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Planning imaginaries of co-existence in urban renewal. Families and persons with substance use disorders in Copenhagen

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ABSTRACT

This paper addresses new planning imaginaries of co-existence through the urban renewal case of Sydhavn (South Harbour) in Copenhagen. Although planners have traditionally placed family life in suburbs, away from the 'ills of the city', in this novel case planners built an imaginary of thriving diversity in urban spaces among newcomer urban middle-class families and persons with substance use disorders. Based on an analysis of planning documents, media representations, municipal meeting notes, as well as fieldwork, the paper concludes that building on the ideal of living together apart, planners capitalized on marginal residents to attract middle-class families, as they acknowledged middle-class social privilege and confidence in urban spaces (Kern [2005]. "In Place and at Home in the City: Connecting Privilege, Safety and Belonging for Women in Toronto." *Gender, Place & Culture* 12 (3): 357–377. https://doi.org/10.1080/09663690500202590). However, the urban renewal plans intensified the living together in ways that made it impossible to maintain the necessary distance, and displacement of the persons with substance disorder followed.

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Urban renewal; diversity; middle-class families; imaginaries

Introduction

> Citizens get organized and do something together. There are old workers, newcomers, young families in apartments that are a little bit too small for them. Addicts, vulnerable and marginalized residents. Astonishingly few students, but surprisingly many rock stars and PhDs. Locksmiths and pedagogues. Children that play football and go horse-riding. (Quarter plan area renewal South Harbor 2015, 15)

The renaissance of the urban city and its public spaces has soon been ongoing for more than 40 years. Diversity, interesting spaces of consumption, and the promise of authentic urban experiences are the key characteristics identified to attract highly skilled creative residents who can generate wealth in cities (Florida 2006). For residents, diversity is a means for social distinction. Diversity has thus become an asset for urban branding, as well as for the regeneration of neighbourhoods (Bolzoni 2022, 435). Gentrification, defined by Hackworth (2002) as the production of space for progressively more affluent users, has for long been mainly connected to singles and double income couples (Boterman, Karsten, and Musterd 2010; Karsten 2003). Families on the other hand have been defined as out of place in cities for nearly a century (Karsten 2008), thus reflecting the aim of modernist urban planning to protect families from the ills of cities (England 1991; Jerram 2011; Wilson 1991). Nevertheless, in recent years, a new interest in also beguiling families to

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This article has been corrected with minor changes. These changes do not impact the academic content of the article.

move to the urban cores has emerged among policymakers also in the Nordic countries (Cele 2015; Larsen and Lund Hansen 2008; Lilius 2019). This paper addresses the urban renewal case of Sydhavn (South Harbour) in Copenhagen, presented in the citation above, in which planners built an imaginary of thriving diversity in urban spaces among newcomer urban middle-class families and persons with substance use disorders. It showcases the increasingly complex and intricate transmutation of policy-lead gentrification strategies. The novelty of the paper is that it presents the reproductions of imaginaries of family life in urban settings in ways that have not been hitherto much discussed in the academic sphere.

Planners and urban designer occupy a key role in providing attractive environments that can allow for their cities to thrive in the global city-wise competition (e.g. van Diepen and Mustered 2009). The citation at the beginning of the introduction portraying an imaginary of a truly mixing diverse population is from the urban renewal plan of Sydhavn. It is an example of the deployment of diversity of planners in the capital of Denmark, Copenhagen, as their means to regenerate the neighbourhood of Sydhavn and, in particular, to attract middle-class families to the neighbourhood. As Brige, Butler, and Lees (2012) have asserted, planners increasingly harness middle-class preferences towards diversity by promoting places on the basis of their diversity or cosmopolitanism. However, research literature has not demonstrated or discussed cases in which marginalized residents and persons with substance use disorders are imagined doing something together with middle-class families. The imaginary is also in stark contrast to the 'proper' middle-class family life in the suburbs that has been discussed in urban theory (Domosh and Saegert 2001; England 1991; Saegert 1980; Wilson 1991). Therefore, the citation and the urban renewal programme of Sydhavn in this paper are used as illustrative examples to provide insights into the interrelated questions: (a) Which contradictions exist in the imaginary of the living-together of middle-classes and persons with substance use disorders compared to earlier imaginaries of family life produced by planners? (b) How can the seemingly unusual imaginary be contextualized to mix families and persons with substance use disorders in a neighbourhood? (c) How does this conflict-free imaginary play out in real life? As such, it contributes to the growing literature on the role of middle-class families in gentrification strategies in European cities and to the literature on planning imaginaries.

The paper builds on the notion that imaginaries are one way of understanding and analysing the city and developments within a city (Cinar and Bender 2007) as they play an important role in defining the future of city spaces (Linder and Messner 2019, 6). Dikec (2007, 5) claims that 'each policy discourse and programme is guided by particular ways of imagining space'. Urban imaginaries can be defined as 'mental mappings of urban reality' (Soja 2000, 324) that change with time (Zukin et al. 1998). Thus planning, as Sandercock (2003, 300) claims, is 'performed through story'. Using imaginaries in planning is powerful as imaginaries 'affect our perceptions, stimulate discussions, determine inclusion and exclusion, frame decisions and ultimately shape our cities and living environments'. Imaginaries nurture a collective understanding of the meaning of urban space is or its intended meaning (Georgiou 2019, 109). As such, imaginaries engage in a 'place-making practice that spatially defines areas to be treated, associates problems with them, generates a certain discourse, and proposes solutions accordingly' (Dikec 2007, 5). Spatial imaginaries do not develop in a vacuum but are dependent on broader political and economic contexts; thus, as Purkarthofer (2018) has emphasized, they are also targeted at being attractive to a specific audience. They are important in marketing and selling the city to politicians, investors, as well as to both prospective and already existing residents (Bonakdar and Audirac 2021; Linder and Messner 2019, 6).

To analyse imaginaries that are created around the coexistence of different resident groups, namely, families and persons with substance use disorders, the paper first contextualizes the phenomenon by adopting a framework of reviewed literature. This includes an overview of historical and contemporary imaginaries of family life in cities, literature on social mix in urban renewal policies and planning, and studies about families living in diversity in gentrifying neighbourhoods. Against this background, the paper then moves on to explore in more detail the aims and outcomes of planning in Sydhavn.

From exclusion to inclusion – middle class families, persons with substance use disorders and inner-city planning

City life is built on both visible and invisible boundaries that result from earlier urban planning. The bond between planning and the nuclear family has traditionally been strong (e.g. Fainstein 2005; Wilson 1991). Modernist suburban planning was based on a separation of different functions, and on the ideal of the nuclear family that was to be safeguarded from the ills of the inner city. These ills have included both physical threats, such as germs that would spread easily in dense and crowded environments, as well as moral issues related, for example, to hygiene, alcohol abuse, and prostitution (England 1991; Howard (1898) 2013; Jerram 2011). Cities were considered improper environments in which to raise children, and urban spaces were places from which both children and women should be protected. The suburbs as well as their private and public spaces were designed with women and children in mind. The imaginary of the suburbs was often built on the image of a mother pushing a stroller (Forsberg 2005, 22).

However, during the last two decades, middle-class families[1] with children have become increasingly prevalent in the central parts of large western cities. They are progressively reclaiming inner cities and have also been identified as gentrifiers in for example Amsterdam and Helsinki (e.g. Boterman, Karsten, and Musterd 2010; Karsten 2003; Lilius 2014; 2018). This is also the case in Copenhagen, where policy makers acknowledge that more families have decided to raise their children in the central parts of the city (Urban Life Account 2014).

An important reason for families staying in the inner cities is the time–space constraints dual-earner families face in their everyday life (Boterman, Karsten, and Musterd 2010; Karsten 2003). The benefits that accompany urbanity, such as good public transport and proximity to workplaces, as well as services, clearly ease the everyday life of families in which both parents work. However, the preferences of the parents towards specific qualities of urban environments are also important. Staying in the inner city enables parents to stay close to commercial amenities, such as cafés, bars, and restaurants, that were already important to them before they became parents. By living close to these amenities, both mothers and fathers can still actively participate in city life as well as go to cafés and bars with or without their children. The diversity and tolerance of inner cities are often also mentioned as being of great importance to the mainly highly educated urban middle-class parents both in North American and European contexts (Caulfield 1994; Frank and Weck 2018; Karsten 2003; Lilius 2014). These preferences contrast with the earlier notions of proper family environments and spaces. For example, Hubbard (2017, 50) has defined suburban shopping centres as typically family-friendly places due to diversity in terms of homelessness and antisocial behaviour being potentially controlled or even excluded. Therefore, the imaginary of the inner-city milieu often challenges common notions of the types of places and practices which are considered suitable to family life (Driana 2018).

Fincher and Jacobs (1998) claim that planners are guided by normative views on events expected to occur at certain stages of people's lives, and the places in which these life stages should occur. These norms and values affect contemporary life in the cities (Sandberg and Rönnblom 2016). When the number of children started to increase in inner cities, there was a lack of concern for their needs in inner city environments. For example, cities including Helsinki and Amsterdam had difficulties in catering for family needs as urban dwellers had been foremost recognized as singles and double-income couples without children. Planners and politicians were puzzled to see families in the inner cities of Amsterdam and Helsinki and were mainly concerned with facilitating for them in suburban environments (Karsten 2003; Lilius 2014). Nevertheless, as Campbell and Fainstein (1996, 4) note 'planning adapts to changes in the city, which in turn is transformed by planning and politics'. Thus, the preference for the urban environment among (upper) middle-class parents has lately been well recognized by planners seeking to attract new middle-class residents in cities (Cele 2015; Lilius 2019; Van den Berg 2013).

Reimagining inner cities as spaces of middle-class parenthood

As Wynne and O'Connor (1998) emphasize, cities seeking to establish themselves as sites of consumption and leisure are increasingly engaged in processes of city reimaging. This reimaging is often done to attract higher income groups. A body of literature (e.g. Wyly and Hammel 2001; Davidson 2008; Uitermark and Loopman 2013; Van den Berg 2013) has claimed that gentrification has become a new paradigm for planning. Planners seek to lift the socio-economic condition of neighbourhoods and change the class composition by increasing the attractiveness of low-income neighbourhoods to higher income residents (Bridge, Butler, and Lees 2012; Lees 2008; Uitermark, Duyvendak, and Kleinhans 2007). Gentrification through social mixing in low-income neighbourhoods stems from the belief that not only do the middle-class form social networks with other residents (mainly those of the lower class), but that through this shared use of neighbourhood spaces, shops, and other facilities, they also share social capital with them (Bosch and Ouwehand 2019, 1819). Although these thoughts are based on the idea of social inclusion and are often also sold as such, in practice, they are often merely a gentrification strategy (Bridge, Butler, and Lees 2012, 12). As van Liempt and Chimienti (2017, 1571) emphasize 'The spread of fancy restaurants, health-food stores, galleries, ice-cream parlours and hipster bars go hand-in-hand with the exclusion of certain other bodies and activities'. In other words, gentrification through social mix transpires on 'middle-class terms' (Mele 2019).

Lately, middle-class families have been specifically identified as a group which cities like to attract to create a social mix. Van den Berg (2013) has proposed the term 'genderfication' to explain the production of space for specific gender ideals. She claims that in ethnically rich and low-income inner-city Rotterdam, the government policy is to produce space for the 'educated, middle class, dual-earner nuclear families' (Van den Berg 2013, 533). Nevertheless, the emphasis on attracting middle-class families to the central parts of the city and to low-income neighbourhoods has also catalysed and loosened understanding of child-friendly environments. While the needs of the mothers and children were earlier stressed in planning, in these times, there is an increasing emphasis on the needs of parents of both genders. Indeed, it is important to meet the needs of urban middle-class parents (Cele 2015). This is also highlighted by Van den Berg (2013, 534) who claims that 'child-friendly' to planners means 'middle-class friendly'. As urban middle-class parents value spending time in public spaces with their children (Karsten 2003; Lilius 2018), increasing attention is also being laid on designing these kinds of middle-class spaces for families. This also includes designing playgrounds to attract the parents as well as providing activities for children at museums, restaurants, and adult music venues (Lilius 2019).

Living with difference in inner cities

As mentioned, social mixing from a policy and planning perspective is expected to reduce negative effects caused by the concentration of poverty in neighbourhoods (Bridge, Butler, and Lees 2012; Lees 2008). Nevertheless, several studies have shown that the advantage of social mixing, particularly for the low-income residents is not always evident. Butler and Robson (2003) have proposed the metaphor of social tectonics to explain the cross movement of white middle-classes and other ethnicities past each other in a way similar to the shifting and overlapping of tectonic plates below the Earth's crust. Even though higher income residents move into lower income neighbourhoods, there is no real social mixing in the sense that the lower income residents would interact with the newcomers and vice versa (see also Blokland and Van Eijk 2010). Instead of being attracted by difference, Pinkster (2014, 812) claims that settling in disadvantaged urban neighbourhoods may offer gentrifiers 'good value for money' as revealed by her study on (mainly lower) middle-classes in Dutch urban renewal areas. However, she contends that it coincides with a lack of attachment to the locality in which they live: 'Rather, these respondents consume the favourable housing prices in disadvantaged neighbourhoods and their convenient location and otherwise claim indifference to

the neighbourhood'. Several studies have clarified that although many inner-city residents may emphasize that they value diversity in their inner-city neighbourhood, living with difference often presupposes moments of annoyance or even conflict and sometimes difference is also perceived negatively by middle-classes. Among families who stay in diverse neighbourhoods, Frank and Weck (2018, 21) found a mismatch between 'the social and multicultural values and aspirations' of urban middle-class families, and 'actual residential strategies and daily neighbourhood-related activities'. The parents enjoyed the multiculturally diverse neighbourhoods and wanted to stay in them, but simultaneously felt that they had to protect their children from being overly exposed to such diversity. In other words, having children can change the perception to difference as there is a discrepancy between parents' feelings about diversity and otherness regarding themselves, and their perceptions of these aspirations from the point of view of their children's wellbeing. Bancroft and Houborg (2020) on the other hand showed how in Copenhagen residents in the gentrified inner city neighbourhood Vesterbro are used to encountering public drug use and drug dealing. As part of the city´s policy to establish nonenforcement and drug consumption rooms in the area, residents are also well informed about drug use: all apartment buildings in the area have been provided with the telephone number to a hotline to the drug consumption rooms and police. While some residents live pragmatically with the encounter of difference, others however do express that they perceive it negatively in terms of nuisances and annoyance.

Against this background, this paper presents the case of the regeneration of the Sydhavn neighbourhood in Copenhagen, specifically discussing imaginaries of encounters between parents and persons with substance use disorders, one form of encountering difference, in urban renewal. After presenting the context of Copenhagen, the paper analyses and discusses the ways in which planners have capitalized on the diversity in the urban renewal of Sydhavn in the hope of attracting newcomer middle-class families. The paper then continues to explore the outcomes of the interaction of families and persons with substance use disorders in the neighbourhood, especially when the planners have left the scene.

Research design

The study was based on an ethnographic research strategy with the goal to provide a comprehensive understanding and description of the research object. It was built around a process-oriented perspective (Franzén et al. 2016, 9). Rather than seeking to compare specific aspects or variables in the city, the research aimed to 'describe and expose' the imaginaries of the planners for Sydhavn, and how they played out in practice. The findings are based on a set of different data. A variety of sources were used as the aim was to analyse both the context and outcome of policy and planning interventions in the case of Sydhavn. The sources were carefully chosen but used in explorative ways. To analyse and discuss the imaginaries of urban spaces in Sydhavn, the following sources were used:

(1) Politically adopted planning documents, namely, the report *Kvarterplan områdesfornyelse Sydhavn 2015* (Quarter plan area renewal South Harbor 2015) and *Bydelsplan for 2017–2020* (District plan for 2017–2020). The plans were chosen as they represent the key planning documents for the neighbourhood.
(2) A structured interview with the main planner. The interview with the planner was conducted to reach a deeper and more vivid analysis of the planning documents.

The findings from these data are first presented in the following analysis section. To understand the actualising process of the planners' produced imaginaries in the neighbourhood, the paper further analysed:

(3) Media representations (newspaper articles) related to the urban renewal in Sydhavn, found in the largest newspapers with online articles (Politiken, Berlinske and B.T in the period of 2016–2020)

(4) Notes from municipal meetings available online (searching the database https://www.kk.dk with the keywords 'Sydhavn', 'Anker Jorgensen Plads' and 'Mozart´s Plads')
(5) Fieldwork notes and photographs from 2017 to 2018. The fieldwork included three daytrips to the area during which everyday life was observed on the main streets of Sydhavn (who was moving around and using the public spaces, as well as what activities were happening in the space). Brief informal chats were conducted with locals from the area: passers-by on the street and one cafeteria worker with immigrant background (n 8). Photos were also taken to be able to document and illustrate the contemporary situation.

The documents and the interview were analysed through discourse and image[2] analysis. To Plöger (2001, 64), urban planning is a discursive practice. It produces a sense of place, place-identity, image, and common cultural scheme, and shapes our understanding of acceptable and non-acceptable encounters in public spaces. Discourse analysis builds on the notion that reality is constantly constructed in discourses. A discourse is a specific way of talking about and understanding the world (van Dijk 2011). Of specific interest here was the use of the discourses and images to legitimise the influx of middle-class families into the neighbourhood, but also to contest if there is space for all the users of the public spaces in Sydhavn. By analysing these discourses and imaginaries against the framework of reviewed literature, the paper argues, we can better understand how planning ideologies change over time and contribute to understand the interplay between urban renewal, urban planning and family ideals.

Setting the context – Copenhagen

The case study in this paper is situated in Denmark's capital, Copenhagen. This is a city known for its famous city planner, Jan Gehl, whose ideas on lively urban spaces have been realized all over the world. Copenhagen, with 644.000 inhabitants, typically scores high on different 'best city' indexes and, according to the city´s tourist authorities, is 'a city for life'. However, the imaginary of Copenhagen was not always so well harmonized with the preferences of the creative classes. In fact, there is a popular narrative in Copenhagen typically repeated when talking about the city´s current success which emphasizes the city's acute proximity to bankruptcy in the 1990s. To become competitive, especially in relation to neighbouring cities, such as Hamburg, Oslo, and Stockholm, several urban planning measures were developed to lure the middle-classes to Copenhagen. This included housing urban renewal, developing new business hubs, and increasing the appeal of urban spaces and housing. To accentuate the attractiveness of inner parts, the city started deporting marginalized inner-city residents who did not fit 'the Disneyesque "creative city"' that was being developed (Lund Hansen, Andersen, and Clark 2001, 853). Thus, social issues related to the gentrification of the inner parts were largely neglected. Larsen and Lund Hansen (2008) have described in detail the gentle gentrification of one of the neighbourhoods in the city centre, Vesterbro. They concluded that the gentrification through tenure shifts had 'traumatic' consequences particularly for the marginalized in the neighbourhood. Nevertheless, the core aim was to attract middle-class families in an effort to change the social composition (or create a 'social uplift') (Larsen and Lund Hansen 2008, 2439). Currently, the socio-economic differences between the surrounding municipalities have mainly declined due to the increasing share of middle-class families. This has increased the number of upper-level employees moving to Copenhagen. The municipality of Copenhagen has strongly focused on promoting the construction of larger flats in former harbour and industrial areas, and it is assumed that this is an important reason for the change (Skovgaard Nielsen 2016, 37–38). At the same time, capitalizing on diversity has become a key feature of planning. According to the municipal plan from 2015, one of the goals for Copenhagen is to 'safeguard social cohesion' to nurture Copenhagen as a city 'where it is nice and inspiring living'. The plan claims that 'the city must be designed so that Copenhageners meet each other across economic, social and cultural backgrounds' (Municipal plan 15 2015, 23). Social segregation is to be avoided as the key is to ensure that

'Copenhagen must remain a city with mixed and diverse residential areas, where there is housing for all and where the development in the city benefits everyone' (Municipal plan 15 2015, 23).

Sydhavn – the dubious area in need of urban renewal

Sydhavn is situated just south of the inner-city neighbourhood Vesterbro, the neighbourhood that has been most strongly connected to gentrification in Copenhagen. Sydhavn was developed just before the Second World War to especially house members of the social democratic party and was a much-appreciated residential environment. More housing was constructed after the war to house those working in close-by factories and the harbour. However, the socio-economic profile of the area changed in the 1980s when many residents lost their jobs due to the restructuring of the economy. Combined with the choice of the municipality to house particularly vulnerable residents in Sydhavn, this changed it into one of the poorest neighbourhoods in Copenhagen in the 1990s. Therefore, by the late 1990s, the area was also chosen as a 'district for upgrading' with government finance. It became a key place to cater for the new competitive agenda of Copenhagen. The focus was on enhancing its attractiveness to draw large multinational businesses, such as the telecommunication firm Nokia. Further, a new modern housing area with 9000 new apartments built on eight islands divided by canals was also planned at Sluseholmen (The Lock Island). Sluseholmen, or 'Little Amsterdam', has attracted an educated middle-class and families.

However, these developments did not result in the rise of the socioeconomic status of Sydhavn. In 2015 and in the old parts, the number of residents from a non-western background was still almost 20 percent. More than 20 percent of the inhabitants were outside the work market, and more than 35 percent lacked any formal education. Half of the housing was social,[3] and the majority of the flats were small (Socioeconomic data 2015). These numbers placed Sydhavn on the list of neighbourhoods which are the target for interventions under the 'Policies for vulnerable neighbourhoods 2017 (Politik för udsatte byområden)-programme'. The programme was launched in 2011 with the goal of 'focusing on a more positive development of the whole of Copenhagen'. As Hochstenbach (2014, 819) has asserted, when the strategy is to change the socioeconomic status of an area the result is that existing problems in neighbourhoods are typically heightened. Upgrading in Copenhagen means statistically lifting certain criteria (residents outside the labour market, residents without education, low-income residents, residents with non-western origin, and living space per resident) to match the city average. According to the programme, the aim is to provide the same opportunities to all Copenhageners, regardless of the location of their dwelling in the city. This is accomplished by reducing territorial stigma, improving the quality of the local schools, and by providing better services. The urban renewal programmes are realized by multidisciplinary groups but are typically led by urban planners. In Sydhavn, the group includes a project manager (planner), an architect, a social worker, and a cultural worker, all of whom, except for the project managers, are employed on temporary contracts for five year.

Diverse public space in which 'alkies' and 'latte mums' intermingle

The imaginary of the regenerated Sydhavn establishes the authenticity of the spirit of Sydhavn by building on the symbolic value of the neighbourhood history, and by building on the future of Sydhavn as a trendy, original place.

First, the urban renewal plan for Sydhavn includes a section on what is called the 'spirit of Sydhavn'. To produce an image of authenticity, the emphasis is laid on the social relations that exist in the neighbourhood and, namely, the solidarity between the residents, as laid down in the citation in the beginning of the paper. Diversity and the social mix of people plays an integral part in the narratives of the area spirit. The urban renewal plan recognizes a plethora of residents and users of neighbourhood spaces. While the master plan highlights 'encounters' in public spaces in the Copenhagen neighbourhoods, the urban renewal plan emphasizes not only *being together*,

but also *doing together*. This is a reflection from the past of the area during which many of the residents were politically active. The urban renewal plan as such seeks to create a new place identity which is based on the areas past and the community's authenticity (e.g. Zukin 2010). According to the planner, the aim in Sydhavn is to develop it according to its the local original character and identity. This in other words, is used as a selling point for the renewal.

Secondly, the urban renewal plan capitalizes on the neighbourhood's past by displaying historic images of the neighbourhood. Most of the pictures showcase only buildings, but there are also a few pictures of old residents in the area. One picture displays children on the Mozart's Plads (Mozart's square) in 1964. In the picture, a well-dressed, proud-looking young girl, about seven years old, pushes a large stroller. She is surrounded by other children looking at the baby, but the viewer's eye is really drawn to the bearded man sitting on a park bench who is also holding onto the pram handle. He also looks with admiration at the baby sitting in the stroller. The man is likely homeless as his bike is parked next to him and seems to contain his belongings, such as rugs and a bag. It could be interpreted that the picture is displayed to show that encounters with diversity can peacefully occur. Everyone in the picture looks happy and nobody seems disturbed by the other. Children can move safely in the neighbourhood and encounter differences, as well as increase their 'urban competence' (Sennett 1992).

Thirdly, it is not only past public life but also that of the future that is being described in the plan. It features a specific part called 'life between the buildings' (named after Jan Gehl's book with the same title from 1971). The aim is to have a neighbourhood with urban spaces that 'invites [one] to stay, provides recreation and enables encounters between people' (Quarter plan area renewal South Harbor 2015, 19). Although planning documents often deliberatively speak in neutral terms (Beebeejaun 2017), the urban renewal plan uses one A4-page of illustrations to outline the possible settings of the public spaces as well as between whom the 'encounters' could happen. One image illustrates a lone female who is being served her drink by a waiter. Another portrays a mother with her stroller and latte greeting a man on a park bench who holds a beer bottle in his hand, smiling with his almost toothless mouth. They greet each other by raising their drinks, the beer and the latte, as a way of saying hello.

The images are peculiar, for several reasons, but especially because they show the relation of alcohol consumption to urban spaces in multiple ways. The first pictures display new ways of publicly consuming alcohol. While it would have been impossible for (lone) middle-class women to consume alcohol in restaurants or bars some decades ago, in these times, it is becoming more mainstream and widely accepted in western society. Furthermore, the consumption of alcohol is currently considered an integral part of post-industrial lifestyles and identities (Jayne, Holloway, and Valentine 2006, 464), including for urban middle-class parents (Lilius 2019). However, public drunkenness is often and still considered inappropriate, particularly in connection with and in relation to families and children (e.g. Jayne, Holloway, and Valentine 2006, 451–452; Lilius 2019). That renders the second image interesting. First of all, it reproduced the image of a new urban figurine, the 'latte parent'. This is a Scandinavian figurine, describing contemporary mothers drinking coffee with their babies in public spaces. Instead of staying out of public spaces, or mainly using traditional spaces for children and women, these are mothers 'who dare to take their place' (Wiklund 2008). Secondly, the idea of the greeting between the mother and the inebriated is something which signifies tolerance as well as a tolerance of differences.

Families and persons with substance use disorders – imaginaries based on social privilege

How could the use of such imaginaries be explained then, considering their contradiction to earlier notions of the proper behaviour of women and families in urban space? Directed at an urban middle-class, these visuals could also be understood as a 'persuasive means to gain acceptance of

the plan or project' (Linder and Messner 2019, 9). As earlier mentioned, middle-classes are increasingly attracted to the central city and its diversity.

To the planner, the image signals tolerance and diversity as well as the idea that different types of people can live side-by-side. A similar imaginary of Sydhavn is also echoed in the media. A mother living in Sydhavn and interviewed by the *Politiken* newspaper recognized that the street image of the neighbourhood is characterized by 'abuse' and a 'hard life'. Nevertheless, during her 17 years in the neighbourhood, she recalled experiencing only one unpleasant encounter, an incident during which a man was aggressive towards 'a friend of a friend of her child'. Most of the persons with substance use disorders, she claims, are 'harmless beer-loving people' (Torbenson Nielsen and Mejer Nielsen 2016). Yet, it still contradicts studies which conclude that parents are stressed by public abuse of alcohol and drugs (Lilius 2019). Despite this contradiction, there is evidence in the research literature that the commodification of drug use and street crime in the area are considered to be important elements of the diverse character of the neighbourhood, consequently appealing to privileged urban dwellers. Citing evidence from the Downtown Eastside neighbourhood in Vancouver, Burnett (2014) claimed that the stigmatized identities of poor and marginalized residents are used as a competitive edge to attract people to visit the neighbourhood. Marginalized people are commodified to promote a distinctive and authentic culinary adventure. However, given the strong emphasis in urban planning to protect families from the ills of the city, the imaginaries produced for Sydhavn still raise questions as to from where does planners´ boldness spring to produce such images, which in many ways challenge the traditional imaginaries of family life? One explanation could be offered by Kern (2005). She has argued that new forms of middle-class urbanity among women, the kind that the women and mother in the images also represent, are underpinned by social privilege, such as whiteness and middle classness. This privilege bestows a confidence on them that explains the reason behind their feeling of belonging in diverse neighbourhoods as well as their ability to distance themselves from the problems associated with the residents. Building on earlier experiences of gentrification in Copenhagen, planners know that even middle-class families are attracted to 'authentic' milieus. Instead of building imaginaries on imagined new residents, they capitalize on the elements already present in the neighbourhood: the authentic urban experience and, as the planners emphasize, the idea that different people can co-exist side-by-side.

'They want to live in diversity, but not when it is right outside their window'

Site-visits to the area during 2018–2019 imply that the image of the 'dubious' part of Sydhavn is rapidly changing. New businesses that meet the demands of the urban middle-classes are located on the main street, the Borgbjergsvej. While the streets still feature traditional services, such as a Smørrebrød shop (Danish sandwich place), a traditional Bodega (a pub), a second-hand shop, as well as a kiosk and a stand that sells pølse (Danish sausage), new spaces of consumption suited to the tastes of the urban middle-classes (see also Silverman et al. 2019) are also moving into the neighbourhood. The newer services include coffee shops, a bike shop, and a bookstore selling both new and used literature and non-fiction on arts and photography. The bookstore features a variety of this literature in the large windows facing Borgbjergsvej, revealing a reflection of the taste of educated readers onto the street. The development of the new services has not spontaneously happened. According to the urban renewal plan for Sydhavn (Quarter plan area renewal South Harbor 2015, 20), the retail spaces had been empty for long. Therefore, the streetscape has been regenerated to become more attractive in close collaboration with the housing association in the area. The site-visits confirm that it is mainly a (white) middle-class that uses the services. Nevertheless, the change also seems to be welcomed by some long-term residents. For example, a young waitress wearing a hijab, who works in the coffee shop that opened in late 2017, expresses her delight with the opening of the new services. When asked about the changes in the neighbourhood, she said: 'I have lived here all my life and the area is really changing. The street (Mozartsvej) is really experiencing a new start'.

There is a growing number of families in Sydhavn. Site-visits to the neighbourhood verified that both those with substance use disorders as well as mothers with strollers are very frequent in the public spaces of neighbourhood. According to the planner, families are attracted to Sydhavn because housing is still quite affordable and because it is close to the inner city while also close to nature. They are attracted to the urban city and its amenities, but value being able to combine the pulse of the city with the green of the area. The planner emphasizes that the schools in the area are also appreciated by the parents. The schools have received additional funding to specifically provide high quality education. Thus, it could be emphasized that Sydhavn delivers what has been understood as the three pillars of family friendliness: affordable housing, quality schools, and safety (Driana 2018, 9).

Unfortunately, despite the efforts of the plan to imagine a future in which encounters between middle-class parents and persons with substance use disorders could be accommodated, the implementation has been less than successful. The neighbourhood Local Committee Chairman in the follow-up plan called District plan for 2017–2020 states:

> … we in the local committee notice that the increasing gentrification of our district is creating unrest among the citizens. We want to work for a neighbourhood where there is still room for everyone, both for those who have lived here long, and the newcomers. (Bydelsplan for 2017–2020, 2017, 4)

The local committee in the plan emphasizes that the marginalized residents must receive more help from different parties, such as volunteers, NGOs, municipal, regional, and private companies. However, they also state that in addition to the increased care for these individuals, there should be a reduction of the municipality's right to allocate housing to vulnerable citizens in the neighbourhood (Bydelsplan for 2017–2020, 2017, 34, 35). The plan visions an imaginary of the future Sydhavn that 'is about health and sustainability' (Bydelsplan for 2017–2020, 2017, 8).

As already indicated, there is evidence that families may have mixed feelings about diversity from the point of view of their children (Frank and Weck 2018; Lilius 2019). As the planner put it: 'They (the parents) want to live in diversity, but not when it is right outside their window'. A socially tectonic situation (Butler and Robson 2003), such as provided in the planning imaginaries, did not occur in the neighbourhood. The behaviour of the persons with substance use disorders that first caused discomfort and unease among the families was, as Eldridge (2010, 41–42) has stated, 'the incivility of urinating in public'. Families complained to the municipality about public urinating, especially when it happened very close to their homes at Anker Jørgensens Plads. That this occurs next to families' dwellings is an outcome of planning intervention. The traditional meeting point of the persons with substance use disorders, Mozarts Plads, was closed for construction due to the development of a new metro station. Although illegal drug use has been ignored elsewhere in local planning contexts (e.g. Boland, Fox-Rogers, and McKay 2020), the urban renewal project group in Sydhavn began a dialogue with the persons with substance use disorders to move some hundred metres further to the significantly smaller open space at Anker Jørgensens Plads (Figure 1). This location is a busy spot next to the supermarket on Borgbjergsvej, but also close to the gardens and windows of some residents. Therefore, very soon after the displacement from Mozarts Plads and relocation to Anker Jørgensens Plads, residents reacted. According to the records for a municipal meeting dated 12 August 2018, residents complained about their experiences of unpleasant behaviour, crimes, and harassment, which had subsequently 'given rise to dilemmas about how much should be accepted, what the limit is for inclusion, and when the citizen should report to the police'. The residents suggested developing more commercial activities around the square, such as a fixed coffee trolley as well as storytelling from the users of the square (Lund 2018).

At this time, the urban renewal project group addressed the problem by starting a dialogue with those they recognized to be mostly persons with alcohol use disorders. To address the problem of urinating, the municipality provided public toilets for those with substance use disorders. Video surveillance was also installed at the square. However, on-site observation in 2019 showed that the problem had remained and created visible reactions among the locals (Figure 2).

Figure 1. Anker Jørgensens Plads (Photo by author).

Furthermore, in 2020, the Danish media started to write more comprehensively about the problems that only seemed to mount up. For example, the tabloid B.T. described the situation as quite irredeemable, illustrating it with several incidents between the retailers on Anker Jørgensens Plads and the marginalized users of the public spaces. An interview with the manager of the supermarket next to the square reported that they had stopped selling cheap Danish beer as a measure to discourage the abuse of it close by. However, they had still seen a decline in 'resourceful' family customers (Bjerring Jensen 2020). The Berlingske newspaper reported that the residents had suggested changing Anker Jørgensens Plads into a non-alcoholic zone, in which public drinking would not be allowed from April to October. An interview with a resident in the same article confirmed that a family with young children had already moved away. Although they were happy to live in Sydhavn they 'could not live with the number of drunk people in their staircases, the noise and the fights'. The resident further claimed that many other families were also considering moving due to the stress and uncomfortableness of the street life (Ejsing 2020). Judging from the imaginary created by the Belingske newspaper, families felt the need to be protected from the public use of alcohol (and its consequences). For this to happen, they were depending on the city and on a regulatory framework provided by the city administration to ensure this. However, despite this expectation, several attempts to contact the city administration in Copenhagen to enquire about the situation were unsuccessful.

In conclusion, the events at Anker Jørgensens Plads would imply that the imaginary build in the urban renewal plans denied the gravity of the alcohol use and, in particular, did not account for the consequences of the abuse of different substances in public. There was an effort by the planners to solve the problems by negotiating with all parties, but those negotiations lacked continuity. Above all, the imaginary was built on an ideal in which there is a peaceful co-existence between persons with substance use disorders and the middle-classes. However, this would have entailed that the persons with substance use disorders would have followed certain norms of behaviour in the public spaces. As Creswell (1996) reminds us, space is shaped by normative codes of behaviour, therefore carrying a set of contextual expectations about appropriate ways of behaving. The imaginaries used by the planners were built on the ideal of living together apart. Nonetheless, the urban renewal plans, and the displacement that followed, intensified the living together in ways that have rendered it impossible to maintain the necessary distance.

Figure 2. 'Listen to the residents, listen to us. No to permanent toilets at Akers plads' (Photo by author).

Conclusion

This paper contributes to an emerging body of literature that argues gentrification strategies have become increasingly complex and contradictory, particularly in how they intersect with the socio-spatial dynamics of urban neighbourhoods (Burnett 2014). It analysed the co-existence of families and persons with substance use disorders in unique planning imaginaries revealing that in an attempt to support social mix, or the class upgrading of an area (Bridge, Butler, and Lees 2012; Lees 2008; Uitermark, Duyvendak, and Kleinhans 2007), even persons with substance use disorders are commodified to attract urban middle-class parents to move to a well-located, but socially deprived area.

Building on the framework of reviewed literature, the paper also highlights the shift in urban imaginaries: the vision of family-friendly environments traditionally associated with middle-class values now coexists with new, often contradictory, representations of urban space, where vulnerable populations are incorporated into the planning of 'child-friendly' cities. This paper does not claim

that these new imaginaries are widely generalizable to urban planning ideals, but it offers an important contribution to ongoing debates about what makes cities suitable places for families in the twenty-first century. Imaginaries of peaceful co-existence between middle-class families and marginalized groups, such as those with substance use disorders, challenge long-standing ideas of urban space as homogeneous and family-friendly. These challenges have not been sufficiently discussed in the academic literature and provide an important area for further exploration.

This case study underscores the need for urban planning and policy to move beyond abstract concepts like 'inclusivity,' 'safety,' and 'access,' as Beebeejaun (2017) points out, and instead address the practicalities of how different social groups can meaningfully coexist in urban spaces. It is clear that the mere rhetoric of 'inclusivity' in urban planning is insufficient; instead, more concrete, targeted interventions are necessary to ensure that vulnerable populations are not displaced under the guise of social mix. This is particularly important for understanding how cities can support not just the physical presence, but the social integration, of marginalized individuals, such as those with substance use disorders, in urban areas undergoing gentrification.

Additionally, the findings reinforce Moore's (2013) observation that planning trends, once scrutinized, tend to be reproduced and normalized in ways that might unintentionally perpetuate exclusion. In this case, the planning imagination of a harmonious urban space where middle-class families and individuals with substance use disorders coexist ultimately became an effective tool of displacement, rather than inclusion. The residents themselves – rather than planners – played a key role in the displacement of vulnerable populations, despite planners' close involvement in attempts to retain them in the area.

Finally, this study contributes to the ongoing debate about what constitutes a 'family-friendly' urban environment in the twenty-first century. As Driana (2018) notes, the definition of a 'family-friendly city' is often under-theorized, yet it is an essential concept in the discussion of urban livability. This paper highlights that the contemporary urban ideal – one that balances child-friendliness with inclusivity – remains deeply contested, and new imaginaries of urban space need to be critically examined to ensure that they genuinely serve the interests of all residents, not just the middle class. Future urban planning should give more attention to how these imaginaries are constructed and how they impact not just the middle classes, but also marginalized groups whose lived experiences are often overlooked in the planning process.

In conclusion, this paper calls for a more nuanced understanding of gentrification and urban planning strategies, one that moves beyond simplistic models of urban revitalization and considers the complex realities of co-existence in increasingly diverse urban spaces. The lessons learned from this case study offer valuable insights for policymakers and urban planners looking to create more inclusive, equitable cities.

Notes

1. The term middle-class family is used in this paper as an umbrella term to distinguish newcomer families in central locations as opposed to those families making the choice to move to the suburbs. It follows the tradition within the literature on urban families (see for example Boterman, Karsten, and Musterd 2010; Butler and Hamnet 1994; Caulfield 1994; Karsten 2003, 2005, 208; Lilius 2014).
2. A shortcoming in this paper is that the images from 'The urban renewal of the South Harbour 2015' couldn't be included due to copyright reasons.
3. Although social housing is not restricted to low-income households in Denmark, municipalities have the right to reserve up to 25% of its social housing stock for communities such as refugees, unemployed people and people with disabilities. Social housing accounts for about 20% of the housing stock in Copenhagen, so the percentage in Sydhavn has been substantially higher than in other neighbourhoods.

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