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**Working Paper**

2005: 02

### **Space and Place in an Everyday-Perspective A Framework for Studying Out-Migration from Inner Copenhagen**

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Conference paper for The Inaugural Nordic Geographers Meeting. Power over Time-Space. May 10-14, 2005, Lund.

**Work in Progress**



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# **Space and Place in an Everyday-Perspective**

## **A Framework for Studying Out-Migration from Inner Copenhagen**

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#### **Out-Migration of Inner Copenhagen**

Out-migration of Inner Copenhagen is the subject of this study. With a starting point in geographical and sociological 'city-theoretization', this study aims to explore relevant concepts and develop a framework for further investigation, especially of the phenomenon of out-migration from Inner Copenhagen today.

#### **Recent Empirical Research**

Recent research carried out by AKF and SBI (Christoffersen 2002 and 2003, SBI and AKF 2001) concludes that during the last 20 years economic activities and jobs in Denmark have concentrated more and more in a few strong center-regions. Through the last ten years an even further concentration has emerged. Now these metropolitan-areas are the all-dominating economic growth centers in Denmark. Surprisingly, this concentration of jobs and economic activities has not caused a corresponding concentration of settlements. On the contrary, the netto immigration to the metropolitan areas has decreased. Meanwhile, the areal extension of the metropolitan housing market, and the areas from where people commute, has extended outwards. The former frontiers of the metropolitan region have collapsed, and new settlement patterns and an increasing level of commuting has caused the metropolitan areas now to be said to include the counties of West-Sealand and Storstrøm. These two counties have experienced an increased netto-immigration, while the former metropolitan area around the capital of Copenhagen has experienced a decrease in netto-immigration (Christoffersen 2002). These migration processes are believed to relate to increased commuting and a general growth in rural-urban-linkages. Historically, life in the countryside or the 'remote' rural areas has been described as an opposition to life in the city. These dichotomies now dissolve as settlement and attachment to a local community does not last for life any longer. Furthermore, local communities (if they ever existed?) are said to be dissolving because of commuting and because more and more shopping and spare-time occupations now take place outside the local community. By crossing the borderlines of "the

countryside” and “the city”, people nowadays meet in multiple ways/situations; as colleagues, at the fitness club, in university etc. and in these various settings they have the possibilities to get fellow experiences (ibid.).

Improved infrastructures and (it-) technological “highways” which increase the possibilities for commuting and for working from home furthermore create new options for the choice of where to live. Today the choice of dwelling area is not so much caused by the job market as the housing market, and newcomers are more attracted to “good places to live” than to opportunistic job markets (Christoffersen 2002).

### **The Porous City**

These empirical processes I want to try out against more theoretical considerations of the development of cities and the dissolution of the rural-urban-dichotomy. The concept of ‘the porous city’, developed by Amin and Thrift (2002), describes cities as networks and relationships between places and across space rather than delimited homogeneous entities. The increase in the human mobility has caused a time-space-compression, and the rural-urban linkages have grown stronger. If one tries to define the inner and outer limits of a city, the entities fall apart. Amin and Thrift criticize the human ecologists, who saw the cities as organisms. In opposition to that, they claim that: *The city is everywhere and in everything* (Amin and Thrift 2002 P.1). As such, contemporary cities are not systems with their own internal coherence, and the limits of the cities have become permeable and extended both geographically and socially: *The city has no completeness, no center, no fixed parts. Instead, it is an amalgam of often disjointed processes and social heterogeneity, a place of near and far connections, a concentration of rhythms; always edging in new directions* (Amin and Thrift 2002, p.8).

Another researcher in this field, Doreen Massey, has also been engaged to studies of these social and spatial processes. Still, she has a more general perspective as she is not only studying rural-urban linkages, but also focuses on relationships between places and individuals’ uses and perceptions of space and place. Especially in “The conceptualization of place” from 1995 Massey writes on globalization and the increasing mobility of human beings; how these processes affect our understanding of place and space. As Massey points to, places have been perceived as delimited entities with specific characteristics, as well as so-called localized communities. But in the most recent period of globalization and the hereto related time-space-compressions this image of place has been challenged: *The old settled coherence of ‘the locals’ may seem to be disrupted. Everywhere seems to become ‘a melting pot’* (Massey 1994 p.46). Or as she stated in 1994: *An (idealized) notion of an era when places where (supposedly) inhabited by coherent and homogeneous communities is set against the current fragmentation and disruption* (Massey 1994 p.146). Massey developed a metaphor, which

(partly) describes this development; 'the activity space' That is the various spaces a single agent (a person, a firm etc.) covers through networks and activities. As Massey puts it herself: *The activity space of something is the spatial network of links and activities, of spatial connections and of locations, within which a particular agent operates* (1995, p.54). Thus, the activity space of a single person e.g. describes the everyday movements from home to daycare center, to work, to shopping areas, to houses of friends. It furthermore describes the breaks in these daily rhythms when a person or a family moves to new places nearby as well as further away. A point for discussion in Massey's theoretical considerations is the question whether relationships to places the individual or agent has not visited directly (but e.g. reached indirectly through connections and networks (mail, tele, it etc.) to remote areas) are parts of the activity spaces. Massey writes: *The idea of activity spaces is not a precise theoretical concept: there are no rules about where to draw the cut-off point around a company's activities or influence, for instance. Rather it is a 'heuristic device' (a useful tool) to help us into a particular way of thinking about the spatial organization of society* (Massey 1995 p.55). The point is that activity spaces of people in general have stretched out and become more complex. Bearing this point in mind, places located in 'the porous city' should be understood as porous and open *and* as defined in relation to other places.

On the other hand side, Massey argues as well that the processes of time-space compression and mobility do not happen to everyone, that is, not every single person experiences these processes the same way and to the same extent. In other words, it is not the activity spaces of *every* human being that are being enlarged. Variations among agents may depend on where in the world the agent is located in the world. According to Massey, the time-space-compression is mainly a western phenomenon. Around the world, we can find peoples who do *not* experience an increase in mobility and global orientation. But also inside of western societies, there is a variety of experiences of mobility and time-space-compression. Thus we have to consider that these processes depend on socio-economic conditions – whether the individual has the economic and social capabilities to increase mobility and become part of the development. Gender and race are other parameters that influence the potential for mobility and thereby the possible experience of the time-space compression. Still, it is not only about having the capability to become mobile. It is also very much about having the capability to take advantage of the increased mobility, to choose or not to choose mobility, and to have the power to somehow rule the movements: *Different social groups have distinct relationships to this anyway differentiated mobility: some people are more in charge of it than others; some initiate flows and movement, others don't; some are more on the receiving-end of it than others; some are effectively imprisoned by it* (Massey 1994 p.149).

These (and many more) studies of ‘the porous city’, mobility and the dissolution of the rural-urban dichotomy causes my curiosity in the quality of ‘the porous city’: Is it porous at all? And to whom is it porous?

### **How to Conceptualize and Analyze ‘the Porous City’? - Elements of a Framework**

In their proposal of how to conceptualize ‘the porous city’ Amin and Thrift focus on concrete daily social processes and actions: *We turn to another urbanism that emphasizes the city as a place of mobility, flow and everyday practices, and which reads cities from their recurrent phenomenological patterns* (Amin and Thrift 2002 p.7). They criticize contemporary urbanists (e.g. Harvey, Soja, Sennett, and Castells) for trying to make (over) generalizations of the city, and point in another direction towards theorists trying to overcome generalizations by capturing everyday life in the cities. In this approach focus on everyday life is seen as a way to better understand what can not possibly be exposed through theoretical abstractions and generalizational perspectives alone. Through an ‘everyday-urbanism’ Amin and Thrift make an image of cities as more complex, dynamic and less demarcated. In their attempt to create an understanding of an ‘everyday-urbanism’ they make use of three metaphors; transitivity, rhythms and footprints: *The first is transitivity, which marks the spatial and temporal openness of the city. The second captures the city as a place of manifold rhythms, forged through daily encounters and multiple experiences of time and space. The third notes the city as footprints: imprints from the past, the daily tracks of movement across, and links beyond the city* (Amin and Thrift 2002 p.9). By means of these metaphors Amin and Thrift create an image of cities as formed by use and history, as open and porous and as characterized by rhythms in various timescales. To me, the ‘everyday-urbanism’ and the three related metaphors make it possible to identify the identity of cities and places as never fixed, as varying from time to time, as formed by active people and as related to other sometimes rather remote places. I am inspired by this ‘everyday-urbanism’ when providing a conceptual framework that shall serve as the first steppingstones of my study.

Another important source of inspiration to my framework derives from Massey’s theories on space and place. I will take my point of departure in her argument on the ways various individuals experience mobility and places. As every single human being has different patterns of movements, different histories, different experiences, and belongs to different social groupings, they experience the city and places in the city in different ways. Amin and Thrift try to capture the rhythms and complexity of ‘the city’ as a spatial object, whereas Massey is more concerned with a phenomenological understanding of how the individual agents perceive places. Even though Amin and Thrift are criticizing other urbanists of their attempt to generalize the city, Amin and Thrift could be criticized for doing the same. In my point of view, a conceptualization and better understanding of ‘the porous city’ must also be concerned with the ways in which single individuals use and perceive their places.

In an earlier paper, I proposed a four-dimensional model of an analytical understanding of space inspired by Simonsen and Lefebvre (Aner 2002). In this model, I distinguish between a structural level of space and an individual level of place. The understanding of place as related to an individual level is close to the perspective (as) Mazanti (2002) takes, when focusing on an understanding of place from within, and this is the perspective I take here. In the model, I furthermore distinguish between concrete and abstract dimensions of place (and space). The concrete aspects of place, I consider to be the physical structures of places, practices in places, and social relationships in and interactions between places. The abstract aspects of places, I interpret as imaginations, perceivings and discourses of place, identities of places, and individuals' identification with places. This is also known as an individuals' 'sense of place'. A number of theorists are engaged in different aspects of the 'sense of place' (Massey 1994 and 1995, Rose 1995, Simonsen 1993 and 1994, Eyles 1985). For Massey, a 'sense of place' includes emotional attachment to places, the sense of presence certain places evoke, as well as the ways humans identify themselves with and relate to various places. In this light, places of residence are infused with meaning by the social relationships among people who live there. The abstract and concrete aspects of places are so to speak dialectically related to each other. As such, the practice of the inhabitants actively creates and recreates places, *and* at the same time places can be perceived as a physical setting or condition for the practice of the residents.

Relating these latter mentioned aspects of individual-place relations to an everyday perspective allows us more clearly to consider the everyday perspective as connected to the individual level (even though every single individual belongs to different groups and are located in a specific social context). Furthermore, I believe the everyday practice and the everyday movements are important tools for understanding how different senses of place are created.

### **Everyday Perspectives**

In the following section I will first of all make a brief overview of a few perspectives which have been objects for discussions in the literature on everyday life. Afterwards, I will try to outline, how I tend to work with an everyday perspective.

According to Felski (1999-2000) everyday life is a frequent subject in contemporary research. Still, she finds it remarkable, that the concept rarely is clearly defined and there are very few references to the comprehensive literature on everyday life. Felski finds that one reason why everyday life is so often used as an approach to different research topics, is a general frustration about and reaction against very abstract theories on "the social". In this connection everyday life is seen as a valuable and relevant approach, which is concerned with a concrete level and which illustrates reality. But everyday life as a

theoretical and analytical concept is unclear and difficult to identify and delimit: *At first glance, everyday life seems to be everywhere, yet nowhere. Because it has no clear boundaries, it is difficult to identify* (Felski 1999-2000 p.15). Furthermore, Felski notes, that the existing literature on everyday life is working on a philosophical and abstract level (de Certeau, Lefebvre, Luckas, Heidegger, Heller, Habermas), while she herself finds it very difficult to generalize over such a diverse phenomenon as the everyday life – especially when taking the large variation of human life into consideration.

### **Everyday Life and Authentic Life Contrasted**

In the literature, a negative view of the everyday life is often expressed. Especially Lefebvre and Heidegger expresses an antipathy for the everyday life, as both of them generally describe the typical everyday life as routinized, banal, stationary and of no value in opposition to “the authentic life” which is characterized by reflection and progress (Bennett and Watson). With this, Lefebvre and Heidegger create a dichotomy between everyday life and “the authentic life” in which the everyday life is associated with the working class and women while the authentic life to some extent is associated with the researchers themselves. As mentioned everyday life is looked upon as unconscious practices and routines while the authentic life is regarded as reflective and well considered actions. The authentic life is characterized by more progressive and innovative actions and as containing a potential for movement and change, while the everyday life is seen as stationary and cyclic (Felski 1999-2000, Bennett and Watson).<sup>1</sup> As a reaction to this formulation of the everyday life, as an opposition to the authentic life, Felski argues for an alternative definition, described in the following.

### **Felski’s Everyday Life**

Felski creates a definition of the everyday life as described by three concepts: Repetition, sense of home and habit. These three concepts form a much more positive (or neutral) view of the everyday life than e.g. than the one of Lefebvre. In Felski’s perspective, the everyday is a temporal term. Everyday life does not refer to the singular and unique, but to what happens day after day. Still, she claims that everyday life is not only repetitive but also has the potentiality to change. As she writes: *The temporality of everyday life is internally complex: it combines repetition and linearity, recurrence with forward movement* (1999-2000 p.21). But while everyday life thus is associated with a specific temporality it is not necessarily associated with a specific locality or space. In Felski’s understanding the everyday life includes a variety of different spaces (the workplace, the home, the mall) as well as diverse forms of movements through space. Still, several researchers have located the everyday life only in the home. It is from home the everyday life takes its departure, and it is to home, we return at the end of the day. But according to Felski, one should not apprehend home only as a geographically

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<sup>1</sup> Please bear in mind that this short presentation not quite do justice to the theories in case. The various theories on everyday life contain much more complex and nuanced views of, what everyday life is like.

unity but also as a metaphysically symbol – a sense of home in the world, and she writes: *According to Heller, familiarity is an everyday need, and familiarity combines with the promise of protection and warmth to create the positive everyday associations of home* (1999-2000 p.22). The temporality and the sense of home in the everyday life are deeply connected to the habits of everyday life; habits and daily routines are creating a sense of safety and home.

### **Everyday versus Strategic Practice**

To sum up, the everyday life can be described as what happens day after day. The everyday practice as such, is a temporal concept because precisely its temporality is what defines it. In opposition to the everyday practice we may put the strategic practice. The strategic practice has an influence on the longue duree. It is characterized by having a goal or an objective and the strategic practice is dominated by reflexivity. But still, the everyday practice and the strategic practice are intertwined because the everyday practice may as well have a goal, and the strategic practice could possibly be unconscious. As also noticed it is very difficult to make a distinction between routinized and strategic practices and unconscious and reflective practices. Simonsen (1993) though has developed an analytical and artificial distinction, and I carry inspiration from this distinction into my project. In this, I tend to make an analytical distinction between everyday practices; daily routines and repetitions (this part will be further developed by the inspiration of Lefebvre 1992 and 2002, de Certeau 1984, Heller 1984), and strategic practices, which is related to the more important choices families are making, i.e. for example when they decide to move (this part will be further developed by inspiration of Bech-Jørgensen 1997, Simonsen 1993). Both in everyday practices and in strategic practices every single individual and family experiences some limitations and possibilities (Giddens 1984, Bourdieu 1997, Bech-Jørgensen 1997). In my point of view it is in this combination of everyday-practice, strategic practice, limitations and possibilities the decision to move and the creation of a sense of place best can be understood. I believe a focus on the everyday practice provides me with an image of how single individuals experience 'the porous city'. A focus on the strategic practice, I believe, provides me with a better understanding of the reasons for moving out of Copenhagen and thereby how (if) the rural-urban dichotomy is dissolving. Even though I analytically distinguish between everyday practice and strategic practice, the interplay between these two will be obvious in the project.

### **Outline of the Study**

In the wake of these theoretical considerations, I will now turn back to the empirical level and outline how I endeavour to come closer to a better understanding of what 'the porous city' and the rural-urban linkages are like. First of all, my research questions are having their background in both empirical and theoretical considerations:

## **Research Questions:**

### **What is the out-migration from Inner Copenhagen like?**

What is the proportion of the out-migration from inner Copenhagen? What types of families moves where to? How do migrants choose their new areas of residence?

### **How does everyday life differ in various types of dwelling areas?**

What are the differences among various agents in relation to mobility and activity-space, networking and community-building and expectations to, and satisfaction with the area?

## **Methodology:**

The project consists of two parts. The first part is a quantitative study of the pattern of out-migration from inner Copenhagen and the question about who moves to where. The second part, further investigates on a qualitative basis how different types of families make their choice of where to live. Furthermore, the qualitative study will examine how the families use their area of residence and how their senses of place are created. Both the quantitative and the qualitative parts are sharing the relationship between the everyday-practice and the place of resident as an analytical focus.

## **The Quantitative Study:**

In the quantitative study, I hold the thesis, that the composition of the family (single or couple, number of children etc.), age and ethnicity does have a significant influence on everyday life and housing preferences. Earnings in this connection, is understood as a material basic condition of the everyday life - a possibility or a limitation for the choice of residence. The decision of/about which variables to include in the study derives from this thesis. The purpose is, through multivariate factor analysis, to define different types of families. Hereby, it becomes possible to investigate where different types of families move to. The time-span of the analysis is the last ten years. From the pattern revealed, I will point out two or three case-areas, in which I (do) will carry out the qualitative research. The places will be chosen (because) on basis of e.g. significant changes in in-migration during the ten-year period, or if e.g. the in-migration to a certain place is totally dominated by one type of families.

## **The Qualitative Study:**

In the case-areas, I conduct qualitative interviews with people who have recently moved into the area. The overall objective is to gain a better understanding of the choices families make, when deciding to

move. In other words, how families navigate considering their possibilities, limitations, dreams and wishes. Another objective of the qualitative study is to gain a better understanding of, what the everyday life is like in different types of neighbourhoods – and also what the neighbourhood means in relation to the everyday life of the families. In this connection, the everyday practice as an analytical focus has two objectives – on the one hand side to state the reason for the choice of residence (the strategic practice) and on the other to clarify the use and sense of place. As such, the choice of residence and the senses of place of the families are seen in a broad framework.

My line of action is first to focus on the concrete aspects of place. Here the analytical focus is the concrete use of the place, the mobility of the families, the localization of the social networks of the families etc. Inspired by Hägerstrand (Hägerstrand 1973, Friberg 1990, Marling.), I will map out the time-geography of the families' everyday practice. This mapping works as a starting point for a deeper understanding of the quality of the everyday-movements. In this part of the analysis the concepts of mobility and attachment to places are central, and they are exposed through questions of localization of the relatives and social networks of the families, their thoughts of and possibility to commute, etc.

My second focus is the abstract aspects of place. In this part of the study the housing preferences and senses of place of the families are analyzed in relation to their dreams and discourses of 'a good place to live', their identification with and attachment to places. These concepts are exposed through questions of where the respondents grew up, discourses and narratives of the specific place, the image of places and the wishes to identify oneself with the place of residence. The concept 'sense of place' is central to this part of the analysis.

Alltogether this empirical and theoretical endeavour aims at providing a better understanding of reasons behind the ongoing out-migration from Inner Copenhagen, the migration pattern and the various forms everyday life takes in different parts of 'the porous city'.

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