



RESEARCH PAPERS

from the Department of Social Sciences

Institut for Samfundsvidenskab og Erhvervsøkonomi

Research Paper no. 4/01

**From Urban Movements to negotiated
Entrepreneurialism.**

John Andersen

Roskilde University, Denmark

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Research Papers from the Department of Social Sciences, Roskilde University, Denmark.

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Abstract

The Danish Urban Development Programme known as the “Orestad project” in Copenhagen embodies larger transitions of Urban planning and governance in Copenhagen. Up till the seventies urban policy was characterised by top-down rational planning. The post-war "golden age” of the Welfare City" rested on a strong centralised city hall administration in the hands of a powerful the Social Democratic leadership, which had been in power since the beginning of the 19th Century. During the seventies the efficiency and legitimacy of the regime was challenged by both a weakened urban economy due to industrial decline and demographic changes, which eroded the tax-base and powerful leftist forces and successful mobilisation from new urban movements. The latter challenged the top-down style of planning and style of governance and mobilised for community based participatory urban regeneration. In the beginning of the eighties, a situation of political and institutional dislocation of the regime fused with a financial crisis for the city. This in turn increased the conflicts concerning additional grants at the state level (from 1982- 92 in the hands of a Liberal- Conservative coalition) in the mid and late eighties. From the late eighties, an onwards state initiated pressure for a Metropolitan strategic growth policy became manifest and a gradual shift towards a “Entrepreneurial City” strategy linked to the emerging cross-border regional strategy became the new orientation of urban policy during the nineties. The Danish UDP was the result the formation of a strategic growth partnership between the state and the capital. As part of this strategy, the Orestads project is the flagship-project of the Oresunds region.

At the start of the new millennium urban policy orientation and governance in Denmark can be characterised by a **duality** between:

1. *Participatory, empowering* welfare oriented strategies that are based on notions of the welfare or solidaristic City and, which targets deprived districts and neighbourhoods. In addition there are
2. Neoliberalist/corporative market driven strategic growth strategies, which are based on notions of the Entrepreneurial City.

The tension and possible mediation between the two orientations represents one of the challenges for urban policy and governance concerned with problems of overcoming social polarisation in the urban space.

Keywords:

**Urban Policy, Social Polarisation, Ørestaden, Empowerment,
Social Inclusion**

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From Urban Movements to negotiated Entrepreneurialism.

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Introduction

This paper is based on work undertaken in the TSER-project “*Urban Redevelopment and Social Polarisation in the City.U.R.S.P.I.C.* (Moulart, Swyngedouw and Rodriguez, 1999) and in the GEP – programme (Gender, Empowerment and Politics)

In the following, findings are presented concerning the role of political and social forces at different levels in the Greater Copenhagen Area. - that is to say, the complex interplay between politicians, local, regional and national governments, trade unions, the business community, planning agencies and governance networks in the design and implementation of the large scale Danish Urban Development Programme (UDP) the **Oerestadproject**. In the last part of the summary some **preliminary lessons** from the case study are outlined.

The analysis focusses on understanding the content and rationality (in political and institutional terms) of the UDP. In which way was it linked to the awareness of social exclusion? Who initiated it and why did it become a reality at that particular time in that particular form?

General characteristics of the Danish UDP

The Danish UDP, the Oerestad project can be interpreted as a manifestation of a specific version of the “**entrepreneurial city strategy**” (Harvey, 1989) developed in a “negotiated economy” or Scandinavian type of welfare regime (Esping-Andersen, 1990). Unlike other countries the Danish UDP was not designed and implemented in a political context of deregulation and fundamental changes in the overall welfare regime. The general characteristics of the Danish social democratic welfare regime: the level of social protection and strength and bargaining power of the trade union movement was more or less intact. However at the time the UDP was being designed in, the late eighties, the general level of unemployment had been high, not least in Copenhagen, for more than a decade. In addition, the power of the main players at the national political level had changed in favour of the Conservative - Liberal block.

In the Danish case, **the design** of the UDP – the Oerestad project - (1989-91) grew out of a new (relatively speaking) consensus around the middle of the political landscape in the late eighties. The UDP was negotiated between the Conservative-Liberal Government and the Social Democratic opposition, at national level, and the Social Democratic leadership of the Municipality of Copenhagen. However, before the UDP was negotiated in its final form, there was a long sequence of conflicts about the allocation of additional resources to tackle the growing problems of social exclusion in the city of Copenhagen. These events are important if we are to understand the political and institutional contradictions and dynamics over a decade that shaped the UDP. This will be outlined in the following.

The unsuccessful attempts for addressing the socio-economic crises of the capital in the eighties.

In the beginning of the eighties, the bargaining power of the Municipality of Copenhagen was relatively weak vis- a- vis the State. Since the beginning of the eighties, the City Council of Copenhagen and the Social Democratic Lord Mayor, Egon Weidekamp started negotiations with the national government in order to combat its growing fiscal and social problems. The first response from the Conservative-Liberal government (in office since 1982) and the liberal home secretary Britta Schall Holberg was to appoint an expert commission to analyse the interplay between the demographic, social and economic conditions, which constituted the complexity of the socio-economic problem in Copenhagen.

The commission released its report in 1984 (The “Copenhagen Report,” 1984). The commission concluded that the socio-economic crises, the emerge of new poverty and the fiscal problems of the city could be explained as a result of negative self-perpetuating processes of (1) industrial decline, lack of new growth and employment sectors and (2) increasing concentration of social excluded groups and other low income groups. This cocktail explained the increasing inequality within the Greater Copenhagen region, the declining tax base and the higher level of expenditure of social protection and services.

The social geography within the Greater Copenhagen Region, :the high share of low income groups, long-term unemployed and other excluded parts of the population were, in part, a result of the lack of access to social housing in the wealthy municipalities surrounding Copenhagen. In the surrounding municipalities, the real estate market was increasingly closed to the victims of the general recession. In short: *Copenhagen had become a victim of “social dumping” from its neighbouring municipalities.*

The lack of new growth and employment opportunities in Copenhagen were, in part, a result of the absence of a co-ordinated, offensive **regional** strategy in which the wealthier Municipalities in the region took part in a coherent effort from which also Copenhagen could benefit.

However, the above mentioned diagnosis put forward in the “*Copenhagen Report*” did not create political action in favour of Copenhagen from the national Government. On the contrary the Greater Copenhagen Council - the regional political institution which could have promoted future offensive regional strategies – was closed by the Government in 1987 (parallel to the faith of Greater London Council during the Thatcher regime).

The Greater Copenhagen Council had been partly paralysed due to, among other things, the political geography of the region: the conflicts between the wealthy municipalities (headed by Liberals and Conservatives) and the less wealthy municipalities (including Copenhagen) headed by Social Democrat- left coalitions. The response of the Conservative-Liberal national government to the functional and political crises in the Greater Copenhagen Council was not to strengthen its instruments and resources for but to close it down. This step further reduced the possibility for negotiating coherent action for economic and social regeneration in the region.

From urban movements in the seventies to “negotiated entrepreneurialism” in the nineties.

In the late eighties, the political climate began to change. At **the national level** the power and influence of the “hard core liberalist” within the conservative-liberal government coalition decreased and the influence of the more pragmatic social liberal/ centre forces increased. The centre-oriented forces within the conservative-liberal bloc were willing to make compromises with the Social Democrats – including negotiations about the future of the capital. Within the Social Democratic movement the power of the centre oriented forces also increased (Andersen et.al., 1999). The new orientation was expressed with the replacement of the chair of the party leader Svend Auken with the Poul Nyrup Rasmussen, who, in 1992, became Prime Minister in a coalition government which included two small social-liberal parties.

In 1988-89 important political compromises were negotiated between the government and the Social Democrats about the labour market policy and growth stimulating entrepreneurial programmes. Key elements in the reforms included better possibilities for training and education for the unemployed. It was around **“Schumpeterian issues”** (Jessop, 1998, Torfing, 1998)) that a new consensus (relatively speaking) emerged. As we shall see this also included a willingness to engage in infrastructure investments and urban redevelopment.

A minority of the Social Democratic and the leftwing forces were critical of this new political orientation. They argued that it would blur the political perspective of a new Social Democratic-left government.

Since key actors at the political level in the formation of the growth coalition in connection with the Danish UDP in the initial design phase was the Social Democratic Mayor of Copenhagen and the Conservative Minister of Finance, (Henning Dyremose) it can be argued that one of the political rationalities in the conception of the Danish UDP at that particular time was the UDPs ability to foster practical political alliances about what was regarded as an “offensive growth policy”. Important members of the Liberal – Conservative government and the Social Democratic party were interested in demonstrating their capacity for “Schumpeterian action”.

The political orientation at the **local level**, the Municipality of Copenhagen, had changed as well during the eighties. In order to understand the nature and origins of these changes aspects of the political dynamics in Copenhagen since the seventies will be reviewed in the following.

The Municipality of Copenhagen has been dominated by Social Democrats since the beginning of the Century. In the seventies, the electoral share and political strength of New Left (The Socialist Left Party) as well as the Old Left (Communists and Socialist Peoples Party) increased to around one third or more of the votes. A variety of urban movements, which criticised the Social Democratic strategy for urban renewal, also entered the urban scene during the seventies. In many districts the urban movements were successful with regard to political and social empowerment of the more or less deprived communities by fostering an alliance between students, marginalised groups, and working class people – and between “new and old left wing” forces.

In this turbulent “post 68” the urban political climate the Social Democratic Party in Copenhagen was in a state of confusion and its leadership became increasingly critical of the new urban movements. The Social Democrats and in particular the Lord Mayor, Egon Weidekamp, became the prototype of a Social Democratic authoritarian “King of the City” – a “Machine Politician”. He claimed that the New Left and the urban movements blocked the way for socio-economic development and were partly responsible for the economic decline in the eighties. Indeed, the old Social Democratic regime was seriously challenged by the left and the new urban movements. In 1981 the largest and symbolic confrontation concerning the future direction of urban renewal in Copenhagen emerged. A week long confrontation – which was called a civil war by many observers – between locals and the police took place in the streets of Noerrebro. The event, which provoked it, was that the Municipality insisted to remove a self organised playground in the area. The locals and their thousands of supporters occupied the area and when the playground had been cleared with massive use of the police, the playground was reoccupied and for several days the police were unable to enter the whole district.

After this dramatic event the electoral support for the Socialist Leftwing Mayor, Villo Sigurdsson, who at that time was political responsible for urban planning, increased even more (in some districts 50% of the votes). The Lord Mayor’s response to this situation was to take away legal responsibility for the urban planning from Sigurdsson and place it in his own office. This decision caused a lot legal confusion including a year-long dispute in the court at various level. In short “**governmentability**” in Copenhagen was threatened – not least from the point of view of the new Conservative-Liberal government , which came into office in 1982. At the same time the fiscal and social problems of the municipality and the level of unemployment increased rapidly.

In the late eighties, the opposition from the left was still there but with less strength. In particular, the strength of the urban movements had decreased. In part this could be explained by a new more flexible and participative orientation in the implementation of the urban renewal in the city. The most visible urban opposition was the new autonomous movement of squatters, who were less able to gather broader public support. The electoral support for the liberal and conservative parties in Copenhagen increased somewhat. Within the Social Democratic party the authoritarian tradition of “Machine Politics” was to some extent replaced by a more open pluralist style – embodied in the new Lord Mayor Jens Kramer, who represented a younger generation of more pragmatic Social Democrats.

The political profile of the new Lord Mayor was, among other things, concerned with creating a more offensive/Schumpeterian growth strategy. The political partners in this part of the urban strategy were seen as the liberal and conservative parties. The leftwing forces were seen as reliable coalition partners with regard to environmental policies and development and maintenance of social protection and services. But more or less unreliable coalition partners with regard to business development.

To conclude: In the late eighties a new urban regime of “Social Democratic Entrepreneurialism” was emerging. And it was in this particular political climate the Danish UDP was born

The implementation of Social Democratic City Entrepreneurialism

The driving forces in the design and implementation of the Danish UDP were, as we shall see, not just corporate actors. The driving forces in the **first initial** design phase were public planners strongly influenced by the new public management tradition who held a strong position strong ties to the Ministry of Finance. However it should not be forgotten that the huge **traffic investments** – the Danish Swedish bridge - had been recommended since the beginning of the eighties by the EU- business lobby “European Industrialists”. Their report “**Scandinavian Links**” about “missing links” in the infrastructure was important for the promotion of the idea of the Danish-Swedish bridge. In the **second, more concrete, design phase a broader growth coalition**, which included the leadership of national and local trade unions and the employers associations was formed. A tool in this process was the formation of an expert commission with the actors, who launched their report “What do we want to do with the capital?” in 1989 (Metropolitan Commission, 1989). However, **the most influential actors** in the design phase was a small group of “**public entrepreneurs**” with roots in the Ministry of Finance. These experts became key actors, among other things because they were able to foster a “growth coalition”. They negotiate with the important corporate interest groups – trade unions and employers associations and *found a formula for risk sharing* between the Municipality of Copenhagen and the State. They were able to foster a common frame of meaning from the mid/late eighties and forward: the need of an economic revitalisation strategy for Copenhagen as part of the broader **regionalisation** strategy: the promotion of the cross border Oeresund Region (Andersson, Aa. and Matthiessen, C. W.,1993)

In the **final decision** phase in 1991 of the Danish UDP the dominant political actors were the Conservative Minister of Finance and the Social Democratic Mayor of Copenhagen. In parliament, the growth coalition included the three biggest parties in Denmark the Liberal Party, the Conservative Party and the Social Democratic Party.

The planning rationality of the UDP

The “negotiated entrepreneurialism” which characterises the Danish UDP seemed to offer a package, which combined (1) the solution of problems at different levels (local/municipal, regional and national) and different political and planning rationalities.

The important strategic and closely interrelated components in the “growth package,” in which the Danish UDP was an important part, of were:

1. Huge infra structure investments in the new **bridge** from Denmark to Sweden. This followed the recommendations about the “Scandinavian Links” suggested by The Round Table of European Industrialists in the early eighties.
2. The creation of a **new type of urban space**: the Oerestad able to attract high-tech business and a **METRO**- system in Copenhagen.

3. A negotiated **financial** arrangement for the UDP, which seemed attractive for the Municipality of Copenhagen. The institutional and economic rationale was a specific way of economic and political **risk sharing on a long-term basis** between private investors, the Municipality of Copenhagen and the State. The State would be the main investor and financial guarantee. The METRO and the new part of the town were imagined to be (partly) financed by selling land to private investors. The Municipality of Copenhagen would "only" risk the value of the land at which the new urban space was planned to be located
4. Boosting **the image of the cross border Oeresunds Region** and stimulating a long term process with increased interregional economic, political and cultural integration.

The political rationality of the UDP

One of the **political rationalities** in the conception of the Danish UDP at that particular time was the UDP's ability **to demonstrate practical governance about what was regarded as an "offensive growth policy"**. As mentioned before important parts of the Liberal – Conservative government and the parts of the Social Democratic party was – after 6 –7-years of political confrontation – interested in demonstrating their ability for "Schumpeterian action". For the Social Democratic the leadership of Copenhagen the "growth package" could be interpreted as the Conservative-Liberal Government's political confession of the structural problems (decline in jobs and tax base) for Copenhagen. It was interpreted as a positive shift in political orientation – compared to the previous lack of political acknowledgement of the specific nature of the urban crises of Copenhagen.

For the Conservative-Liberal Government the UDP – the huge traffic investments and the creation of a new urban space supposed to strengthen the competitive position of Copenhagen – was a **political acceptable** way of "helping" Copenhagen. As mentioned before, the Conservative Liberal government had previously refused to negotiate the allocation of additional financial resources to Copenhagen based on **political** acknowledgement of over average **social needs**.

The discourse concerning the UDP

Despite the criticism from critical planners (Gaardman, 1996), the political left and lower levels of the Social Democratic movement, the growth coalition became relatively successful in defining the policy and planning agenda as choice between two scenarios:

1. The **defensive stagnation** scenario with more car traffic, stagnation in investments in Copenhagen and the region as a whole (with the result that Copenhagen would further decrease its competitive position vis a vis other cities) or

2. The **offensive “glocalisation”** scenario that included an updated infrastructure (metro and bridge to Sweden) and a new growth zone and the creation of a new urban space equipped for coping with the potentials of the knowledge based economy and postmodern social life of the 21.st. century.

In short, what happened in the political process and public debate was that it became possible for the ”growth coalition” to reject the criticism against the future oriented, offensive and internationally oriented strategy. The criticism, which indeed occurred (and still does) was rejected at a cultural level **as nostalgic and localist in** orientation, and at a economic level for not taking the positive and negative challenges of the ongoing **transformation towards a knowledge based economy seriously.**

Three arguments made it difficult for the critics to convince the political middle ground about their scepticism and promote convincing alternatives:

- The **financial arrangement.** The sale of unused land would finance huge amounts of the investments.
- The **linkage** between the creation of the new urban space and the construction of a METRO system, which has its own **environmental** legitimacy by reducing the growing car traffic
- **The slow and flexible** creation of a new town over a longer span of time.

The ongoing criticism of the UDP has focussed on two issues:

1. A general **democratic** scepticism vis a vis the type of governance and public-private partnership which the project embodies. The delegation of planning and implementation competence to a **quasi public development agency** like the Oerestad Development Company (ODC) is viewed as delegating to much power in the hands of technocrats. This hinders efficient access to ongoing democratic intervention and public discourse (Gaardman, 1996)
2. Development strategies should not concentrate the resources in one large scale project. Instead the challenge is the development of a diverse, multifaceted, coherent strategy for socio-economic development linked to notions of **social economy , empowerment of excluded groups** which is sensitive with regard to different needs and resources (the social capital) in the different parts of the city and its population..(Jessop, 1998, Andersen, 1999)

Risk calculations and reliability of the new urban entrepreneurs.

In 1997-98 a new type of criticism of **the economic calculations** has emerged. The reliability of the financial calculation, which initially was presented for the politicians and the public, when the law about Oerestaden was passed through Parliament in 1991, has been seriously questioned. The criticism has made by the independent analytical agency and business newsletter ”Monday Morning”. This

agency is closely related to the business community and mobilises support within the Danish and Swedish business community, politicians, research institutions and other actors for the future growth potential of the cross-border Oeresund region. In particular, they have boosted the vision of a “Medicon Valley”.

In their analysis, which was based on the experiences in the first phase of the implementation (where land has been sold for a much cheaper price to private companies than forecasted in the calculation presented to the Danish Parliament in 1990), they argued that the original economic calculations seem to be far too optimistic. The analysis concludes that a more realistic scenario is that the project as a whole instead of reaching a state of financial balance in the year 2010 will end up with a **deficit** at an level of 8 billion Dkr. 1.1 billion ECU).

Seen from the present perspective, where the economical rational has been seriously questioned the following problem have been strongly addressed :
For the broader public and the politicians (at municipal and state level) there was a lack of access to **alternative calculations** and knowledge available – not least taking the rather short period of decision making about the project into account. For politicians and the broader public the calculations about the costs and reliability of the overall calculations in the project was difficult to challenge and criticise.

The missing links between large scale UDPs and Social Action programmes - some preliminary lessons

The first lesson to be learned is about the “democratic deficit problem” with regard to the type of complex governance we are dealing with. Large scale UDPs contain by their nature a large number of **unknown risks**. This is where is the need for institutionalised “alternative planning and expertise” in the policy and planning process comes in.

Using a metaphor from an other subsystem this could be compared to the principle of access to a “**second opinion**” often discussed in the medical profession. Here the principle means that the patients should have the right to have another doctor to suggest alternative diagnosis before the cure of the disease starts. This approach and way of thinking is compatible with some of the reflections about **sub politics** put forward by contemporary social theorists like Ulrich Beck (Beck, 1992)

In the Danish UDP the problem (seen from the social polarisation angle) was that the public and political debate about the objectives, the instruments and ressource allocation to the UDP, its socio-economic rational, possible alternatives and / or linkage to other strategies for social empowerment and social inclusion - was never really developed.

The “growth coalition” became successful in **reducing** the policy and planning agenda and the public discource to the choice between the **localist** defensive stagnation scenario and the transnational/regional offensive **glocalisation** scenario. The risk of creating an expensive “ghost town” and the possible negative social effects in terms of increased social polarisation was not on the agenda.

The question, which the critics of the project posed from the beginning – and which to day is also asked by some of the supporters of the general regionalisation strategy, is whether the key-actors and the public had sufficient access to different scenarios and open and reliable calculations about benefits and risks. The critics claim that the presentation and calculation were too optimistic and seductive.

This leads to the second lesson: **the need for linkage between** (1) the UDP and the general strategy for economic growth and employment and (2) the targeted programmes for social action and urban renewal in the deprived urban areas.

This will be explained in the following:

In Copenhagen the spatial expression of social exclusion has been increasingly concentrated in particular districts and neighbourhoods and the social segregation in the Greater Copenhagen region as a whole has increased.

In 1993, the Social Democratic Government recognised that targeted selective social action was needed in order to stop the emerging ghettorisation in deprived urban areas. In 1993, a new inter-ministerial Urban Committee and a **national action programme for social renewal** in deprived urban areas was launched, and since 1994 implemented. The programme was inspired by Poverty 3 and multidimensional, experimental urban policies in other EU-member states (Broennum, 1994). It was the first time in Denmark that a large scale targeted programme based on principles of **area based action** and local participation was launched.

A part of the programme was to fund multidimensional and partnership (in particular partnerships between NGOs, housing associations and local government agencies) based action against socio-cultural (not least ethnic related tensions) disintegration at district level. In Copenhagen the Kongens Enghave and Bispebjerg districts were chosen as Model Action Districts (“kvarterløft”) and right now concrete plans of actions are being implemented. Though the program of the Urban Committee represent an important innovative step with regard to social action in deprived urban areas it is also striking that the nature of the activities are mainly **localist and socio-cultural** in their orientation. **Socio-economic** strategies, including employment and entrepreneurship and the **linkage** to the broader revitalisation strategy are only addressed in a marginal way.

Generally, the policy responsiveness vis a vis problems of social exclusion, social polarisation and disempowerment is (despite the universal schemes of social protection and services) fragmented and strictly divided between (1) socio-cultural responses at district and neighbourhood level and (2) socio-economic responses at city/regional level.

The linkage of the two in terms of efficient institutional frameworks, planning agencies, administrative and professional capacity etc. represents an important and complicated challenge at local, regional and EU-level.

In the forthcoming implementation process (which will be over the next decades) an important issue will be the **possible involvement** of the most deprived **districts** (e.g. Kongens Enghave situated beside the Oerestad) in the ongoing planning and decision making. The pressure for increased district participation and

stronger linkage of growth politics and politics of social renewal - may change the future conditions the implementation of the UDP .

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