“A private plot in the sun”. Public and private space in Danish cooperative housing associations

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Abstract

Exploring discussions and negotiations about such mundane things as the responsibility for garbage and the building of balconies in Danish cooperative housing associations, this paper sets out to discuss how social relations and flows of persons, tangible and intangible objects unfold as differently valued space in and around the home.

Seeing space not as presupposed categories and given ontological attributes (public/private, privately owned/publicly owned), but as an emerging property of social relationships (Corsín Jiménez 2003), the paper will examine how residents in coops invest backyards, rooftop terraces, staircases and balconies with different values and meanings – kinship, friendship, neighboorliness, community, individual freedom, peace and quiet – through their social relations. From this perspective, balconies are extensions of the family home into the common pool of fresh air and sunlight and the garbage and dirt from staircases is creeping into the family home and sense of orderliness.

The paper is based on anthropological fieldwork in selected housing cooperatives in Copenhagen in 2008-2009.

Key words: anthropology, space, public/private, home, Deleuze, common property, cooperative housing.

“A private piece in the sun”. Public and private space in Danish cooperative housing associations

In cooperative housing much space cannot easily be categorized as either “public” or “private”: The space between what clearly belongs to the individual flats and households (everything behind the front doors) and what clearly belongs to ‘the public’ (the street, the sidewalk etc.). In many case, the coop’s common space does not even stop at the front door; in Danish housing associations vertical pipelines are common property and the common responsibility of the house, while breaks in horizontal water pipes have to be covered by the cooperative flat owners themselves. During my fieldwork in selected housing cooperatives in Copenhagen I realized that most of the discussions, arguments and disagreements centred around these spaces, big and small. In this paper, I will explore how such “intermediate” space can be theorized. The ethnography of social life in housing cooperatives can help conceptualize the “in-between-ness” and blurring of boundaries that is characteristic of much (urban) social space.

In search of analytical conceptualizations for such common space I begin by reviewing symbolic analyses of the space of the home and the structuralist disctinction between the private and the public that has a special place in European history. However, the study of cooperative housing invites seeing the space of the home, the house and its surroundings as *social relations* and *actions*, instead of starting out the analysis with presupposed places or spaces that are either categorizes as public or private/domestic. The housing associations continuously change with people moving in and out (of their own and each others’ homes), with their ambitions and interrelations. The meaning and use of space is the object of endless discussions and negotiations among cooperativists. I therefore turn to the Spanish anthropologist Alberto Corsín Jiménez theory on Space as Capacity (2003) to explore these aspects. In this view, housing cooperatives are not preexisting spatial, social, legal or economic structures that people inhabit but spaces constituted through people’s relationships, activities and intentions.

Toward the end of the paper, I explore Deleuze’ notion of ‘the fold’ (1993[1988]) in relation to the common spaces in the housing associations, because folding entails both the emergent quality of space as social relations and the

possibility that space can be both public and private/domestic at the same time, through public and private/domestic being folded into each other.

First, let me present cooperative housing in Denmark and its background.

Cooperative housing in Denmark[1]

Cooperative housing as a property form traces its intellectual and historic ties to the rural cooperative movement in Denmark, one of Europe's oldest. Here small and large producers cooperated across families and households, irrespective of size, and egalitarianism, open access to new members and the principle of one member, one vote has remained a key feature of cooperative ideology. The slogan in the rural production cooperatives was "Hoods not hooves" (*Hoveder ikke høveder*) – that means the number of farmers in a cooperative counted and not the number of cattle belonging to each farmer - and even the smallest farmer had one vote independent of the size of his herd. Likewise, at the housing coops' general assemblies, every household or flat holds one vote, irrespective of the size of the flat.

The first collective ownership scheme for housing in Denmark was established in the late 19th century as building societies (*byggeforeninger*) (Bager 1992). Workers paid a percentage of their salary into the building society and after some years their savings entitled them to one of the small semi-detached houses that the building societies had constructed. The first real cooperative housing association (*andelsforening*) was formed in 1913 in a housing block in Copenhagen. The aim was to enable tenants to become owners and have direct influence on their housing conditions. More housing associations with tenant boards were formed around 1st World War as a reaction against housing speculation: Rents should only depend on the running costs and the loans raised for construction and flats should not be objects of speculation.

Up through the twentieth century more cooperative housing was built, some of it with state subsidies. A big boost came after the housing agreement of 1975 according to which all private-sector housing properties that were put up for sale had

[1] My PhD project Ownership, Property and Value in Danish Housing Cooperatives runs from November 2007-October 2010 and is supported by The Centre for Housing and Welfare, Realdaniaforskning. I have conducted 15 months of anthropological fieldwork in selected housing cooperatives in the Copenhagen area from Spring 2008 to Summer 2009. I have interviewed 35 residents in coops and participated in general assemblies and board meetings in 8 cooperative associations.

to be offered to the residents first (Kristensen 2007). In order for a property to be turned into a housing cooperative, the majority of the tenants must join the cooperative association and pay the market price for the whole property.[2] The residents that don't join have the right to stay in the house as tenants, now renting their flats from the housing association. Formally, the owners dont't buy their flat, but a share of the house. Thereby they gain the right to live in one of the flats, not formal ownership. The price of the individual flat is calculated by dividing up the value of the house by square meters, reaching an index called the *andelskrone* (share crown). When people move out, they can take with them the profit from their share of the price rise of the house. The annual general assembly of the housing associations sets the price per square meter in the house. The general assambly can either choose to follow the purchase price of the house plus the cost of improvements, the market value as assessed by a private appraiser or the valuation by of the house the tax authorities (called 'the public valuation').[3] All associations are different, not only when it comes to the size and locality of the house, but also the house rules and statutes, the economic arrangements and mutual obligations vary a lot among the associations. Every housing association is obliged by law to have a set of statutes, but the wordings are quite different and the statutes are updated or changed every year at the general assemblies.

All members of the coop association have to live in the house and can only sub-let their flat for shorter periods up to two years. Decisions about the management and maintenance of the property are taken at the annual general assembly, where a board is elected that is assigned executive power over the day-to-day management of the house. Participation, democratic principles and common decisions about the house, its aesthetics and house rules are stated by the residents as some of the most important values of the cooperative housing ideology (*andelstanken*) in the interviews I have conducted.

In the 1990s the city administration of Copenhagen started selling its council estates and these were also offered to tenants first, so that many have gradually

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[2] To buy the property the association usually takes a collective loan in the bank. Recent years' drastic rises in the property market have caused some housing associations to buy their property at horrendous prices leaving them with huge loans to pay off.

[3] These different options can lead to hour-long heated discussions among the cooperativists at the general assemblies. Often, those who intend to stay in the house are not in favour of a high *andelskrone* while those who are planning to move on want to take out the highest possible amount.

become cooperative associations. Apart from getting cash into the city's empty cash box, this policy was part of an urban revitalization plan that should rescue the dilapidated council estates and attract or even create responsible, property-owning citizens who are quasi-owners of their flats. Many council estates have gradually become cooperative associations, as a part of the gentrification of whole city districts.

Thus, the concept of cooperative housing associations (*andelsboligforeninger*) covers a great variety of housing communities stretching from old and small, rather exclusive and often family-based intentional communities to big, rather anonymous former social housing estates that have been converted into cooperative housing associations. Cooperative housing amounts to 7% of housing in Denmark. It is mainly a city phenomenon, and housing cooperatives make up 1/3 of the housing market in the inner city of Copenhagen (Kristensen 2007). According to The Danish Association of private co-operative housing (ABF), the umbrella organisation for housing associations that is also lobbying for the legislation on cooperative housing, there are approximately 200.000 cooperative flats in Denmark today. There is no public register for cooperative housing associations, but ABF estimates that there are between eight and ten thousand associations.

Social relations in the coops

There are wide divergences between cooperativists' (*andelshavere*) reasons to live in cooperative housing: To live in a housing cooperative is usually not a choice of lifestyle (like cohousing (*bofællesskaber*) is for many), but a matter of network relations, luck or coincidence that facilitated the aquirement of a cooperative flat:

> **Maja: Why did you decide to buy your cooperative flat (*andelslejlighed*)?**
> Susan, 26 years: Well, I had the possibility to take over the flat from my dad, and it was not a lot of money. It was 45.000 crowns or so and I thought that was perfect. I could get a loan from the bank, so that was great. And it was a really wonderful flat compared to what my girl friends lived in.
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> **Maja: How did you get this cooperative flat (*andel*)?**
> Johannes, 54 years: I got it through a friend, someone I studied with at university. We kept in touch after she moved to Copenhagen and sometimes I used her flat while she

was on holiday. I liked the neighbourhood and suddenly another flat was vacant in the house and she called me. And then I saw the notice – and I was the one who got it.
Maja: What did you know about cooperative associations before you moved in?
Johannes: Infinitesimally little. That was not the reason why I moved in, but it has become a good thing. It was not relevant for me before. I knew they existed, but I guess it is a Copenhagen thing. There isn't much cooperative housing in other parts of the country.

Maja: And you had been on a waiting list for this flat?
Karen, 32 years: Yes, I had been on a list since '93 or '94 [She moved in in 2000]. At that time they were miserable, miserable flats. They cost 10.000 crowns or something, so it was insanely little, insanely cheap. And the rent was low too. They were very crude flats, very small and very crude flats. But my sister's husband knew someone who had lived there once and then we signed up on the list. That was the way we learned about the place's existence. And then, while I was on the waiting list, there was a revitalization (*byfornyelse*) of the neighbourhood, so they were okay flats [once we moved in]. But still the flat we got was very cheap and very small.

Social relations play a crucial role at all stages in the process of moving into, living in and moving out of a cooperative flat: Susan bought her flat from her father; she had the luck that she could take over the flat after him (in fact, he was the reason they got the flat in the first place a few years earlier, because he had been admitted on the house' waiting list). Johannes "got" his flat through a friend. Notice the way we talk about "getting" a flat as though it is not something you buy, but a gift you get. Karen had been signed up on a waiting list for some years before she "got" her flat. However, she only knew about the place through an acquaintance. There is no central register or office for housing associations where one can go and sign up, as it is with public housing associations in Denmark. Family, friends or colleagues and waiting lists are the main ways of "getting into" (*komme ind i*) a cooperative association.[4]

As we also see in these interviews, moving into a cooperative flat is not primarily thought of as becoming a member of a housing *association*, but – as with Johannes – often it turns out to be become "a good thing". A few people get involved in board or committee work immediately. They have usually lived in a coop before

[4] This was true until 2007-2008 when prices in some housing associations had become so high that flats were sold by real estate agents, through newspaper adverts and special websites with coop flats for sale.

and are experienced or just generally very involved in voluntay associations; they are what they themselves and others call “association persons” (*foreningsmennesker*). Many of the young people who move into a housing cooperative, however, don’t think much about the concept of cooperative associations before they have lived there for some time and received one or more invitations for the general assemblies.

> Anna, 31 years: I just moved in, and was not into it at all. It is a bit diffucult, when your are only 20.
> **Maja: Did you go to the general assemblies then?**
> Anna: Not often. But sometimes. I don’t think I completely understood what I had moved into. It was just a flat. I think I can see the same with the 20-year-old who move in now. They sit at the general assemblies and think “huh, what is going on here? Okay, it seems to be something one has to participate in.”

No matter why and how people have ended up in a cooperative house, this form of shared ownership and governance has consequences for their daily lives and domestic arrangements. If they want to sub-let their flat or change something in the kitchen or bathroom, for example, they have to follow the commonly decided statutes and ask the board for permission. Living in a coop is a matter of continuous cooperation, enquiries and negotiatons with neighbours and the board.

There is a great variety in the relations between people living together in a housing cooperative: Some “get in” through family and friends and thus already know each other and have “allies” in the house from the beginning. Others have lived together in the house for years and have developed friendships or “good neighbourliness” (*godt naboskab*) over the years. Some may have lived in the house since the flats were rented out by a private landlord or by the municipality and share the reminiscences of the times when they fought against ‘the slum landlord’, ‘property shark’ (*boligspekulant, bolighaj*) or ‘the system’.

Blood is thicker than water, it says, and internally in the housing association, the residents’ crosscutting interests and kinship relations can cause a lot of conflicts: Members put their younger siblings and other relatives on the waiting list and when flats go for sale, fights between the residents about whose siblings or friends are entitled to buy them can be fierce and spare no machinations. Some friendships among residents are be cracked for years due to such fights.

These crosscutting solidarities are built into the rules and practices of the housing cooperatives: Most associations' statutes allow that cooperative flats can be sold directly to consanguines or at least vertical consanguines. There are a range of "checks and balances" built into the statutes and practices such as intricate waiting list rules, supervisors of the waiting lists and supervision of flat sales in order to avoid fiddling and money under the table.

Generally, the coops can be divided into small, family-based coops where the majority of residents are recruited from one or a few families. In these coops, residents are of different age and generation which forms a good basis for mutuality: The young set up Internet for the whole house, the families with children build playgrounds and ensure that there is a lot of 'social life' (*socialt liv*) in the house which is usually highly valued and the older generation has time and experience for bigger construction projects and for managing the house economy.

In other coops almost all residents are students and young people. These are usually the coops in less attractive or "student" neighbourhoods and older and more rundown houses with small flats. Here people help each other too, go out together or arrange parties, but fewer are engaged in the long-term management of the house. Thirdly, there are a lot mixed, often bigger coops with a high turnover where people do not necessarily have much contact. In such coops, new compositions of residents can change the milieu very quickly: If a group of active residents for example applies for subsidies from the municipality to renovate the building or backyard, they can turn the house into an attractive place for middle-class families and professionals within only a few years.

Despite all the differences and crosscutting solidarities within cooperative houses it is striking that so many have as an ideal and/or experience that a kind of community or fellowship (*fællesskab*)[5] comes from living together in the house and sharing it as common property. This fellowship is both economic and social and is described sometimes as *fællesskab* (fellowship, community), sometimes as *godt naboskab* (good neighbourliness):

[5] *Fællesskab* can be translated into "community", "social fellowship" and "Gemeinschaft". While the communities of community studies refer to groups of people that belong to certain places like neighbourhoods and form usually positively valued relationships, the Danish term *fællesskab* is also normatively positive loaded, but refers to different kinds of common interest or social fellowships (Anderson 2008, Olwig 1992). Each person enters into, creates for herself/himself, maintains, and frequently also leaves again a range of different networks of *fællesskab* centered around the family, workplace, voluntary associations or even the nation.

> Susan, 26 years: I think it is positive and fantastic that coops still exist. It is super important. I am very much in favour of *fællesskab*. That you cooperate and help each other and have this little 'society' where you help each other. I am very much in favour of this. Therefore I think it is fantastic that we have this social way of thinking and not just come here, live here and then that is it.

> **Maja: You said "good neighbourliness" (*godt naboskab*). What do you mean by that?**
> Carsten, 31 years: I think that good neighbourliness first and foremost means that you have to find ways to solve pratical everyday life problems together (*i fællesskab*). I mean renovation or the house rules or cleaning-up or maintenance of the house or that you take care of each other and the common things and so on.
> Apart from that, good neighbourliness is a 'plus-thing'. It can be added though it is not crucial. What I mean is that such a good neighbourliness is something social. You are there for each other (*Man har hinanden*, literally You have each other), also on a social level. Talk with each other, know each other, live close together. Also in ways that are not only a practical arrangement.

Just as Susan and Carsten explain, many people who live in coops wish some kind of "civilized" contact with their neighbours. It entails greeting each other in the backyard or staircase, that they know who their neighbours are, that they can borrow an egg or some sugar from their neighbours if necessary and in some coops that they support each other in their personal lives. In short, the coop should be "a nice place to live/be" (*et rart sted at bo/være*). This kind of civilized social contact (*fællesskab* and *good neighbourliness*) is not like decent behaviour in 'the public' - the streets or shops, for instance - where people do not necessarily greet each other. Neither is it like social relations within a family or among close friends.

Common space in the making

The *fællesskab* and the common spaces created with the housing cooperatives is also an ideal; something people expect will develop in a cooperative. In many coops it does not exsit yet, but some of the residents may be working on it and have some explanations why it is lacking so far:

> Maria, 36 years: Something I thought about [when we set up our housing association] was that it may lead to more solidarity (*sammenhold*) here. Because that was problematic before. There was no *fællesskab* at all here. It has become better, but it is still a big estate and not like the small cooperative associations. (...) But I think it has become better here after we turned into a cooperative assocation.

Maria has lived in her flat for almost 10 years. In the beginning, the house was owned by a landlord, but when he wanted to sell the house, she decided to become a member of the 'initiative group' that worked for turning the property into a cooperative association. She has been a board member since. During my many conversations and meetings with her and other residents in the house I have pieced together the story of the house which is a triumphant story of turning one of the worst slum and drug dealers' buildings in Copenhagen into "a nice place to live". The house was not a place before. People asked why a decent person would move into this former public housing estate that was renowned for drug dealing and the crime that goes together with this. A divorced father told me that his grown-up children refused to visit him when he first moved there.

Since then, two common houses have been build with laundry facilities and a hall for social gatherings and private parties and the asphalted backyard has been turned into a green park with picnic areas and playgrounds. As a way to emphasize the changes in the milieu of the house, both young and old people repeatedly told me that now there are children playing in the backyard and families let their babies sleep in prams under their kitchen windows.

Housing cooperatives are always in flux, always in movement. There are always people moving in and out or some kind of construction projects or social activities going on. Much like with internal home decoration (Clarke 2001; Gullestad 1992), cooperativists have aspirations and dreams about rooftop terraces, balconies, new laundry facilities or other spaces that shall improve their life quality and the quality of their community. During the housing boom when many coops increased their property value, the construction of balconies and rooftop terraces was a recurrent suggestion at general assemblies. As with all projects in coops, there has to be a majority to make a decision. Since many coops customarily don't just vote for decisions but have long discussions and try to reach a consensus that is satisfactory for all parties in the house, the discussions about balconies or a rooftop terrace can go

on for years, from the point when someone makes the proposal till the terrace or balconies are built. During these discussions a lot of notions and practices of space and social relations in the house are revealed:

At one general assembly in a rather big housing cooperative, someone made a proposal for the construction of balconies. It seemed that the man just wanted to sense the general attitude toward balconies and possibly form a working group on the project. Yet, immediately negotiations started between those in favour of balconies and those against: “What about those of us who live on the ground floor and don’t have the possibility to get a balcony? Can you try to find a solution where we can all get *a private plot in the sun*, for that is what it is all about, isn’t it?” The woman raising this question was clearly upset about the appropriation or privatization of common space that the building of balconies implied. This was only going to be accepted by her, if *everybody* would get their share of the pleasure of having a balcony. Sometimes such discussions lead to the establishment of a common rooftop terrace besides the balconies.[6]

Balconies are the result of social relations, of long negotiations and commonly acceptable solutions. In another cooperative’s general assembly I witnessed discussions over balconies at a more advanced stage. Here, again, it became clear that space and social relations are closely connected. The balcony project had been in the pipeline for more than a year already and at the previous general assembly one year earlier, they had decided to hire an architect to draw a sketch of how the balconies would look like. There were two main problems: It was not possible to construct balconies for all flats and two families living on the ground floor would suffer from less sunlight, if balconies would be constructed above their windows. Thus, a compromise had to be found, everybody agreed. In the following I have picked some quotes from the discussion that went on for almost an hour. All participants at the meeting were between 35 and 65 years and had lived in the house for more than a year, many of them for more than ten and they were generally good friends with each other.

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[6] A great part of the negotians of the meaning and use of space is carried out through discussions about the financing of building projects, e.g. if the balconies should be paid by the collective or by the households.

> The chairman of the board opens the point ‘balconies’ on the agenda by presenting the architect’s drawing and report.
>
> **Eigil**: The report does not say a single thing about our attitude as a community (*fællesskab*) toward the fact that there are two flats on the ground floor who suffer from this.
>
> **Lone, resident from the ground floor**: Apart from the social and cooperative aspects of this project and the huge discussion we had last year, I don’t find the architect’s material good enough. (...) The balconies will take the only daylight I get down there and also I think the use of our common terrace in the backyard will change.
>
> **Axel**: In my home, the disagreement about the balconies goes right through the conjugal bed. My wife wants a balcony and I don’t. This plant did not grow in our garden [i.e. this is not our idea]. I don’t want to support a balcony project that will split our association in two parts.
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> **Sally**: Why can’t you just build smaller balconies?
>
> **Camilla, main advocate of the balconies**: You are living alone, Sally! I want a balcony where four persons can sit and grill [she and her husband have two children].

The space in and around the house is conceptualized through social relations: Families want balconies to enjoy a family dinner in the sun, opponents say that balconies will not only block the inflow of light into their apartment, but also destroy the good atmosphere on the common terrace which is where families have their grill evenings now while they socialize with the other residents. Some of the residents say they value the good atmosphere and *fællesskab* more than having their own balcony, while others see it as a personal vendetta against them that the balcony projects is delayed year after year.

When space use is thematized in daily encounters in the backyard, on the stairs or in the laundry or more formally at general assemblies, this is often done through discussions of reponsibilites. Who is repsonsible for keeping the stairs and the laundry clean? If someone leaves his or her trash on the stairs or does not dispose of it properly, he or she will receive comments from the neighbours, because it is seen as an offence against the common effort to keep the house clean and nice.

In the following sections I explore how the common spaces in the cooperative housing associations can be theorized. I begin with symbolic approaches to the home as a special kind of space.

Symbolic and structuralist approaches to the home and and its surroundings: Public vs private space

The home is often described as a kind of moral space with its own spatial and temporal routines, an important site for the formation of social relations and identity (e.g. Douglas 1991). The Norwegian anthropologist Marianne Gullestad assigns the home a special role and goes as far as calling Norwegian culture “home-centered” (Gullestad 1991; Gullestad 1992). Not only because Norwegians spend a lot of time and energy on home improvement and these activites are important for the creation of close social relations, but also because Norwegian cosmology can be understood in terms of the oppostion between “inside” and “outside”: The ‘inside’ and the home stands for warmth, intimacy, security and ‘closeness’ (*nærhet*), as opposed to the cold, impersonal relations of ‘outside’, the market and the state (Gullestad 1991). “The word *hjem* (home) brings together in one notion both the idea of a place and the idea of a social togetherness associated with this place” (Gullestad 1992b:131). Also in the anthropologist Inger Sjørslev’s work on Danish single-family houses, the home is an important site for people’s projected emotions, dreams and hopes and the materiality of the house is embedded in a morality of care and family relations (Sjørslev 2008).

In a similar vein, the residents in the Copenhagen coops want their houses to be “nice places to live” and want to create a homely atmosphere, characterized by closeness, togetherness and good neighbourliness. The houses are improved to fulfill social aspirations and personal dreams – but there is more to it than the family home. The *fællesskab* reaches beyond the space of family home and takes place in backyards and terraces. This come space is clearly not home. Is it “public” then?

The home as an important symbolic space in Western European culture is often understood in relation to ‘the public’ (see also Cieraad 1999). The symbolic distinction between the domestic space of the home and the public space surrounding it can be linked to the development of the ‘public sphere’ or “bürgerliche Öffentlichkeit” in Western European history from the Enlightenment onward together with capitalism, universal laws, the nuclear family and the concepts of private property and civil society (Habermas 1990 [1962]). In a recent edited volume on “The Politics of Public Space” (Low and Smith 2006), Neil Smith and Setha Low bring together architects’, geographers’, anthropologists’ and urban planners’ literature on public space and sociologists’, philosophers’ and political scientists’ literature on ‘the

public sphere'. Public spaces are the street, parks, markets, squares or the Internet and many contemporary theorists criticize the ongoing encroachment of private space on public space. The public sphere literature focuses on media, institutions and practices in what is called 'the public' or 'civil society', but which is rarely thought of in spatial or geographic terms. Habermas defines the public sphere as "the sphere of private people coming together as a public" (Habermas 2001:27 [1962] in Low and Smith 2006:6).

While Low and Smith (2006) are concerned with the links between neoliberal politics' clampdown on public space and assaults on the public sphere, especially since 9/11 2001, but also before that, I am interested in the notion of "private people coming together (as a public)".[7] If we compare private and public spaces not as certain spaces that are invested with different morals, but start out with different *qualities* of social relations, it makes sense to talk of public and private *spheres* of social interaction. Feminist anthropologists have for a long time been interested in the mutual constitution of space and social relations, namely in the simultanous construction of gender relations and gendered space, e.g. Michelle Rosaldo's argument that women's universal subordination to men can be found in their primary association with the domestic *sphere* (Rosaldo 1974).

In urban spaces where people live close to each other there is a lot of "in-between-ness" between the private and the public sphere. If Scandinavians distinguish between a cold "outside" and a warm "inside" (Gullestad 1991), there is a lot of appropriation or domestication of "outside" spaces going on in cooperative associations through negotiations over and through the practical use of space which the symbolic and structuralist analyses of space do not account of. It seems that space in housing cooperatives can be both public and private at the same time. I will get back to this in the last section of the paper concerning 'the fold'.

Rather than working from a notion of presupposed spaces or spheres, people create space around certain understandings of social relations. In cooperative housing associations space is created around notions of *fællesskab* and togetherness. The Spanish anthropologist Alberto Corsín Jiménez (2003) offers a theory of space seen as and through social relations.

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[7] Cooperative housing associations could indeed be studied as a kind of 'civil society' organizations, but that is beyond the scope if this paper.

Space as capacity

Corsín Jiménez reconsiders the ontological nature of space based on his fieldwork in the dusty mining city of Antofagasta, Chile. Antofagasta is not a 'place' where social relationships unfold, but a non-place or a different kind of space. The city and the landscape of the desert surrounding it is rather something people strive to "overcome". At the same time, people struggle to invest their city with value and meaning and to create healthy and family friendly recreational spaces through their actions and social relations. When the parents and children in Antofagasta go out shopping, eating and playing on Saturdays and Sundays, as Corsín Jiménez describes in his paper, they create spaces that are aspects of their relationships, not given places 'out there'. They shape "a concrete temporal geography (Saturday and Sunday evening) with a concreate socio-spatial rhythm (family outing)" (Corsín Jiménez 2003:148). Social relations in themselves have *capacity*; they produce space and value in that they are always *in* space and meant *for* something. Thus, space is always a becoming, "an emerging property of social relations" (ibid.:140). "Social life is no longer to be seen as unfolding through space but with space, that is, spatially. Space is no longer 'out there', but a condition or faculty – a capacity – of social relationships. It is what people do, not where they are." (ibid.).

Corsín Jiménez is interested in the 'presentations' or events that make up social space, rather than in spatial representation or references. His view is close to non-representational theory in geography (Thrift 1996; Thrift 2008), and in line with recent anthropological approaches, Corsín Jiménez focuses on social relations and social processses situated in local ethnography.

Corsín Jiménez' theory of space as capacity offers a fruitful way of thinking about space, not only in places that are detested by its inhabitants such as Antofagasta, but also in other places. In cooperative housing space is capacity, because people continuously see possibilities for creating new kinds of spaces; regenerated backyards, balconies and terraces, common laundry rooms and so on. The social relations in the coops emerge in space and with intentions. Different notions and practices of kinship, friendship, neighbourliness and *fællesskab* unfold through differently valued spaces.

In the last section of this paper, I explore the notion of folding in Deleuze' "The Fold" (1993 [1988]), because folding entails both emergent quality of space and

the possibility that space can be both public and private/domestic at the same time, through the public and private/domestic being folded into each other.

Foldings

The concept of the fold is developed by Deleuze in his work Leibniz and the Baroque (Deleuze 1993 [1988]). ‘The fold’ is an attempt to formulate an anti-dialectic alternative to the basic dialectic thinking about the dynamics of being, negations and reciprocal interaction between the singular and the plural (Lærke 2001). In a deleuzian perspective the world consists of continuous series of folds and foldings or “inflections” that have both an inside and an outside and are folded into each other. I understand these foldings as social actions or “events” that create new kinds of spaces.

If the private or domestic space of the family is folded into the public or common space of the coop – like four persons sitting on a balcony grilling – the domestic and the common are two sides of the same fold and both domestic and common values are present in the social space of the balcony as it is enacted. Thus the balconies can be seen as “folded” spaces. In the same way, a baby in pram in the backyard is “inside” domestic space folded into the “outside”, thereby creating a new kind of space, a trustworthy common space. The folding is dynamic and has different temporalities; sometimes space changes slowly like plate tectonics in geology, sometimes fast like volcanic eruptions. Though only the surface is visible, there is a detailed history behind and some social relations that are eclipsed.

The “foldings” in the cooperatives are temporal not only in the sense that there are layers of past folds, but also that the *future* is anticipated in the way private/domestic and public, own and shared are folded into each other. Because owners only have use rights to their flat and there is the potential option of swobbing flats internally within cooperative houses, redecorations and renovations in individual homes involve the collective: Changing installations in the kitchen or bathroom requires permission from the board, for instance, and people take future residents of their flat into consideration when they change things in their homes. In one coop, a family invited their neighbour to help pick the wall colours and furniture in their new kitchen, because they knew that this person was interested (and next in seniority on the waiting list) in taking over their flat when they moved out.

Deleuze' notion of 'the fold' seems to be a good image to conceptualize the emerging spaces in housing cooperatives, a way that allows spaces to be both private/domestic and public, own and shared and that accounts of all the porousness and blurred boundaries of shared social space.

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