential motives, preferences and biography. In this way belonging is a sociological concept that calls for different perspective from our disciplinary tradition theoretically as well as methodologically.

The six demographic zones identified on the basis of levels of inbound and outbound migration have turned out to not precisely map on to zones of belonging. In some cases, the demographic zones covers distinctly different forms of belonging, while in other cases the demographic zones could be indicators of where we need a more sophisticated and differentiated conceptualization of belonging, as in the case of variations relating to elective belonging. What we have found, therefore, are not fully distinct social and cultural units. Rather, our findings support that the dimensions of the demographic zones in terms of "race and pace" of population turn-over can work as a first step to indicate variations in the conditions for local social relations. The zone-perspective and the multiple dimensions related

to characterizing place variations in this perspective helped us to identify different sub-areas within the municipality, which, on the face of it, share the same pattern of inbound and outbound migration and socioeconomic position.

The findings puncture the idea that people in late modern societies are freed from ties to local community, neighbours, and places. The interviews and the survey answers provide clear evidence of a general orientation towards place, local community, and neighbour relations, albeit combined in different manners. We have identified six forms of belonging; elective belonging, project based belonging, relation based belonging, rootedness, consumption based belonging and alienated. The only places where neighbourhood and neighbour relations are reported as less important are in the inner city, where we find a demographic zone in transition, the lowest socioeconomic status, the youngest segment of the population, and in the localities where we find alienated form of belonging. The six forms of belonging can be mapped on to two forms of continuums, the first have preference for a homogeneous demography in one end and preferences for heterogeneous demography in the other end, while the second continuum stretches between local and global attachment.

While we also find evidence of preferences towards elective belonging associated with power, distinction, aesthetics, and the presentation of a mobile lifestyle (Savage et al. 2005; Watt 2009; Atkinson 2005), such motives often co-exist with an orientation toward local community. In the present study, middleclass belonging is oriented towards local social life, but varies with regard to the forms and scale of community sought for.

Place is an important category in the understanding of modern social life and we have by taking this seriously been able to observe how place in different ways can either mediate or increase social differences. Both the project based and the alienated forms of belonging are effects of this. The findings related to the project based and the alienated forms of belonging are interesting in relation to future research, as they indicate a changed relation between urban and rural forms of life. Interviewees representing project based forms of belonging mirror the social demography of many inner city areas in terms of high education levels and their political affiliations, but actively settle in rural areas where there are interesting projects underway. The alienated show low local attachment, but might be interesting in terms of indicating the direction of the suburbanization of rural areas. Both of these forms of belonging only appear when working with fine grained variations within and between neighbourhoods, and through the attention to how the dimensions of people and place interact with resources, temporal dimensions and meaning ascribed to place in the formation of varied forms of belonging.

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