



# RESEARCH PAPERS

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Research Paper no. 9/06

**URBAN COMPETITION AND URBAN  
CRISIS:**

**CHANGING CONCEPTS FOR  
HANDLING DANGERS IN THE CITY:  
THE CASE OF COPENHAGEN**

**Anni Greve**

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**Anni Greve**

**Roskilde University, Denmark**

## **Research Papers from the Department of Society and Globalisation, Roskilde University, Denmark.**

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**Abstract:** How does society form its perception of urban danger? The essay points to the importance of intermediary bodies of social movements, their codes of morals and ideas about solutions to civil conflict. In the history of modern welfare society the new professions, the labour movement and the co-operative movement have provided individuals with frameworks, points of reference and oaths of solidarity in the struggle to come to terms with modernity. These movements have left their fingerprints on leading ideas about preventive criminology. Moreover, in decisive periods in the making of the modern welfare state, architects have been of service to strong social forces. Far from acting in isolation from the main social actors on the political scene, architectural design has had an influence on the visions and ideas of strong social movements. At its best, architecture has aided in staging a playground – or a laboratory – for sights and visions about straightening out characters. This essay therefore focuses on measures of preventive criminology in three periods of Danish history, namely the 1850s, the 1930s and the 1970s. It seeks to form a backdrop to the study of present-day ideas about urban dangers. With a focus on the 1990s and the 2000s, the closing section discusses contemporary changes in penal policies in a welfare society in transition.

**Keywords: Urban dangers - civil conflict solutions – moral codes of strong social movements – crime prevention and architecture – changes in penal policies**

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**Preface:** This report of four essays is outcome of readings into and meetings with the French sociologist Jacques Donzelot. It is hard not to remember Jacques Donzelot when one has had the opportunity to read his main books. For good reason *La police des familles* (1978) and *l'Invention du social* (1986) both have had impact on contemporary Danish sociology. Today, Donzelot is involved in a major comparative research scheme titled “Ville, Violence et Dependence Sociale – L’inflexion neo-liberale des politiques urbaines, sociale et de securité” at PUCA – Le Plan Urbanisme Construction et Architecture – under the French Ministry of Research and Technology. His latest books *Faire société: la politique de la ville aux États-Unis et en France*, Seuil, 2003 (with Catherine Mével and Anne Wyvekens) and *Quand la ville se défait: Quelle politique face à la crise des banlieues*, Seuil, 2006 both offer insights into aims, perspectives and outcomes of the study.

The comparative research scheme includes seven European countries: Holland, Denmark, England, Germany, Italy, Belgium and France. This report deals with the case of Denmark. We have had the opportunity to present our thoughts at a seminar April 2006; besides we have got the possibility to participate in a session on the case of England June 2006. Both seminars were organized by PUCA. The more we have come into the task the more one realizes the level of its ambitions. Jesper Visti Hansen has been with us as important moderator and interpreter of Donzelot’s work.

The report consists of four distinct essays that are meant to be read in chronological order:

**1. Introduction**

Anni Greve

**2. Urban politics in Denmark**

Hans Thor Andersen

**3. City and security: The case of social welfare in Denmark with a focus on housing policy**

Peter Abrahamson

**4. Changing concepts for handling dangers in the city: The case of Copenhagen**

Anni Greve

## **URBAN COMPETITION AND URBAN RISIS:**

### **CHANGING CONCEPTS FOR HANDLING DANGERS IN THE CITY: THE CASE OF COPENHAGEN**

**By Anni Greve, Roskilde University, Denmark**

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## Introduction

*Denmark has completely changed during the last one hundred years, materially as well as socially. Nonetheless, the prison population has not changed, except during World War II. [...] It is still a small country, with possibilities for personalised relationships. And it is a country where the courts have been able to preserve their independence vis-à-vis the legislature. But this is an independence under increasing attack. [...] An important defence would be to look at conflicts as civil matters, not as criminals, and encourage arrangements for civil conflict solutions even in the more severe cases.*

Nils Christie, 1999.

In the winter of 2004, a young man caused the death of three individuals in a car accident, evidently caused by reckless driving in the densely populated district of Brønshøj. From the very beginning, all the public media covered the accident with detailed articles about the loss of lives, the mourning of families and friends, interviews with passers-by, questions about what was the appropriate punishment, and interviews with ministers, above all the minister of justice. Given the awareness of the full extent of the tragedy, utterances about the need for severe punishment were freely exchanged. Eight months later, the young man, whose first name was Bekim, was sentenced to three years in prison. Under existing legislation, the maximum sentence for this offence is one year, but in this case the jury decided to make an example of the offender: reckless driving is not acceptable in Denmark, and so he was sentenced three years imprisonment.

The sentence handed down to Bekim was remarkable for many reasons. Until recently, Danish jurisdiction has been recognized for its tradition of acting in accordance with Montesquieu's principle of the division of powers into the legislature, the executive and the judiciary (Christie 1999). Until recently too, Denmark has had a strong and independent class of civil servants, who have been a safeguard in relation to the phenomenon of 'moral panics'. But at present we are seeing a change in jurisdiction, with the political level and the public media drawing increasingly closer to the court. There is now a demand for higher penalties and to criminalize more minor offences such as drug abuse. It is well known that prison is a place for hard-core 'real' criminals, that there is no necessary link between the strictness of the punishment and the frequency of crimes, and that the prison system, far from restoring people to normality, actually produces criminals. Yet at present there are 'considerably more people behind bars compared to other Nordic countries' (Balvig 2000: 320; see also Balvig 2004).

Are we witnessing the prelude to a new penal code similar to the Anglo-American ones as a successor to the Danish penal code of 1930? Or is a mixed system emerging, due to the specific context of our regime in Denmark? According to Balvig (Balvig 2000: 320; see also Balvig 2004), 'the penal complex of England and the United States has increasingly become a role model for the Danish prison system'. And, with the intensification of the global economy, we are seeing the rise of new surveillance technologies and private security firms in semi-public areas such as the shopping mall. Nonetheless, there are still exceptions to the rule in the case of Denmark. For the Norwegian criminologist Nils Christie (1999), Denmark has some tradition for resolving civil conflicts, partly due to the size of the nation. We are in touch with each other and have concrete knowledge about what leads to crime and the people behind it. It has, until recently at least, reduced our desire for severe

punishment. As such it is a sign of the existence of extensive networks of normative regulation, or 'a deep grammar of society'.

How does society form its perception of urban danger? This essay points to a second not less important component of the Danish situation than the size of the nation. It has to do with the presence of intermediary bodies of social movements, their codes of morals and ideas about solutions to civil conflict. In the history of modern welfare society the new professions, the labour movement and the co-operative movement have provided individuals with frameworks, points of reference and oaths of solidarity in the struggle to come to terms with modernity. These movements have left their fingerprints on leading ideas about preventive criminology. Moreover, in decisive periods in the making of the modern welfare state, architects have been of service to strong social forces. Far from acting in isolation from the main social actors on the political scene, architectural design has had an influence on the visions and ideas of strong social movements. At its best, architecture has aided in staging a playground – or a laboratory – for sights and visions about straightening out characters. This essay therefore focuses on measures of preventive criminology in three periods of Danish history, namely the 1850s, the 1930s and the 1970s. It seeks to form a backdrop to the study of present-day ideas about urban dangers. With a focus on the 1990s and the 2000s, the closing section discusses contemporary changes in penal policies in a welfare society in transition.

## **Preventive Criminology: A Danish Case?**

Like the major European nations, Denmark has followed the same route from classical liberalism to types of modern welfare, although a little later. There was no French revolution in Denmark at the end of the eighteenth century: rather, absolute monarchy was re-established after the bloody execution of Count Johan Friedrich Struense.<sup>1</sup> It was only in 1849 that civil and political rights were proclaimed against the background of Europe's civil wars. The promotion of 'the social', involving a shift from a divided and class-based society to a unified and extended nation, was in the melting pot during the first part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, in which the 1930s was decisive. But it was only after World War II that the system became fully institutionalised. As in other nations, in decisive respects the penal complex has followed the shifts of thinking of the changing forms of government. I agree with David Garland (1985, 2001), one of whose main arguments is that the prison, the penal code and the juridical profession have transported concepts of government into the area of judicial punishment. Three types of jurisprudence have been at work in the last two centuries: classical criminology, punishment and welfare. It is in these years that we see the emergence of a neo-liberal mode concurrently with the weakening of the social bonds of movements in civil society.

## **Civil rights, interests and a moral right to hate criminals**

In Denmark, it was not until the 1849 Constitution that civil and political rights were proclaimed. The civil rights established the 'the rule of law' as 'a law of freedom' (Marshall 1949) involving the right to take up an enterprise of one's own choice. Copenhagen became a field for the 'natural regulation' of private enterprise and a mirror of its limits. There was a need for social reforms: the

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<sup>1</sup> In 1772 Struense was sentenced for lese-majesté and executed according to Danske lov 6.4.1 (Inga Floto 2004).



encircled medieval city was overpopulated (with 130,000 souls in 1850, it had more than doubled six times since the construction of its ramparts). The need for space was manifest everywhere— in the streets, squares and dwellings – in the form of the enormous stench of accumulated household rubbish, faeces and urine (Lützen 1998; Frandsen 2004). The fear of the cholera epidemics that plagued other parts of Europe caused intensive criticisms from the medical profession. Studies in Paris and London indicated that the disease was most probably spread through the air and not only by touch (Emil Horneman 1851, in Lützen 1998: 84). Therefore, the strategy of quarantining sufferers would not work. Clearly quarantine represented an anti-liberal form of discourse. Nevertheless, it was only after the actual outbreak of cholera epidemics in 1853 that poor sanitation and ‘acute dangers due to density and the overcrowding of the poor quarters’ (Emil Horneman 1876, quoted in Frandsen 2004: 109) became an issue of political controversy. This did not lead to any reform of the sanitary system, but one outcome was the establishing of a suburbia outside the ramparts of the old inner city of Copenhagen and the construction of the first modern model building in 1854, namely the *Lægeforeningens boliger* (the housing of the medical association).

Though limited in space, this first low-density housing became laboratories for future welfare buildings in a double sense. First, they offered one answer to the risks, crimes and dangers of inner city life. A new way of living would contribute ‘to straightening out characters’ and reforming the individual with regard to good citizenship.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, preventive criminology was not part of the classical terminology, but during the second half of the nineteenth century, professionals and philanthropists (Lützen 1999) took initiatives in the direction of what was to become one important aspect of future forms of knowledge, namely ‘normalisation’. ‘These practices are concerned not just to prevent law-breaking, but also to inculcate specific norms and attitudes’ (Garland 1985: 238). Secondly, the new housing corresponded to the demands of the physicians, since they had what was missing in the inner city: plenty of light, fresh air, more space both within and between the houses, cleanliness etc., which were to prevent diseases from spreading and improve overall health conditions.

## The Home as a Locus for Straightening Out Characters

*The author Lars-Henrik Olsen has provided an insight into the childhood of Leif Petersen (born 1928) in Copenhagen. Among other things, he writes, ‘Each district had its own gang, it was almost small armies of street gangs that were at war with each other, and if a gang had been attacked by a gang from a different district, then there would be revenge. Sometimes things developed to such extent that adults would intervene, or the police would come. [...] Indeed, we did not take into consideration where the blow would hit. [...] And suddenly someone got an iron bar in his head, so that one side of it split.*

(Balvig 2005)

When we turn to the first part of the twentieth century, we find the fight for social rights becoming a key issue. In the capitalist market place, capitalists and workers had reached a turning point with the collective bargaining of 1899 after which wage levels and working conditions were negotiated every fourth year.

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<sup>2</sup> “Vil man forebygge, at trangen ikke bliver til Armod, og endnu i Tide opløfte Arbejderens Mod, opmuntre ham til Renlighed, orden og Sparsommelighed og holde ham fra Værtshuslivet, der er lige så ødelæggende for Økonomi og huslig Lykke, må man skaffe ham et Hjem, hvor han uden Modbydelighed kan tilbringe sin korte Fritid i sin Ægtefælles og sine Børns Kreds, og for hvilken Leien ikke overstiger hans Evner” (Fædrelandet 31 December 1850, cited in Frandsen 2004: 101).

Basically the system has become the core of 'the Danish flex/security model'. Conversely, the urban socialist movement changed its focus from 'socialism' to 'the promotion of the social' (Donzelot 1984). Among other things, it did this by improving health care, housing, food quality etc. By then the ramparts encircling Copenhagen had been abolished (1860), and flats in multiple-storey buildings in dense districts had been hurriedly built (Nørrebro and Vesterbro in the 1880s and 1890s). Inside, buildings were to become overcrowded, small apartments with a minimum of sanitary installations, while outside, in the public arena, space turned into dangerous streets and the 'bad places' of the city. There was a need for social reforms to fight the risks and dangers of urban society, which was obvious to both wings of the political spectrum of the parliament.

The inter-war period saw a great expansion in building activity, not least in Copenhagen, which was extended considerably towards the north. Here the north-west district, Bispebjerg, created in 1931, is a case in point. Its slogan 'From cradle to grave' evokes literally a famous vision of the labour movement. Outside Denmark, Keynesianism, a new field of knowledge concerning the economy and modern welfare began to crystallize. In Scandinavia, Gunnar and Alva Myrdahl were actors, Gunnar in respect of economic theory, Alva on the modern family. In the early 1930s they co-authored a number of publications which decisively influenced Swedish welfare policies (Hirdman 1990 and 1992) and were concerned with what they termed a crisis in the population. If, they argued, the state did not intervene comprehensively Sweden would be threatened by a decrease in the population or become completely deserted. Like Keynes, they argued for directed collective consumption, but at the same time they offered a fully developed vision of a civil society that should be governed with respect to concept of preventive criminology, design and laboratory for future ways of living, as follows. *Concept*: The family should be a playground for visions of the social engineering of new forms of living. The aim was to fight the anomie of modern individualism, the risk of deviation, conflicts and crime, by reforming both lives and homes in the direction of good citizenship. *Design*: An urbanised version of *Gemeinschaft*, within a multiple-storey building of family flats, but where all practical functions, such as the laundry, dining hall and play room, were situated on the first floor. *Laboratory*: The nucleus of modern society was to become a large strong family with a clear division between the roles of the man and the woman. Women and children were to be re-socialised, the former by earning wages, the latter within public institutions organised in accordance with the thinking of the newest behavioural sciences.

Denmark took in ideas from Sweden. The population issue was addressed in the social housing reforms of the 1930s. But the outcome was not the creation of a single reformatory schema, as in Sweden. More perceptions of urban danger and good citizenship were at work. The urban socialist movement was most in line with the thinking of the Myrdals. In 1938 the government in office, the Social Democrats, advocated building on the Swedish experiment, but this was rejected by the liberals (Banke 1999: 113-134)<sup>3</sup>. In their opinion the population problem could be addressed through subsidies for single-family detached houses on the edge of the city or in suburbs outside it. The result was that, in the aftermath of Second World War, 'single-family detached houses

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<sup>3</sup> The cooperative movement has also left its fingerprints on the types of subsidies and building styles of social housing in Denmark. According to Jørgensen and Tonboe (1992: 28), 'it should not be forgotten that it was exactly during the last two decades of the nineteenth century that the outstanding rural mobilisation in form of the cooperative movement took place'. They 'would become an important element of later attitudes towards overall universal welfare ... long after the demise of the co-op movement itself'.

(market-based) and rental flats in high-rise buildings owned by social housing associations were built, which attests to the priority given to increasing both individual and collective housing affluence' (Ærø 2004: 191).

## **Punishment and rehabilitation**

The Danish penal code of 1930 introduced the idea of rehabilitation. Over time the law has been altered on many occasions, but today its basic premises are still at work. It has had profound consequences for the overall operation and representation of the penal system. The prison became a place for hard-core 'real' criminals, other, new institutions taking care of those who were to be subjected to moral restitution. Now criminals were represented as individuals to be pitied, cared for and, if possible, reclaimed, not people whom it was a moral right to hate. In David Garland's words, 'There no longer exists a universe of free and equal legal subjects which coincides with the sane adult population. Now there are categories, which pose exceptions to the rule, classes, which exhibit only limited degrees of freedom and a large population of "special cases"' (Garland 1985: 25).

The new penal system can be characterised as a complex of three sectors, the 'normalising', the 'corrective' and the 'segregative' sector (Garland 1985). The '*normalising*' sector has to do with preventive criminology, consisting of 'planned and programmed reactions to expected and real deviance' (Cohen 1985). It is based on the view that 'crime is a kind of disease that is curable through ever-refined methods developed by experts' (Balvig 2004:176). With David Garland, it 'goes much deeper than mere crime prevention', it aims at 'straighten out characters and reform the individual in regard to good citizenship by way of 'the extension of the juridical power into the lives and homes of offenders to include his parents and his families'. The '*corrective*' sector includes another series of institutions, the juvenile prisons (with partly indeterminate sentences), reformatory schools and a number of special measures. 'These measures were directed at certain groups of offenders, juveniles, mental patients, recidivists, substance abusers etc., who were believed to be in need of special treatment aimed at preventing further offending' (Balvig 2005:174). The '*segregative*' sector for hard-core criminals is the prison, which is displaced away from correction and towards segregation.

## **Suburbia and normalisation**

Post-war Denmark is characterised by the interplay of the mutually conditioning elements of a general social strategy. Policies that were in the melting pot during the 1930s found their form within the framework of a Danish welfare state marked by the influences of two strong social movements, the urban social democratic movement and a self-confident farming movement. 'The welfare state was decentralised, but overall standards and central control were maintained as the rationale for national central government' (Jørgensen and Tonboe 1992: 39).<sup>4</sup> Preventive criminology, especially the 'normalising' aspect, gradually became an integral part not only of social policies, but also of architecture and urban planning.

It was only in the aftermath of the Second World War that the social and housing acts of the 1930s produced their full implications. The first social

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<sup>4</sup> See also Niels Finn Christiansen and Klaus Petersen (2001), "The Dynamics of Social Solidarity: The Danish Welfare State, 1900-2000", in *Scandinavian Journal of History* Vol 26, no. 3.

housing acts (see Engberg 1999) paved the way for the building of family residences owned by social housing associations. Not only were the Corbusier types of 'House Machine' constructed, like the rental flats in high-rise blocks in Bellahøj, Ballerup and Brøndby Strand (Bertelsen 1997), but also single-family detached houses.<sup>5</sup> 'The numbers of flats built in multi-storey buildings and single-family detached houses built were similar; both peaked in the early 1970s at 27,000 single-family detached houses and 17,000 high-rise flats annually' (Ærø 2004: 190).

Each in their way responded to the visions of two strong social movements, the urban social democratic movement, and the liberals, with their roots in the Danish co-operative movement. The first movement supported and encouraged social housing associations, which became closely linked to the labour movement. 'The residents have from the beginning run the housing co-operatives and still today their democratic structure is regarded as one of the strengths of the Danish "housing regime"' (Andersen et al. 2000: 11). The types of scheme which the social housing associations typically developed would be settlements 'planned as *new towns* furnished with such public institutions such as nursery schools, schools and libraries, together with shops and communal facilities such as community centres' (Ærø 2004: 195). The liberals, conversely, were not enthusiastic about these fully developed coherent schemes, since they emphasized publicly funded single-family detached houses as an important way of uniting private and collective interests. 'Not yet industrialised regions and localities were to be industrialised and (as a means to this overall aim) the jobs to be brought to the people – just as the countryside was brought to the city ... through garden cities and detached single-family houses' (Jørgensen and Tonboe 1992: 39).

The suburbs influenced the images of strong social movements and met some of their wishes. *First*, they offered an answer to the dangers and risks of living in the inner cities, as was documented statistically. The multiple club activities of the suburbs offered young people (an up and coming social category, and a dangerous one) alternatives to the street corners of Nørrebro and Vesterbro. *Secondly*, the new residences offered a solution to the great shortage of housing in the 1950s and 1960s and became a playground for visions of modern ways of living, possible stages being the modern functionalistic flat or the bungalow of suburbia, with plenty of light, fresh air and space both within and between the houses. *Thirdly*, these buildings manifested a utilitarian bargaining practice integrated into the new modes of social thought: "If we accept the rules of the game of the market place, then at least some of our wishes have to be met". From the start, the social housing associations were run by the labour movement. They were to become the guardians of a realm of individual claims within the social bonds of the movement. Conversely, the suburbs of single-family detached houses became the playgrounds of the values of individual responsibility and relations of trust, with all their ambivalences. This model influenced these districts in promoting positive social control and a certain tradition of finding solutions for civil conflict.

The economic growth of the 1960s, combined with full employment and increasing consumerism, gradually changed the terms of the deal. If we compare with the three points that have just been made, we can make the following observations. *First*, what has been termed 'individualisation' influenced the social bonds of civil society: for example, football need not be

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<sup>5</sup> Earlier examples of welfare state subsidies include houses built with state loans. Until 1958, many privately owned dwellings were built with financial support under the Construction Support Act (Ærø 2004).

the natural activity of working-class children. *Secondly*, consuming turned into an ideology. Danes got the hang of the art of shopping and the method of choosing exactly the details needed for a modern home, the gadgets, a car, plastic fruit bowls – anything; buying a sofa became a science. *Thirdly*, increases in income gradually meant that families who could afford it moved out of the buildings based on this model. They were not prepared to live in boxes ‘from the cradle to the grave’, but chose instead single-family detached houses in one of the suburbs that had sprung up on the outskirts of Copenhagen.

## **The Crime Prevention Council of 1971**

During the second half of the 1960s, an increase in crime, above all offences against property, were a first indication of the weakening of the social bonds of civil society. It seems that more individuals whose material wishes were beyond their reach legally were committing robbery and open theft. With full employment, why could they not take a decent job? Increasingly the delinquent and the poor too, were regarded as being ‘excluded’ from society, rather than a weak link within a united social movement as hitherto. But the social movements no longer offered a stable framework, a closely knit tissue of norms and rules, which could serve as the basis for the resolution of civil conflicts. In 1971, therefore, the Crime Prevention Council was established with the aim precisely of strengthening the tradition of resolving such conflicts. From the very beginning, the Council was explicit in including housing and urban planning with the realm of crime prevention. In reality, it took up a threat that the architects and urban planners of modern welfare buildings and districts already had addressed, involving the integration of concepts for handling the dangers of the city into its very layout and architectural design. From the beginning of modern welfare planning, Danish architects have influenced the prevailing concepts of crime prevention, the invention of suburbia outside the ramparts of old inner city Copenhagen, the social housing schemes of the 1930s and post-war *new town* movements being significant examples. In the late 1960s, what was new was not only the increase in crime, but the fact that it took place within those residential areas (Borch 2005: 15) that used to be marked by positive social control and a certain tradition of resolving civil conflicts. It seems that the silent oaths of solidarity had been displaced by the mergence of a moral vacuum and of anomie.

The Crime Prevention Council advocated solutions such as street lighting, buildings and districts as a kind of universal cure. Moreover, the council suggested mobilising communities through the sponsoring and facilitation of common community activities. ‘These activities are described as cosy and fun, but the aim of the incitement is more serious, i.e. to empower communities in order to mobilize the residents as guardians and thereby prevent crime’ (Christensen 2005: 77). One outcome has been the creation of a unique Danish construction, SSP co-operation, i.e. co-operation at the municipal level between the Social administration, Schools, leisure providers and the Police. This is aimed at creating a network of community agents to prevent crime in the everyday lives of children and young people, and at regenerating communities in order to establish the social control and sense of responsibility that have been lost. They therefore represent themselves as ‘community regenerating programmes’ (Christensen 2005: 87).

## **Welfare under pressure**

If we return to David Garland's main point, namely that the penal complex is an extension of government thinking and not purely an idea from abroad, then we must take a closer look at the political landscape of the 1970s. The Crime Prevention Council and the 'Danish experiment'<sup>6</sup> were founded in the early 1970s in an era of optimism due to economic growth, full employment and expansive Keynesian welfare policies. It was expected that a new grassroots-oriented civil society would be able to include the delinquent and the poor in 'alternative' communities (the free town of Christiania in 1970 would be just one model). Within the public administration, the innovation of a new municipal reform came into existence. The municipal reform of 1970 involved a profound reorganisation of local government in Denmark, aimed at rationalization and simplification, and implying a process of decentralisation in which 'executive functions should be administered as close to the citizens as possible' (Andersen et al. 2000: 21).

The oil crisis of 1973 influenced Danish society profoundly. Initially it was thought that the growth in unemployment that resulted was merely a temporary phenomenon, an exception to the rule. Only gradually did a new economic philosophy arise, and with it a change in approach: now unemployment came to be regarded as an integral part of economic growth. The reforms that were launched with full employment turned into an apparatus for governing the 'necessary' consequences of economic policies. One component of the municipal reform was the principle of governance by means of framework law, that is, one that gives the state authorities a licence to extend judicial power to the local level. In other words, judicial judgment became a matter of administrative assessment. One implication of this was that the level of social administration increasingly turned into a self-contained system: for example, jurisdiction was handed over to social administration at the local level, whose task it was to assess and decide upon the worthiness of a client to receive some kind of support. Thus, with a keen eye upon Copenhagen's financial deficits, early retirement was granted generously in the early 1980s. In this way, a heavy economic burden was delegated to Copenhagen County, since the counties had taken over responsibility for tasks that, under normal circumstances, the municipalities cannot provide for. This promoted new modes of classification, which became interwoven with auditing, and a new kind of cynicism gradually entered a field that had been traditionally occupied by professionals with high morale standards.

## **Social reform and social work**

What has become of the delinquent and excluded who are not in prison? They have turned into the clients of the public administration. Until the mid-1970s professionals with high morale standards had worked hard on finding substitutes for the positive and 'normalising' social control of the old social movements. Strong ideals, such as the ethics of vocation, characterized nursing

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<sup>6</sup> In 1973, some of the special measures that belonged to 'the segregative sector' of the penal complex, such as the juvenile prison, were closed down. The initiative was launched as 'the Danish experiment'. It was argued that there is no necessary link between the stringency of punishments and the frequency of crimes, and that the prison system produces criminals more than it restores inmates to normality. Indeed, at first the initiatives did not result in an increasing prison population. On the contrary, from 1971 to 1974 the prison population declined by 25%. Increasingly the focus of criminology created what has been called a 'moral panic' (Cohen 1985; Järvinen 1998). What people experience as threats and dangers are not necessarily significant features within statistical specifications of the prison population; in other words, there seem to be discrepancies between fears and facts. Nevertheless, the Danish experience has been left behind.

and social work. And strong ideals were certainly needed. But, it was argued, the ethics of vocation generally occur within asymmetrical relationships. In other words, whereas it is those aspects that are of relevance to integration into some kind of 'programme' that are of interest to the social worker, strong ideals of civic and social solidarity are displayed elsewhere. In the 1970s the social work profession was criticised for being associated with the process of social stigmatisation. Those who made use of public services were regarded as self-confessed failures. In particular, those who applied for welfare aid - for public support, that is - were said to feel 'pauperised'. Social work practices were thus interpreted within a discourse of discipline and (negative) social control (Greve 1998).

Welfare came under pressure, and attitudes and procedures changed. The fact that the reforms of the early 1970s were introduced in a period marked by recession and municipal deficits contributed to new forms of social segregation. In other respects, this has left its traces on the city in terms of spatial segregation. In itself spatial segregation is not a problem, but it becomes one when it implies an accumulation of social problems. During the 1980s the social administration of Copenhagen municipality relegated deviants and the poor in large numbers to neighbourhoods that used to be model buildings for the working classes, thus gradually changing the characteristics of these districts. They had been intended to meet the needs of a working population after hours, but considerable numbers of them had left. Those who stayed behind became the neighbours of new types of tenants. For example, Bispebjerg, created in 1931, gradually became a mixture of the following categories: 1) The long-term unemployed (concentrated among the middle aged and older unskilled women and men), who had been displaced through the comprehensive slum clearance programme of inner-city Copenhagen as well as Nørrebro and Vesterbro; 2) The mentally ill, due to the policy in the 1970s of closing down large institutions, including psychiatric hospitals.<sup>7</sup> 3) Immigrants and/or refugees without stable relations with the labour market; and 4) single-parent families, preferably single mothers. Within a short period of time, the municipality of Copenhagen had relegated social clients with 'a right to a home' to a restricted set of neighbourhoods, and within them, even selected housing blocks. For example, the mentally ill were typically housed in blocks with one-room flats. From silent oaths of solidarity, they were to become the locus of what has been termed 'a negative social spiral' (Skifter Andersen 2004).

## The Community as a Target for Crime Prevention

*In the fall of 1998, a committee under the Danish National Police commissioner issued a report on street gangs in Denmark. In its report, the committee defined a street gang as a group of youngsters who commit crimes and/or violate the peace by intimidation and aggressive behaviour in public areas. This rather broad definition helps to describe a phenomenon that has given rise to growing public concern and fear. The gangs in question normally do not have any fixed organisation, hierarchy or membership ties, but can be characterised as having situational leadership, floating 'membership' and reasonably good solidarity, allowing them to generate fear in the neighbourhoods and city centres. The types of crime include street robberies, violence, threats, malicious damage, and attacks on police officers, thefts and extortion. There are about 15-20 street gangs in Copenhagen, consisting typically of 5-20 members between the age of 15 and 20 years. The majority of the youngsters have an ethnic minority background. They come from families that are poorly integrated. They generally lack education and jobs and feel marginalized and discriminated against. A typical street gang consists of key members who act*

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<sup>7</sup> In the late 1960s, large-scale administrations and 'total institutions' came under attack. One fatal outcome from viewpoint of later crime statistics was the closing down of the large mental hospitals and the invention of district-based psychiatric care.

*as leaders in the instigation of crimes; members who are active in crime and benefit from the solidarity in the peer group and their status as gang members; and hang-arounds that often take part in confrontations with the police.*

Arne Stevns (Stevns 2002)

Since the 1990s, urban politics has been marked by the implementation of a more holistic approach 'to combine efforts at a number of fields in the hope of producing a lasting change in terms of social well-being, empowerment and participation' (H.T. Andersen 2006). It is possible to speak about two phases and two different philosophies with regard to the meaning of place. One is concerned with the meaning of place from the viewpoint of social work,<sup>8</sup> networks of strong ties and civil security, while the other adopts the viewpoint of the market, chance equalities, networks of weak ties and civil security, reflecting a shift in governmental style.

In 1994-1998 a large number of projects were set up to 'fight criminality and increase security' (Christensen and Ærø 2003: 6), especially within those residential areas that used to be characterised by positive social control. The philosophy underlying the initiatives was to deal with places with reference to a communitarian vein of thought, i.e. to promote a sense of responsibility in the local area where people lived and shared affective bonds and culture. Being a community therefore entails having a measure of commitment to a set of shared values, norms and meanings (Etzioni 1994, in Greve 1998). As in other European cities, the initiatives pointed to 'the necessity of new forms of mechanical solidarity and explicit organisation of cultural bonds' (Vranken 2005) in order to fight anomie and promote a lost tradition of resolving civil conflicts. The measures included architectural renewal, such as the bettering of common spaces, i.e. community houses, parks, playgrounds etc., as well as social projects, such as turning risky moments (for example, New Year's Eve) into 'events' based on voluntary initiatives.

With the reinvention of the community as a target for crime prevention, community policing came into its own, something relatively new in Denmark. Although it was introduced in the early 1980s, it was only in the late 1990s that it became more widespread, with 57% of Danish police districts adopting it. POA is another initiative parallel running with community policing, the term being an abbreviation of 'problem-oriented police work', and the idea being that a thorough analysis of the problems of crime in a community should form a point of departure for good police work. During the 1990s, new issue-directed measures were introduced using the same line of thought. Thus within the last decade, this has given rise to the introduction of 'packages', such as 'the violence package' (1993), 'the theft package' (1994), 'the drug package' (1994), 'the organised crime package' (1995), and very recently 'the ghetto package' (2005). One outcome of these packages has been a whole industry of reports focusing on the spatial and temporal aspects of crime, such as that produced by Torben Berg Sørensen and Hans Jørgen Dam (*Pendlerrapporten. Socialpædagogik og kriminelle unge indvandrere. Sociologisk analyse*, 2000).

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<sup>8</sup> Partly due to the unemployment rate, the issue of the negative effects of social integration has been replaced by another issue, namely the fear of disintegration and social exclusion (Donzelot 1998; Visti Hansen 1998). Moreover, the social work discourse is not interpreted solely in terms of social control: it still has the function of integrating its clients into a stable order. But inclusion has both negative and positive dimensions. The negative dimension can be interpreted in terms of discipline and social control, whereas the positive dimension has to do with the production of modern citizens (Osborne 1996) and new forms of social citizenship.



## A new paradigm

The 1970s was an era that culminated in the humanizing of crime prevention. In the 1980s, the principle of young criminals entering into a social contract was introduced. In 2001 this new philosophy entered a new phase. Compared to only 15 years ago we see the upcoming of a new paradigm. The person who commits a crime is considered a sane citizen, a situational man, a rational individual he is a criminal of choice. Increasingly the offender is perceived, not as subject to morale restitution but from viewpoint of 'demolition and revenge'. He is a rational individual, a criminal of choice. For good or for worse 'recognition' has become a keyword within the Danish criminal justice system. The person who has committed a crime has to be recognized as a juridical person who is subject to punishment; once again – when compared to the era of classical liberalism – it has become a moral right to hate criminals.

Significant changes have taken place within the area of crime prevention. Today we see the emergence of a new security economy concurrently with the entry of Copenhagen into the competition for visibility on the global city map. Place matters, Denmark being a case in point, not least due to its high levels of social and civil security. Copenhagen is being promoted with a branding that promises a relatively stable framework for investments and financial flows. Thus 'a safe environment for leisure activities, shopping and mobility is an important parameter of competition'. Similarly, it is 'the indirect costs of the exposition of specific symptoms of dangerous deviance or non-civilised behaviour (such as yelling, pushing, running, scruffiness) that is of the greatest concern' It is order rather than law enforcement, prevention rather than punishment, that constitute the programmatic objectives of governing through security 'in these open institutionally managed spaces'. Therefore 'the security industry (in particular the use of surveillance technology and private police in privately managed spaces accessible to the public) has been expanding in Denmark' (Christensen 2005: 19-25).

According to Jacob Christensen (2005: 22-27), a new 'criminology of everyday life' has emerged characterised by the re-emergence of aspects of the 'classical terminology': the person who commits a crime is considered a sane citizen, a situational man, an opportunist consumer, a rational individual and therefore a criminal of choice. But the real object of problematization is 'the criminogenic situation'. The focus is on the spatial and temporal aspects of crime, 'the architectural ordering of space and surveillance technologies. Indeed, the security industry (in particular the use of surveillance technology and private security firms in privately managed spaces accessible to the general public) has been expanding in Denmark. The number of private security firms has increased from 70 in 1985 to 466 in 2005, 'most of which offer surveillance both on site (watchmen) and electronically (electronic surveillance systems)'.

There has also been a change in the corrective sector of the penal complex, which includes borstals, reformatory schools and a number of specialist institutions that direct attention towards the task of re-socialising the offender. The criminal is someone against whom one has to protect oneself, and who has to take the consequences of his actions accordingly (Balvig 2003: 47). If he succeeds in committing a crime, he should be sentenced in accordance with the gravity of the deed, not from point of view of his possible restitution. Among indications of this trend are increases in the extensive use of contract-based sanctions in place of (indeterminate) solitary confinement, and in 2001 the creation of a system of youth sanctions for young criminals aged between fifteen and eighteen. The act aims at replacing indeterminate solitary

confinement with 'consistent' and 'controlled' treatment in a closed institution for two years. This involves co-operation at the municipal level between the social administration and the penal institution, the idea being that socio-legal measures should be complementary to the rules of criminal law. 'The social administration works out its recommendations from its assessments. Moreover, the municipality is responsible for achieving the youth sanction' (Vestergaard 2005).

### **Changing concepts for handling dangers in the city**

In 2001 the Ministry of Urban and Housing Affairs was abolished and measures for improving deprived neighbourhoods through community projects came to an end. The Ministry's field of responsibility was reallocated to a couple of new ministries, including the Ministry of Employment, and gradually a different rhetoric came into play. Now the social integration of immigrants through work became the very heart of developing multiple initiatives. This happened in spite of numerous evaluations of community improving projects that documented the fruits of empowerment, not least to their participants. Unfortunately, there was a tendency for those who were evaluating the projects to close themselves to those who had carried them out. 'When people evaluate their own work, they tend to find that everything works' (James Q. Wilson, quoted in Balvig 2000: 260).

There are other reasons for this change. Social cohesion is needed to ensure the reproduction ('sustainability') of a neighbourhood, a city or any other urban system, but at the same time there is a growing awareness of its pitfalls. Social networks consisting of strong ties might very well contribute to the ongoing segregation of the city, since they generate boundaries and create the labels 'we' 'you' and 'they'. Moreover, in the long run the strategy of reviving values of previously strong social movements does not provide meaning to residents who lack a stable relationship to the labour market (as H.T. Andersen has remarked (H.T. Andersen 2006), projects for improving districts 'never really took employment and industry on board') or to immigrants with stronger ties to a family or clan. In spite of these measures, more and more immigrants are behind bars. Today unskilled or unemployed poor male immigrants represent about 25% of the total prison population (Balvig 2005).

The 'ghetto package' of 2005 is focused directly on immigrants and the parallel societies they have created. It aims to improve the conditions in which weak ties may be created, thus enabling the city's social circles to be cross-cut, *first* by introducing a new model for the relegation of rental dwellings with the aim of improving the principle of mixed housing; *secondly*, by establishing a committee of representatives from the social housing sector, the municipality and sectors external to the state with the aim of promoting new 'issue-directed measures', and answering the question of how to use the experiences of the parallel society as a platform for entering the Danish labour market and thus the Danish society; and *thirdly*, through a more explicit focus on the role of the public school from the viewpoint of crime prevention etc.

### **Conclusion**

Denmark has a tradition of the resolution of civil conflicts, which in itself is a sign of the existence of extensive networks of normative regulation, or 'a deep grammar of society'. Strong social movements have dealt with the bad places of the city. As a city, Copenhagen has been characterized by the influences of two

strong social movements, the urban social democratic movement, and a self-confident liberal cooperative movement. In 1971 the Crime Prevention Council was established, which was aimed at strengthening the tradition of resolving civil conflicts; from the very beginning, the Council was explicit in including housing and urban planning within the realm of crime prevention. In reality, it took up a threat that architects and urban planners of modern welfare buildings and quarters had already addressed, involving the integration of concepts of incorporating the dangers of living in the city into its very layout and architectural design. From the beginning of modern welfare planning, Danish architects have influenced prevailing concepts of crime prevention: the creation of new suburbs outside the ramparts of old inner-city Copenhagen, the social housing schemes of the 1930s and post-war *new town* movements being significant examples of this. In the late 1960s, what was new was not only the increase in crime; but the fact that it took place within those residential areas that used to be marked by positive social control and a certain tradition of resolving civil conflicts. It seems that the silent oaths of solidarity had been replaced by a moral vacuum and anomie.

The last twenty years have seen the introduction of measures intended to restore a tradition of resolving civil conflicts as an important means of crime prevention. During the 1990s, numerous projects for 'lifting up the districts' were initiated by the former Ministry of Urban and Housing Affairs. New suburbs were not created, as in post-war policies, but rather the improvement of existing residential areas through a mix of architectural renewals and social politics. Also, urban planners gradually changed the scope of activities from physical planning to *urban governance*, which involved a participatory approach based upon a clearer understanding of the various motivations, reasoning and outcomes associated with such places. From the viewpoint of civic cohesion, the task was to move towards neighbourhood empowerment through a reformulated civil society, the intention being that the excluded and poor should regain a sense of belonging to society in other ways than labour market integration. Today we are seeing the emergence of a different strategy. It is acknowledged that the strong ties within a local community have deficiencies from the viewpoint of labour market integration. Therefore, for the moment, the conditions for creating weak ties enabling the city's social circles to be connected is creating a new focus of attention. It is assumed that they will improve opportunities for entering the labour market. Still, it is an open question where the poor and excluded will acquire the competences needed to permit transactions between people from different backgrounds and with different interests. Previously, Danish crime prevention was influenced by the tradition of the old social movements of resolving civil conflicts. At present, religious institutions are being called in as conciliators in cases of serious crime, but the outcome does not seem to be promoting the removal of parallel societies with different norms and traditions of resolving civil conflicts.

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