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Conflict In Copenhagen: Urban Reconfigurations, Disciplining the Unruly

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Abstract

This paper discusses the connections between political dissent, urban spaces, normalization, conflict and national identity. Two questions are central to this paper: 1) How are social and political marginality being constructed, negotiated and resisted in Denmark? 2) What insights are generated when groups defined as 'marginal' by the state challenge state authority and compete for control of urban spaces?

Christiania is a key cultural icon in Danish society and widely known as one of the oldest, most successful and politically active squatter communities in Europe. In the center of Copenhagen, moments walk from the Danish Parliament, one-thousand citizen-activists have created an alternative, self-governed community on the remains of a former military base.

In 2002 a new government was elected in Denmark, and Christiania's future as a legitimized "social experiment" under the previous Social Democratic government was in doubt. The new government, elected on a neoliberal agenda that promised significant reform of the welfare state, began plans to close the squatter community. The stated goals are to end the flourishing illegal hash trade, privatize and develop the area. Equally important, normalization will curtail this trenchant and oppositional political voice by transforming this prime location, just minutes walk from downtown Copenhagen, from a space of alterity and opposition into a marketable place comprised of privately owned homes and businesses.

I use the example of the engagements and contentions surrounding Christiania's normalization (privatization) to demonstrate how the Danish state is attempting to minimize political dissent by privatizing this 35-year old squatter community and to examine significant changes occurring in Danish society and Scandinavian welfare state.

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Introduction

On the remains of an abandoned military base, a few minutes walk from the commercial and political center of Denmark, a village has arisen. Named Christiania after an ancient Viking monarch, this community of little more than a thousand was established thirty-five years ago as an alternative society. Amidst the 1960's student revolts and critique of modern consumer culture, Christiania was formed as a space of expression and difference. The hope was to create a new society that would allow freedom from the constricting rules of the welfare state, and offer a counter-point and challenge to the homogeneity of Danish culture. Over the years, Christiania has become a key cultural icon in Danish society, recognized as a "social experiment" by the earlier Social Democratic governments and widely known as one of the oldest, most successful and politically active squatter communities in Europe.

Christiania lies unobtrusively in the neighborhood of Christianshaven, near Copenhagen's famous walking street. The enclave comes slowly into view, obscured by the surrounding multi-story, grey apartment buildings and busy, car-filled streets. Among the dense rows of monotonous buildings is a surprisingly un-urban space; a vibrant, artistic, car-free and tree-filled village. Set-off from the busy bustle of the surrounding city streets, Christiania remains enclosed by a long colorful wall that separates it from the street. The encircling wall, a relic from the military past, is now a graffiti-filled space that provides running commentary on the current political situation in Denmark and abroad.

At one of the few entrances, a gravel path leads away from the monotonous urban side streets towards the infamous Pusher Street; a city block of densely clustered booths illegally selling cannabis products, often joints rolled with different grades of marijuana, hashish blocks on paper plates, and the necessary paraphernalia to complete the smoking experience. Christiania is often represented in the media as a throwback, a place that is out-of-touch, lost in the hopes and dreams of the 1960's.

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Once within Christiania, it is difficult to get oriented. There are no street signs and dirt pathways crisscross through the thousand-person community, and the various houses are not numbered. The noticeably formidable, large, grey military buildings dominate the community center. The functional austerity of the military barracks mixes with new age, pot-smoking, hippie style and vibrant hip-hop style graffiti covers the large buildings that once served as military housing and provided storage facilities. Over the past 35 years their functional austerity has been subverted. Some of the large buildings have been divided into communal houses, theaters, or transformed into work spaces such as the all-women smithy. A military base has been transformed into a living space. Christiania is a pastiche; hodge-podge, auto-constructed homes mix with brightly colored wagons that sit dispersed among three-story, massive grey barracks parodying the uniformity of the surrounding cityspace.

Although only one-thousand people live in Christiania, it is also one of the most visited places in Denmark. The Danish Tourist Bureau estimates that several million people come to Christiania each year to see the famous "hippie" commune; purchase cannabis products or sit, enjoy and listen to music; jog on the surrounding canal embankments; or visit the many shops, and eat at the several restaurants and bars.

"Pusher Street" is widely known as a tourist magnate, and is the most famous street in Christiania and is listed on tourist maps. The community also boasts a four-star restaurant called *Loppen* (The Flea Market). Christianitter revel in their alterity and boast that their community is a special space, a needed counterpoint to the constricting rule-based limitations of the Danish welfare state and the homogeneity of the Danish culture. The emphasis on difference, and a resistance to incorporation is symbolically marked as you leave Christiania, a wooden arch hangs over the exit, carved in wood the sign proclaims: "You are now entering the European Union."

This paper discusses the connections between urban spaces, police violence, conflict and national identity. I use the case of Christiania, an illegal squatter community in Denmark, and focus on the twin projects of urban renewal and the policing of urban spaces. Christiania is a key cultural icon and widely known as one of the oldest, most successful and politically active squatter communities. It is also the most diverse and policed spaces in Copenhagen.

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In 2002 a new government, elected on a neoliberal agenda that promised significant reform
of the welfare state, began plans to close the squatter community and to capitalize on its counter-
cultural cache. The government's plan popularly referred to as "The Normalization Plan," will
transform this prime location just minutes walk from downtown Copenhagen, from a space of
alterity and opposition into a marketable place comprised of privately owned homes and
businesses. This paper explores how control over urban space is integral to maintaining Danish
national identity that is premised on restricted conceptions of cultural citizenship and belonging.
Two questions are central to this inquiry: 1) How are social and political marginality being
constructed, negotiated and resisted in Denmark?; 2) What insights are generated when groups
defined as 'marginal' by the state challenge state authority and compete for control of urban
spaces?

The policing and privatization of Christiania is indicative of broader challenges to
maintaining an ethnically and culturally homogeneous "white" Danish nation, the reformation of
citizenship and the welfare state, and the project of creating a space of European nations.
Following Gupta and Ferguson's (1992) call for a critical, ethnographically grounded
consideration of the spatialized production of difference this paper is an ethnographically
grounded consideration of the spatialized production of difference that examines how control
over urban spaces are generative; creating contending social imaginaries and oppositional
identities that destabilize state projects seeking to eradicate opposition by controlling the urban
environment.

 "Christiania will be normalized"

In 2002, a new government was elected in Denmark, and Christiania's future as a legitimized
"social experiment" under the previous Social Democratic government was in jeopardy. The
new government, elected on a neoliberal agenda that promised significant reform of the welfare
state, began plans to "normalize" the squatter community. The goals were to end the flourishing,
illegal hash trade, privatize the space and then develop the area through state generated
privatization. This process colloquially entitled, "The Normalization Plan," will effectively
displace Christiania's many residents who cannot afford market rates, and will transform this

prime location, just minutes walk from downtown Copenhagen, from a space of alterity and opposition into a marketable neighborhood comprised of privately owned homes and businesses.

Christiania is not numbered, arranged and orderly. Order is intuited, embodied and experienced, not marked and organized through the nomenclature and disciplinary sciences of the state. There are few signs, mostly for businesses, and the houses are named not addressed. For example, I lived in Karlsvogn or the Farmer's Wagon which was also known as the home of my two roommates. My house did not have an address, and was not located on a map, but it was well-known as one of the oldest cooperative houses in Christiania. The history of the place gave it an identity. Those residing within it became associated with this history because the house was an activist house, and by association, those living within it were linked to the activists. State-generated Normalization and the reformation of the built environment are strategies of discipline that aims to silence the oppositional histories in order to replace the contentious past with the grand narratives of nation-building, military past and the 'rational' organization of the market.

According to Foucault (1975, 1977), normalization is created through a range of disciplinary apparatuses that instantiate "the subject" who is disciplined into being through the restriction of bodily movements in carefully constructed spaces of control and surveillance. The most famous example is Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon, a potent symbol of self- discipline and spatial control (Foucault 1977). Foucault argues using the example of urban plagues, that normalization functions through the creation of surveiled and orderly spaces structured on formal scientific systems of evaluation, production and investigation.

> "This enclosed, segmented space, observed at every point, in which the individuals are inserted in a fixed place, in which the slightest movements are supervised, in which all events are recorded, in which an uninterrupted work of writing links the centre and periphery, in which power is exercised without division, according to a continuous hierarchical figure, in which each individual is constantly located, examined and distributed among the living beings, the sick and the dead - all this constitutes a compact model of the disciplinary mechanism" (Foucault 1977: 195-228).

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Christa S Amouroux

The transformation of unruly and undisciplined bodies into coherent, self-regulating subjects occurs through the control of spaces and the creation of manageable populations. Discipline and control are achieved through scientific disciplines that naturalize the use of timetables, regulate embodied practices through repetitive exercises, and the creation knowledges that rank and order, placing limits on practices through pathologization and criminalization. The various apparatuses and accompanying knowledges encourage subject's complicity in their self-regulation. Foucault's normalization is about foreclosures, silences, and limitations on practices deemed excessive. Difference and the possibility of authentic politics are limited.

In Christiania, state generated Normalization is a strategy of control, but one that is overtly using the built environment to control and eradicate, and subvert. Christiania's Normalization is about privatization, the management of dissent through spatial strategies, and the use of overt force to silence oppositional voices.

Creative Copenhagen

Rescued from obsolescence or demolition by the squatters, Christiania's buildings are now considered historic treasures, a testament to Denmark's military past that is worthy of preservation. Christiania is being re-imagined. The Normalization Plan will end the social experiment, which has been labeled a failure, and transform the space into a multi-use, privately-owned area. A new Christiania is being imagined and forcefully created. The new urban space will be fully integrated into the surrounding urban area complete with paved roads, additional parking and a new bridge to reduce driving time from the center of Copenhagen. I agree with Kathleen Bubinas who asserts that, "Politically-dictated urban renewal programs restrict access to cityspace by those racial and ethnic groups deemed or publicly constructed as "dangerous" (Bubinas 2005: 157).

Since 1980 there has been an ongoing process of transforming the greater Copenhagen area into a regional economic power (Hansen 2001). Part of this process is the concept of "Creative Copenhagen," and the privatization of public lands in Sydhaven, Øresund, and Christiania. "Creative Copenhagen" is a state generated plan to repackage and develop the cityspace, and Christiania's privatization is central to making Copenhagen attractive to investment. Privatizing

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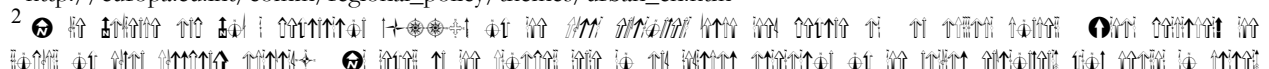Christa S Amouroux

Christiania, a prime location just minutes from downtown, would integrate this valuable area into Copenhagen, and raise property values while neutralizing its oppositional character. A similar process of repackaging the cityscape is occurring in cities throughout the Europe and the United States. Setha Low makes the point that: "Increasing privatization through public/private partnerships between municipalities and local businesses has transformed such places as Bryant Park and Union Square in the center of New York City into safe, middle-class environments maintained by strict surveillance and police control" (Low 2003: 34). Like other cities, Copenhagen is being transformed into an elite urban space that is eradicating subversive, contentious places through increased police presence and the use of surveillance technologies. Christiania's transformation from an interstitial, danger zone of alterity into a managed and marketable space is integrally interlinked to making Copenhagen fit for elite consumption and hi-tech production.

The Creative Copenhagen plan is a response to economic globalization and regional development initiative which Hansen argues, "must be seen against the background of competition between cities." Creative Copenhagen is a strategy which attempts to ensure Copenhagen's place among European Cities by marketing an image of entrepreneurial creativity in the North (Hansen & Clark 2000, 2001). In order to ensure Copenhagen's place as a city attractive to capital investment, public lands are sold to private corporations that have significantly less accountability to the electorate and when the area is developed the poor and marginal residents are displaced (Ibid). The increasing privatization of public lands suggests a strategy of close cooperation with private firms and organizations as a means of ensuring global competitiveness. The Creative Copenhagen development plan is also an extension of EU economic development policy aimed at transforming Copenhagen into a node in the European market. Regional development policy focuses on the regeneration of urban areas and is supported by EU Cohesion Funds[1].

Competing visions of the urban built environment[2] are part of transnational processes reforming cities throughout Europe. This *neoliberal imaginary* is integral to transforming

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[1] http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/themes/urban_en.htm

[2] ⊗ ⥮ ⥮⥮⥮ ⥮⥮ ⥮⥮ ⥮ ⥮⥮⥮⥮⥮ ⊢⊛⊛⊹⥮ ⥮⥮ ⥮⥮ *⥮⥮ ⥮⥮⥮⥮⥮* ⥮⥮⥮ ⥮⥮ ⥮⥮⥮⥮ ⥮ ⥮ ⥮⥮⥮ ⥮⥮⥮⥮ ⦿⥮⥮ ⥮⥮⥮⥮⥮ ⥮⥮
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"**Conflict In Copenhagen: Urban Reconfigurations, Disciplining the Unruly**" presented at the 2006 Breslauer Graduate
Student Conference: "The Right to the City and the Politics of Space" University of California, Berkeley.
Christa S Amouroux

Christiania into a simulacrum of itself so that the city of Copenhagen can be marketed, rehabilitated and fully integrated into a European city. The impacts of these processes are evident in struggles over meaning, history and place, providing insights into the political implications and the social impacts of the reconfiguration of cities.

By neoliberal imaginary I mean a mixture of neoliberalism, which describes a form of renewed economic liberalism and a political philosophy which reestablished itself in the 1970's, combined with the establishment of a emergent social imaginary (Castoriadis 1975). Neoliberal imaginary is a political philosophy which guides social, political and economic interactions. It operates as a political philosophy, presented as a transparent good and logical approach to the management of society in a democratic modern nation. Proponents reject earlier forms of government intervention into private life and the economy epitomized by the welfare state. Instead, progress and social justice are achieved through the free-market, individual choice and accountability, with the state playing a minor, but supportive role to entrepreneurial citizens by ensuring a fair playing field.

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The Normalization Plan

> "We have been too tolerant and too liberal for too long in this country. No one in Denmark
> should be beyond the law. There is a limit and Christiania is past that limit."
>
> (statement made by Adam Moller, a former special forces soldier and conservative MP[3])

In 2002, the government announced that Christiania will be "closed." This new government, elected on a neoliberal agenda promised significant reform to the welfare state promising to transform the bureaucracy intensive structure into a trimmed down, efficient "minimal" welfare state.

I began my research during the summer of 2003 and Christiania was, once again, in the political limelight. "Normalization" had become a national buzzword and provided the government with certain rhetorical strategies to publicly defend and legitimize their plan to privatize the area. The Normalization Plan, bureaucratic nomenclature for a complex set of political and cultural processes, was taken-up by the media and transformed into a catch-all phrase. Normalization encapsulated state authority. By contrast, the state argued Normalization was a transparent, lawful process that would simply make things more equitable by integrating and legalizing the Christiania area. Most of all, Normalization came to mean the ending of "special treatment" for Christianitter. The state argued communal ownership and control over public space provided an unfair advantage, one that was not available the rest of the law abiding Danes. In Christiania, The Normalization Plan signaled "the death of Christiania's spirit;" the replacement of autonomy by state bureaucracy and impersonal laws.

The Normalization Plan entails several key changes to the legal, spatial and economic management of the Christiania Area. The first step of normalization was to transform Christiania from a quasi-legal into an illegal space. The initial phase terminated the legal rights of residence and management that had been afforded the Christianitter in 1986.

On June 4, 2004 the government unanimously approved the new law (L205, also referred to as "The Law to End the Law on the Christiania Area") that ended the scarce legal protections afforded residents of Christiania. The goal was to remove any legal protection offered under the

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[3] Source The Observer Sunday December 21, 2003
http://observer.guardian.co.uk/international/story/0,6903,1111171,00.html

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"Christiania Law," which provided the scant legal protections offered by the social democratic government in 1989. Despite the popular and political support Christiania enjoyed as a space of cultural experimentation and freedom L205 was passed unanimously by the Danish Parliament (the Folketing). With the new legal framework in position, the government began implementing a series of changes that would end Christiania's self-government, privatize the communally held properties, and the government argued, integrate the community fully into the market economy thus providing all Danish citizens access to the space through the implementation of neoliberal principles of freedom of choice and the "fair" mechanisms of value and competition operating in a free market. Communally owned houses would be privatized, placed on the market, and sold at fair market value. Ideally all citizens would have the opportunity and right to purchase into the community, assuming they have the resources.

According to the government, the clear and fair rules of the market would replace Christiania's labyrinthine and socially opaque system. Under the old system, Christianitter decide by vote who lives in their community. As houses become available, a social network of would-be residents is alerted through their contacts in the community. New residents are often chosen based on their commitment to Christiania and their qualities as "good neighbors." Commitment takes the form of providing support, which often translates into free labor; working for the good of the community in a way that is perceived as selfless. It is extremely difficult to get a place to live, even on a temporary basis as I found out during my fieldwork. As one of my contacts said, "You must have very good connections to get a place in Christiania." The government is very critical of the insularity and opaqueness of the Christiania's systems of decision-making.

In one respect, the decision-making process based on an Arendtian ideal of dialogue, deliberation and consensus is being heavily critiqued by the state, despite the stated desire to implement similar principles such as dialogue, open communication and transparency using the internet. Christianitter often remark that the "state does not know what to do with us. We agree be consensus and that takes a long time." Decision-making through deliberation by involved citizens is a hallmark of liberal democracy. Christianitter have forestalled state action through their de-centralized structure, and used it to legitimize and explain their uniqueness and autonomy. However, rather than supporting the developing democratic form, the neoliberal

government has responded by labeling their consensus democracy a failure. Rather than aiding this alternative political and social formation, the state intends to put into place rules that the state argues are fair, legal and intelligible.

The assumption is that market rules ensure "open" access to this valuable property. Whereas the old system screened new residents and admitted them through a voting system, which located control within the community, the market removes individual and communal levels of agency and responsibility. Regardless of the type of rule structure in place, entrance to the community will still be regulated. Certain people, those who can afford to pay market rates, will be allowed to live in the community. The enclave community, with its convoluted rules of residence and decision-making would be replaced by an open, transparent, and so the neoliberal rhetoric goes, fair system that allowed all citizens the possibility of living in this highly prized community. Of course, the neoliberal imaginary is premised on the illusion of obtaining economic equality through the market and refuses to acknowledge that Christiania is, first and foremost, a creation of the poor who transformed the vacated space of the Danish military past into a thriving community. Christiania was created in response to the lack of affordable housing, which still plagues Copenhagen today. It seems now these entrepreneurs are victims of their own success, having transformed the bare utilitarian space into a lush living space.

The second step of The Normalization Plan was to end the flourishing illegal hash trade. The police arrested approximately seventy people associated with the drug trade, confiscating all of the structures and paraphernalia related to the sale of cannabis products. An early morning raid in March 2004 rousted Christiania's Pushers from their beds, and as the police collected the sleepy hash sellers, they also systematically removed all traces of the illegal trade from Pusher Street. The few remaining booths, heaters, benches and paraphernalia were confiscated and trucked away to be used as evidence.

Once a formidable and well visited space where the law was openly challenged through daily commercial and informal exchanges, Pusher Street is now occupied by a few remaining who have claimed the street as theirs, protecting it from incursions from outside sellers seeking to make a profit in this (in)famous space. Pusher Street was now a ghost of itself, reduced to an image on tourist maps.

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Student Conference: "The Right to the City and the Politics of Space" University of California, Berkeley.
Christa S Amouroux

No Hash Today- The Closure of Pusher Street

3/17/04- Field Notes

The police are back. As I returned from the library, I witnessed a woman being taken roughly into custody by two police officers dressed in riot gear. There are police on Pusher Street, talking together in groups of 10-15. The wear bright, blue helmets with shields raised. The presence of the police is stifling, the street is blocked, and it takes intentionality and a sense of purpose to walk the small street that is so very quiet. Ironically, the police make it possible for me to take pictures and video record, an impossible task when Pushers ran the space. Taking pictures was a potentially dangerous affair, unsuspecting tourists have had their cameras ripped from their necks and smashed. Large graffiti of a camera with a large, red stripe through it is meant to dissuade photography. Pushers do not like their pictures taken.

The large brightly painted boulders at the entrance and exit to Pusher Street have been removed so that the police vans can move in an out more freely. Soon after the police leave for the evening, and they always leave at night, the boulders will be put back, and the street will likely erupt into drunken laughter and loud music. However, the bustling, energetic and somewhat oppressive feel of Pusher Street is vacant. The wooden booths, where hash was sold from paper plates displayed on tables, have been torn down. All the Pushers were arrested yesterday morning before dawn, taken from their beds. Around 74 people have been taken into custody by the police. So, there will be only a few clandestine exchanges tonight.

In the past, before the massive raid brought hundreds of police to Christiania in the early hours of the morning, Pusher Street was the commercial and social center of Christiania. Official estimates put the total of annual visitors from 1-3 million, visitors who come to look, buy and experience. Before today, raids were common but the Pushers hid their wares, waited and hoped the police would leave quickly. Then it was back to the business of selling hash and marijuana to Christiania's many visitors. No longer.

Within Christiania the closure of Pusher Street is fraught with tension. For some, Pusher Street was sapping the community of its vitality and legitimacy, reducing Christiania to a parody

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Student Conference: "The Right to the City and the Politics of Space" University of California, Berkeley.
Christa S Amouroux

of itself.   From this point of view, Christiania became synonymous with Pusher Street, drugs, illegality and marginality.   They perceived the community as plagued by the affects of the professionalization of the hash trade such as intensification of policing, raids, criminality, violence and the commercialization of the community. The anti-consumption and anti-capitalist ideology that formed the basis of Christiania's development as an alternative society was openly mocked by the intensely guarded space of Pusher Street where millions of Danish Kroner were made every year, and where grim faced Pushers were constantly on the look-out for undercover cops, and suspecting a raid at anytime. Large dogs trained to flee with packs full of hash sat around the pusher stalls, attacking people that were ignorant enough to run through the street.

For others who support the Pushers, their incarceration signals the seriousness of the situation that drains the community of a network of support and resources the Pushers command. Also, the central revenue generating space in the community is now closed and this impacts all the businesses in Christiania and those who earn a living there. Pusher Street may have been the locus of the government's ire, but many deemed this an excuse. Rather than legalizing cannabis, the new government sought to criminalize Christiania through its policing of Pusher Street.

In sum, through the closure of Pusher Street and the arrest of the pushers the government accomplished several important objectives: to end the centralized and open hash trade in Copenhagen, forcing dealers into other locations and destabilizing the cohesiveness the network; dividing the community between those who support the dealers and those against them; and most importantly, crippling the local economy, which translates into reducing the number of visitors and thereby the potential number of Christiania's supporters as the government takes the next steps of privatization and integration into Copenhagen.

The third and arguably final phase of The Normalization Plan entails a re-organization and commodification of the space[4]. The first step of the third phase is the removal of auto-constructed structures built by Christianitter over the past thirty-five years; the second step is modernization of the housing; the third step is restoring the historic buildings; the fourth step is the creation of a historic park area; and the final step is the transformation of the communally held property into private residences and the erection of modern living space.

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[4] It is interesting to note that Christiania is a trademarked community that has very successfully marketed itself at an alternative community complete with an internet butik, webpage's, logo and flag. (see http://www.canetbutik.dk/).

"**Conflict In Copenhagen: Urban Reconfigurations, Disciplining the Unruly**" presented at the 2006 Breslauer Graduate
Student Conference: "The Right to the City and the Politics of Space" University of California, Berkeley.
Christa S Amouroux

Residences and businesses designated as illegal, unsafe or unsanitary will be removed in order to modernize and, as the rhetoric goes, "open up the area." The center of the community, known as Fabrikken (The Factory), is the prime location for housing development. Whereas the areas near the water that are located on the 16th century military fortifications and embankments built by Christian IV will be returned to their "original" state. In order to accomplish this twenty-five self-built houses on the embankments, often considered to be architecturally unique and impressive artistic expressions, will be demolished. All vegetation, including trees will be removed in order to create a public park area that celebrates Denmark's military past. The squat will be divided into three sections – residential, business and park. The area will be developed and privatized, houses demolished and the vast majority of residents displaced.

When Christiania was established in the 1970's there was high unemployment, a lack of affordable and modern housing, and a large proportion of highly educated but unemployed youth. The closure of the military barracks, centrally located to downtown Copenhagen, signaled the retreat of the military from the area and the possibility of transforming acres of open space into a community. This task was taken on by Christianitter who have, by their own volition and with limited economic support, provided a space for unemployed youth, social drop-outs and those who did not fit neatly into Danish society. The issue of affordable housing remains a critical one in 2006 as the election of Ritt Bjeargaard as Copenhagen's major on the platform of building 5000 new homes in five years attests.

The three phases of Normalization are part of broader developments occurring in Copenhagen. Christiania's privatization and cleaning-up, the removal and incarceration of the pushers, and the closure of one of Copenhagen's most visited and notorious tourist sites are integral to reforming the Danish capital into an important city in the European market, and I argue, representative of a neoliberal imaginary that is reforming the entire welfare state in Denmark. The result of Normalization is the commodification of this oppositional space, which is in line with the neoliberalist agenda of the Danish government. The strategy is to cleaning- up Christiania by removing the Pushers, privatize the houses and place them on the market. Thus guaranteeing Christiania is a marketable, manageable, and integrated part of the urban cityscape. Christiania is becoming a pale vision of itself, as the contentious, disorderly and critical community is gradually policed into silence and forcibly integrated.

"**Conflict In Copenhagen: Urban Reconfigurations, Disciplining the Unruly**" presented at the 2006 Breslauer Graduate
Student Conference: "The Right to the City and the Politics of Space" University of California, Berkeley.
Christa S Amouroux

If successful, The Normalization Plan will end 35 years of oppositional practices, incarcerate or relocate those who oppose it, and demolish the auto-constructed homes and businesses. The Danish state is exerting a specific form of control by rehabilitating the built environment rather than the citizens. Socio-spatial management is a state strategy that controls unruly populations through the reformation of the built environment.

Critical Intersections: Space, Place and Identity

The squat of a closed military fortification, some thirty-five years ago, and the process of creating an intentional community has shaped the identities of Christianitter. To be a Christianit is to stand in opposition to the state by living in a space that was created to challenge the foundations of Danish culture and society. Per Lovetand, a "founder" and resident described why people were attracted to the 'dream' of Christiania:

> What characterizes people in Christiania is a common wish to be able to make one's own decisions, to be able to do one's own thing. In their former lives this wish has been frustrated to a greater or smaller degree. Now they see in Christiania a possibility of realizing themselves, even though this involves an insecure and primitive way of life. There is the foundation on which a lot of widely different people have got together by chance to form a community. There are young people, there are foreigners, and there are minority groups and all kinds of drifters. There are active and passive, peaceful and violent, idealists and the saved all mixed up together. They are criminals and they are 'social losers,' the maladjusted and the unadjustable."(Lovetand 1980).

Christiania was formed and maintained by its relationship with the state and the Danish national community. In general terms, the state apparatus was perceived of as essentially repressive, serving only to confound the Christanitter's ability to create an alternative community. Therefore, Christianitter were most likely to define themselves in terms of what they are not. A collective sense of separateness resulted from the process of boundary creation between Christiania and the state.

Dolores Hayden uses and extends Lefebvre's argument to argue that space is socially produced, historically meaningful and productive of identities. Hayden argues in "The Power of

Place" for the recapturing the "bitter memories" of the past that are inscribed in the built environment, and which reflect the complex and painful experiences of marginalized communities (Hayden 1995). Some memories, as Hayden makes clear in her discussion of the American urban landscape and the politics of architectural perseveration, are allowed to remain while others are erased, submerged or pathologized. Hayden asks us to consider whose past is preserved and why. In other words, who has a right to the city? Hayden argues that erasures of unruly presences sanitize the urban form of its political contentiousness, and is an attempt to silence in order to render spaces homogenously safe and exclusive. I would add spaces are productive and generative of identities, and that the socio-spatial management of spaces is a strategy that attempts to silence, erasing certain histories while aggrandizing others. Hayden reminds us that history, identity and space are inexorably interlinked and the control of space is also a means of controlling the past upon which the present is built:

> "The politics of identity – however they may be defined around gender, race or neighborhood- are an inescapable and important aspect of dealing with the urban built environment, from the perspectives of public history, urban preservation, and urban design" (Hayden 1997: 7).

By knocking a hole in a fence encircling a vacated military base, Christianitter have transformed a state controlled space to contested, social space. Hilda Kuper's work (1972) on *social space* is a useful way to understand why Christiania is such an important and complicated site of meaning production, a space that challenges and destabilizes taken-for-granted notions. Kruper's idea of social space builds on a rich but diverse anthropological tradition that has theorized the social and political importance of spatial dimensions of culture (Durkheim 1915; Durkheim & Mauss 1903; Evans-Pritchard 1940; Levi-Strauss 1963; Malinowski 1944; Marcel Mauss 1990). Kuper defines social space as:

> "a site can be defined as a particular piece of social space, a place socially and ideologically demarcated and separated from other places. As such it becomes a symbol within the total and complex system of communication in the total social universe. Social

relations are articulated through particular sites, associated with different messages and ranges of communication…The importance of these sites is not only their manifest and distinctive appearance, but their qualifying and latent meaning" (Kuper 1972 cited in Low & Lawrence 2005: 258).

The intersections of contestation, space and politics provide insights into the complex issues of the production of nation and identity, and how tactics of exclusion and marginality are spatialized. Should Christiania be allowed to remain a self-governing, culturally significant symbol of difference? Is the state's opposition to Christiania indicative of broader changes to the functioning and ideological basis of the Danish welfare state?

Imbricated within the discussion of Christiania's Normalization are a complex set of issues facing modern welfare and democratic states as citizens and government officials negotiate various understandings and interpretations of economic globalization and neoliberalism. These issues include the right to city, inclusion in the Danish polity and democratic imaginary. Some urban theorists argue that state power is evident in the built environment and particularly in cities (cf Amin & Thrift 2002; Caldeira 2000; Davis 1989). Among other things, the city is a policed space that fosters social exclusion supported by the policies and decision-making processes of local and state authorities. As Amin & Thrift (2002) argue in *Cities: Reimagining the Urban,* "Cities are rarely the site of disinterested practices. They are full of subtle, and not-so subtle, acts of brutality…The city is much as means of shutting down possibility as it is a means, through the openness of some (and only some) encounters, of opening it up. We come, in other words, to the 'hard' issues of power, domination and oppression- and to the role of cities in defining who or what is normal, and who or what is abnormal, who or what is appropriate and who or what is inconceivable" (Amin & Thrift 2002: 105).

In a highly developed democratic welfare state such as Denmark, modes of control, coercion and Normalization take on forms that are packaged as "acceptable" policies that do not openly contradict notions of fairness. The government is clearly aware of the importance of democratic procedure, dialogue and transparency evidenced by the creation of several committees and the publication of documents on the internet. However, alternative means – privatization and legal instruments- are being used undermine dissent and manage opposition in the city.

The Normalization Plan is a socio-spatial management strategy that will systematically displace, through privatization and demolition of housing. This dissenting population will be removed and relocated, sanitizing the city and dispersing a cohesive oppositional voice. Christianitter will be displaced and replaced with mainstream Danish citizens living in a homogenous urban space suitable for consumption that preserves Danish military past.

The Normalization Plan signals broader transformations in the Danish welfare state and civil society. I argue that contestations over urban spaces such as Christiania are framed by discourses of exclusion and inclusion, citizen rights and obligations, and are spatial and historical moments of conflict that allow for a broader understanding of changes occurring in Denmark.

Emergent Racializations

Raced, spaced and gendered exclusions are occurring within Denmark and are tied to conceptions of European belonging, whiteness and the territoriality of the nation-state. Limiting the right to the city, political voice and social acceptance are part of emergent racializations and spatial incarcerations of others in Denmark, and the preservation of whiteness through the protection of Danish cultural practices.

In Denmark, there is a growing reaction to racialized others, those bodies marked as other, but more importantly superfluous to the nation-state. The racialized other is represented as a dangerous and illegal interloper. Gender and race collide in the symbol of the Muslim terrorist, a set of conflations that are symbolized by the fictive character invoked though anti-immigrant sentiments, which are represented by the essentialized caricature "Ali," who is black, male, Muslim and definitively not Danish. "Ali" is other, an imaginary foe whose presence signifies the marginalized and racialized space of the other. Ali is representative, much like Christiania which is a multi-racial and inclusive space, a counter-modernity that is dangerous and oppositional. According to this racial-spatial narrative, immigrants live in parallel, but not overlapping spaces, marked by total disconnection from Danish culture, politics and separate from civil society. In the media Christiania and immigrants are represented as violent, backward, and regressive.

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Christa S Amouroux

The Good Society

The Social Democrat's tentative endorsement of Christiania over the past 30 years and the general public support must be placed in a broader context that reflects ideas about the nature of the "good society" and the import role of social welfare. State tolerance towards Christiania can be linked to Denmark's political development and modernization, which has been described as an "Enlightenment without a revolution," a nation created with a mythical heroic peasant, who is the embodiment of the values of education, freedom, and equality (Sørensen & Stråth 1997). The formation of a national peasant identity took political form in social democracy; a continuation and transformation of the ideals manifest in Lutheranism, parochial political culture, popular movements and the ideological edifice of freedom and equality (Sørensen & Stråth 1997). I argue that Christiania's closure signals broader changes occurring to the ideological basis and form of Danish social democracy, changed that are currently being implemented by the conservative *Venstre* party led by Anders Fog Rasmussen.

In response, Christiania and its supporters drew on notions of the cultural importance of their community as a space of difference in a country that is having significant issues with managing difference in the form of its religious and ethnic others evidenced by the controversy and strong opposition to the publication in October 2005 to a series of twelve cartoons caricaturing the prophet Muhammad. For many this controversy has less to do with freedom of the press and expression than it does with increasing xenophobia and emergent radicalizations occurring in Denmark and Scandinavia (see Pred 2000; Rytkonen forthcoming).

The interactions between the community, the state and civil society are a means of understanding these wider issues. A spatial approach, which is attentive to discordant and competing versions also demonstrates how seemingly taken-for-granted notions and commonplace practices are contested, and illuminates how dynamics of power are uneven and fraught with tension. As Low and Lawrence argue, "Urban environments provide frequent opportunities for spatial contests because of their commonplace structures and differentiated social entities that collide and compete for control over material and symbolic resources" (2005: 19). The "spatial contests" referred to by Low & Lawrence-Zuniga are one of the main foci of this paper, but these conflicts are vital to the spatial production of oppositional identities, and the fortification of the Danish nation-state.

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In many ways Christiania is a victim of its own successes. The barren military space has been transformed into a lush, green living space surrounded by canals and devoid of traffic because no cars are allowed in Christiania. The area is known for its beautiful, diverse and eclectic vernacular architecture that sets it off from the rest of Copenhagen. The "Christiania aesthetic" has transformed the military space into a living space for the poor, different, unruly and disenfranchised.

Christianitter also appealed to social values of protecting the weakest in society. These two notions have shaped the current debate on Christiania's future. Christiania presented itself as a "social space" which was markedly different from the rest of Danish society, a space that was built on diversity, inclusion and acceptance of difference; a counter-point to the perceived conformity and homogeneity of Danish society. Christiania is now touted as one of Denmark's most popular tourist attractions, and the Danish National Museum contemporary history exhibit forefronts a hash booth taken from Pusher Street before its violent closure; relic of a tolerant past.

Conclusion

Once considered a slum, Christiania is now viewed as some of the most valuable real estate in Copenhagen, as well as a monument to Danish progressive values and a symbol of the abuses social tolerance can engender. Christiania's engagement in alternative practices such as self-government through direct democracy, operating Europe's largest open air cannabis market, and squatting a former military base fundamentally challenges accepted notions of citizenship, democratic process, legality, social inclusion and the uses of public goods such as land. It is these alternative practices and contestations that the state's Normalization effort seeks to eradicate.

This paper argues that Normalization is an attempt to discipline a politicized population through the management of place. The creation of an imaginary urban space and Normalization together represent the instantiation of a neoliberal imaginary that is setting limits on democratic participation, and negatively impacting social citizenship rights, particularly those of marginalized and politically contentious groups. This strategy translates into the reconfiguration and management of contentious urban spaces such as Christiania, and this transformation is

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framed by a neoliberal imaginary which places limits on transgressive urban populations. The state's project is to re-create the urban space replacing Christiania's turbulent past with a spatially and politically neutralized version.

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