



A Story of Connections

*An intergenerational community in
The Faroe Islands based on
shared living*

Interviews



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There is a great need to rethink the Faroese housing market¹

1 Dahl 2018, 10th December

In Tórshavn municipality there is a need for:

240 apartments before 2022
60 dorm- or youth apartments before 2022
400 additional apartments before 2030
200 dorm- or youth apartments before 2030¹

1 Dahl 2018, 10th December

There is a need for:

Rental apartments
Condominiums
Cooperative housing¹

1 Dahl 2018, 10th December

After the economic crisis in 2008 Faroese municipalities were desperate to get Faroese people to move back to The Faroe Islands, but it quickly turned out that there **was not enough adequate housing for the people that choose to move back**¹.

1 Dahl 2018, 10th December

“The elderly need more housing options. The options should not only be between a large villa or a nursing home, however today there are very few options between the two” - Annika Olsen, mayor in Tórshavn¹

1 Viderø, Wardum, Strøm, Frýdal, Fosaa, Bennicke, Reistrup, Simonsen, 2018: 2

38% of the Faroese population live in Tórshavn. Almost 70% of new housing is built in the capital.¹

The demand for rental apartments has never been higher¹

1 Dahl 2018, 16th November

1 Joensen 2019, 7th March.

*“The municipality should not get authorisation to build apartments. Private companies should build apartments, not the public sector”
- Annika Olsen, mayor in Tórshavn¹*

1 Bertholdsen 2018, 5th November

In Tórshavn municipality there are approximately:

72% villas

17% semi detached and terrace houses

7 % condominiums

3 % student accomodation

1 % rental housing¹

1 Dahl 2018, 10th December. The 1% rental housing does not cover private lettings

The Faroese housing market is 20-30 years behind with regard to type and quantity of housing.¹

1 Dahl 2018, 16th November

**1.1 Resume of interview with Jóhan Christiansen,
Mayor in Eystur municipality.
30th January 2019**

Direct quotes are from interviewee and they are in citations. The interview was in Faroese and all quotes have been translated by Chanette J. Hansen.

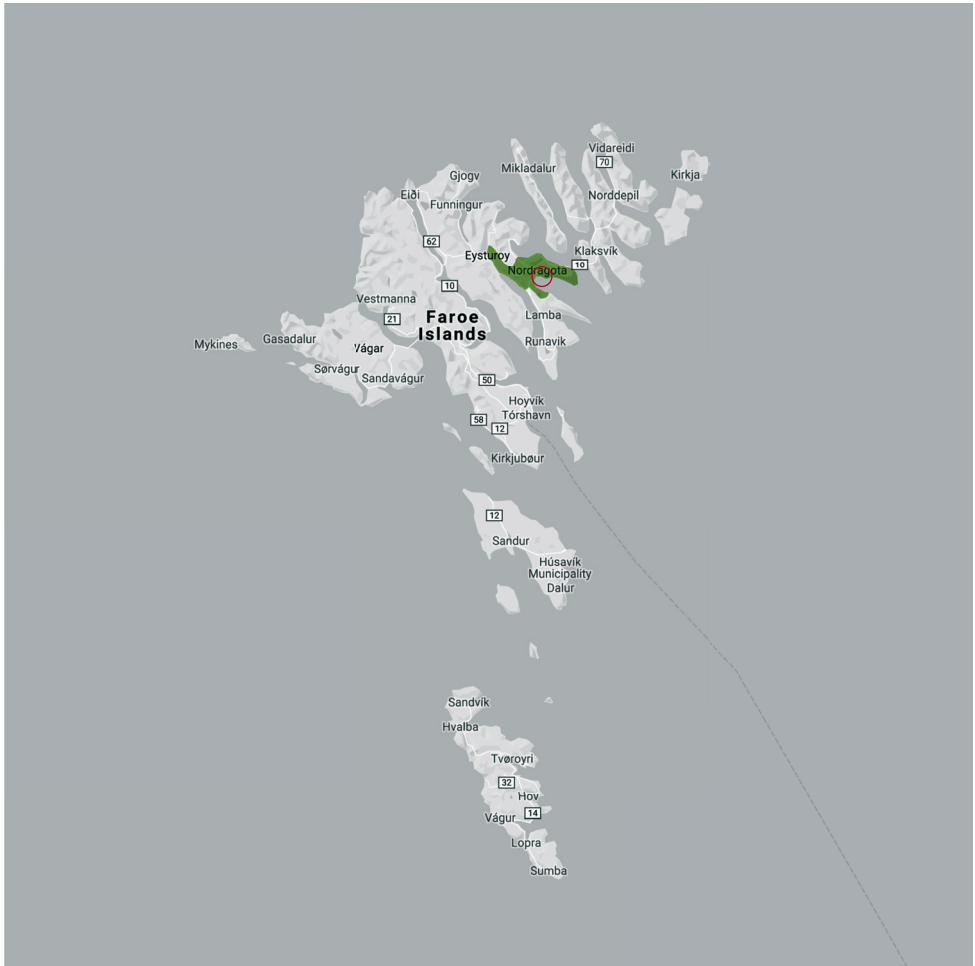
The Faroese housing market

During the last few years there has been a big increase in the population. At the same time there is a lack of housing which increases the prices for selling and buying property.

There are various undergoing housing projects, but they are mainly in the capital, Tórshavn. This is due to the big demand for housing in the capital and because housing is worth more in Tórshavn. Therefore it is more profitable to build and rent out in the capital. The municipality does not have authorisation to build apartments, apart from nursing homes. It may help to build more nursing homes, as this would release some houses. However, it is mainly young people that are in need of housing. Many of them are returning from studying abroad and therefore they do not have a lot of capital to buy a house. A lot of people that have returned to The Faroe Islands move in with their parents. For many this is the only other option apart from buying a house.

“It is the people that return from abroad and move to The Faroe Islands that have the greatest need to find a place to live.”¹

1 Original quote in Faroese: “Tað er tey, sum koma aftur úr útlandinum og sum flyta til, sum hava størst tørv á at fáa eitt stað at búgva.”



The green colour marks Eystur municipality and the ring marks the site

Should the municipality or private companies build apartments?

The municipality is financially stable and safe and therefore Jóhan thinks that the municipality should build apartments in order to decrease the demand for housing. Eystur municipality would like more people to move to their municipality because it will secure income for the future.

“I think that a large proportion of the Faroese people in Tórshavn and outside the capital would like for private companies to build housing. But we can confirm that this is not happening and therefore somebody else has to do it.”²

The motive for private companies to build apartments is to gain as high a profit as possible. The municipality’s motive to build is to get more citizens and in this way to gain income from taxes, which is gained over a longer period of time.

“If people’s (people that have been studying abroad) only option is to move back in with family upon returning, then this is a hindrance for the population growth.”³

2 Original quote in Faroese: “Eg haldi, at ein øgiliga stórir partur av Føroya fólki bæði í Havn og uttanfyri Havnina høvdu ynskt, at tað eru privat sum byggja. Men man staðfestur, at tað hendur ikki. So má onkran annar gera tað.”

3 Original quote in Faroese: “Um tey, sum hava lisið uttanlanda, bara kunnu flyta heim til foreldrini, so er tað er forðing fyri fólkaøkstinum.”

Fewer possibilities to build outside the capital

Jóhan talked about how the financial sector discriminates a lot between the capital Tórshavn and the other villages, because they do not require as much self-financing to build a house in Tórshavn as they do if a person wishes to build a house in a smaller village. For example a person returning from studying abroad, with an education and a start salary of 30,000 Danish kroner per month may not be able to obtain a loan for a house outside the capital, but they are eligible to get a loan for a house in Tórshavn.

As it is now most people do not have the opportunity to rent for a period of time, while saving money in order to build a house where they wish to live. A house in Tórshavn will have more worth after it is built. It is the opposite for houses built outside the capital. This has become a negative spiral causing the banks to increase the prices for housing.

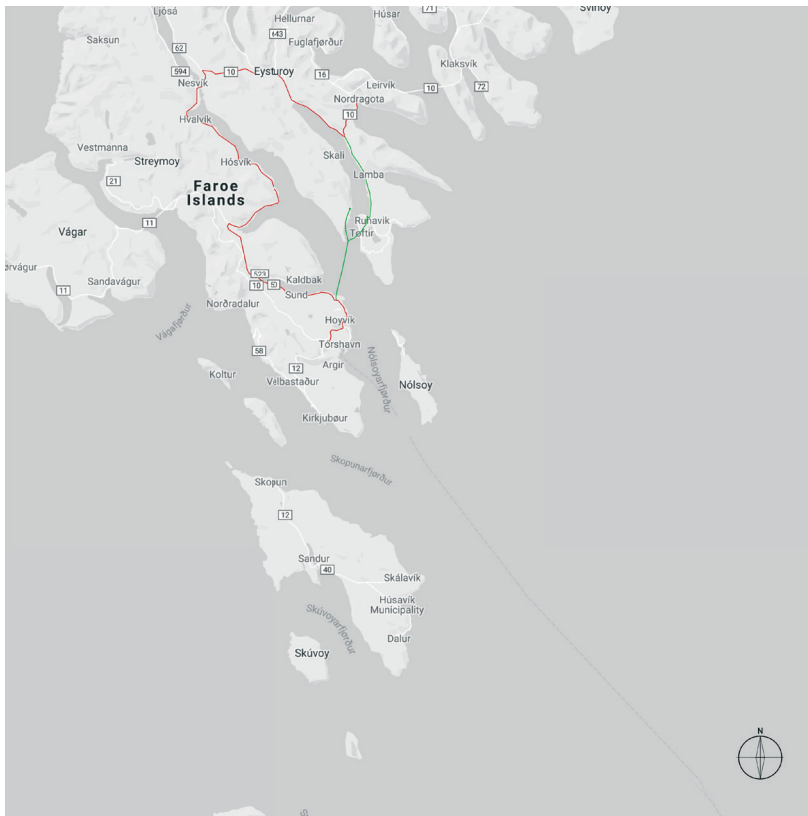
Eystur municipality is the fourth largest municipality in The Faroe Islands and have with great difficulty been able to build five apartments in Leirvík (a village in the north), since they started focusing on building apartments in 2007. They have been trying for a long time to get authorisation to build apartments.

“As it is so difficult to obtain permission to build apartments then the energy is not there to continue to keep fighting.”⁴

⁴ Original quote: “Tað hevur man ikki orku til at blíva við at berjast og stríðast.”

The new tunnel (Eysturoyartunnillin)

A new sub-sea tunnel is currently being made which will shorten the time it takes for people in the villages in the north-east to drive to Tórshavn. The tunnel is scheduled to be done in 2020. Jóhan thinks that the new tunnel will increase the demand for housing outside of Tórshavn and there are already not enough apartments. The new tunnel will make this problem worse. Bústaðir,



The red line marks the current route to Tórshavn. The green marks the new route to Tórshavn, when the new subsea tunnel is finished

the Faroese housing association, mainly builds in the capital and they cannot meet the housing demand. Jóhan does not think that they should have the full responsibility to do so either.

The obstacles in the way of building more housing

The biggest hindrance for private companies to build, own and rent out apartments is the lack of financing. Private companies that are interested in building housing are only able to obtain loans for 15 years.

“There are several in Eystur municipality that would like to build apartments, but they are informed by the financial sector, that because they are building for profit, they can only obtain a loan for 15 years.⁵”

This increases the cost of renting so much, that people cannot afford this type of housing and therefore they do not get built. In comparison when private people build or buy a house, they are usually able to obtain a loan that they can spend 25, 30 or maybe even 40 years paying back. The housing that Bústaðir builds needs to be paid back within 25 years.

We talked about how the capital, like many other capitals, is a place that most people wish to live in and because of this, the rent is also higher than in other villages. Therefore some apartments are built here and there is a better chance of being able to get the investment back.

5 Original quote in Faroese: “Vit hava fleiri í okkara kommunu, sum ynskja at byggja íbúðir, men tey fáa at vita beinavegin frá figgjarstovninum, at tað er vinnulig bygging, og so skal tað betalast aftur innanfyri 15 ár.”

“This is a way of discriminating and taking away the options to live outside of the capital and it is done deliberately to keep the prices high in Tórshavn.⁶”

The banks finance houses and apartments in Tórshavn for private people with the aim of making a profit, much more now than they did for 10 years ago. 10 years ago, the bank calculated how many years it would take for the buyer to pay the loan back. Now the bank calculates how much the house can be sold for and approve that people only pay rent and don't pay back on the instalments, so long as the house maintains its value. This is not possible outside the capital.

The same thing is happening in The Faroe Islands now which happened in America during the housing crisis. The cost of housing has increased greatly and people are willing to borrow a lot of money in order to live in the capital and they have no chance of ever paying back their mortgage. If the interest increases 1-2% then this will have big negative consequences. Everything will collapse and The Faroe Islands will end up with a financial crisis similar to what happened in America. In America the banks invested beyond their means in expensive projects and when people were not able to pay their mortgage back, then the financial sector collapsed.

“What we see happening is really dangerous.⁷”

6 Original quote in Faroese: “Soleiðis diskriminerar man eisini og tekur móguleikar frá at vera uttanfyri Tórshavn. Man ger tað eisini nokkso bevíst, fyri at halda prísinum í Tórshavn uppi.”

7 Original quote in Faroese: “Tað sum hendur í dag er rættuliga farligt.”

The difference between Denmark and The Faroe Islands

We talked about that there is an increase of elderly people in The Faroe Islands and about building senior cohousing communities in The Faroe Islands. There is a difference between the Danish housing mentality and the Faroese housing mentality. Most people in Denmark have tried to live in dorms and other types of shared housing. Not as many people in The Faroe Islands have done so.

Jóhan thinks that it is easier for people in Denmark to relate to the thought of moving into a senior cohousing community, because rental housing is more common in Denmark and it is something Danes have a lot of experience with. In Denmark a lot of people start with living in a dorm, then a condominium, then maybe rental housing, then senior housing and then a nursing home. Cohousing is also more common in Denmark. In the Faroe Islands a young person or couple may start by living in an apartment in the basement of their parent's house. Later they move to a house and then maybe to a nursing homes. Typically a person starts and ends with a house: They live in the basement of a house, then they buy their own house and many live in their house until they die. It is a different way of living compared to in Denmark.

It is still a bit difficult for elderly to move out of their own house and into something that they have to rent. Jóhan said, that they can see that this is changing quite rapidly now, but there is still a mental hindrance. The reason for this is that the elderly are used to living in a house they own and are not familiar with rental housing.

A lot of the young Faroese people that move back to The Faroe Islands have tried to live in a dorm and they take these experiences back with them. Because of this, there are changes being made and housing in The Faroe Islands is changing, but the development has maybe not come so far yet as it is in Denmark.

Several generations under one roof

In Eystur municipality they do not like to divide housing into groups for specific people e.g. student housing, housing only for elderly, housing for disabled etc.. They do not think that they should live separately and be divided based on their age, background or abilities.

“We think it is healthier if everyone lives side by side, both young and old, if this is what people want.”⁸

“The Faroese culture is that we all live together in some form. All types of people are in our neighbourhood, both young and old. It is this concept that we (Eystur municipality) are trying to implement, but we cannot obtain authorisation to do so.”⁹

For this reason, Eystur municipality has not invested in senior housing, because it is only for the elderly.

8 Original quote in Faroese: “Vit halda at tað er sunnari, at øll kunnu búgva síð um síð, ung sum gomul, um man ynskir tað.”

9 Original quote in Faroese: “Tað feroyska er at vit búgva øll saman, so ella so. Øll eru í okkara grannalag, eisini yngri og eldri. Tað er tann tankan sum vi hava prøvað at realisera, men vit fáa ikki heimildir til at gera tað.”

Why cooperative housing is better than rental housing

Cooperative housing is not common in The Faroe Islands. In 2010 Eystur municipality established a cooperative housing association together with Bústaðir (The Faroese housing association) and the plan was to start building cooperative housing. However the law was changed so that it was no longer profitable for Bústaðir to invest in cooperative housing and it became more profitable for them to invest in rental housing.

Experiences in Denmark have shown that unless there are clear regulations regarding cooperative housing and how much they may increase in worth each year, then some people may try to abuse the cooperative idea. The idea with cooperative housing is that you pay a relatively small deposit and pay rent and then when you sell it, then you will get your deposit back. The fear is that without regulation people will start to sell their part for a profit and therefore destroy the cooperative idea.

“Cooperative housing would be more ideal for Faroese people, especially the elderly, than rental housing. The elderly have difficulties letting go of the house they own and moving to something they rent.”¹⁰

Jóhan thinks, that the elderly will feel more secure if they own a part of the house like people living in cooperative housing do. He thinks that the elderly would be happier for cooperative housing than rental housing. He has talked with a lot of people in his municipality about this and this is where he has his information from. There is not a tradition for rental housing in The Faroe Islands.

It has become so expensive to build in The Faroe Islands that if you sell your house and buy an apartment, the price will be the same for the apartment as the selling price of your house. This may stop people from moving from their house and into a smaller apartment.

10 Original quote in Faroese: “Lutaþbúðir hevði passa feroyingum, og serliga teimum eldri betri enn leiguþbúðir. Tey eldri hava eitt sindur truppult við at sleppa sínum húsum, sum tey eiga og fara at leiga okkurt.”

The people that Jóhan has talked to do not feel that it is safe to sell their house and move into rental housing. The reason for this may be that most of the rental apartments in The Faroe Islands are in the basement of private houses and are rented out without the safety of a rental contract. Without a rental contract the person renting risks having to move out on a short notice.

This may be due to that one of the children is returning from studies abroad. There is no rental law in The Faroe Islands and there is no guarantee that a person will be able to rent privately for a long period of time. Jóhan thinks, that this is why the elderly are more sceptical about rental housing compared to the younger generation.

How big should the apartment be?

Eystur municipality has done some research about what Faroese people prefer in their house and their research concludes that they prefer a 2 room apartment more than a one room apartment. For many it is important to have an extra room for visitors or for storage.

Quarries in The Faroe Islands

In the 80s there was a lot of road construction and so the quarries were necessary.

“Quarries are a big problem in all municipalities today. In the 80s people were eager to make quarries. They look awful; terrible scars in nature.”¹¹

11 Original quote in Faroese: “Tað er eitt stórt problem hjá øllum kommunun í dag. Man var so yvrig eftir at gera grót-brot í 80inum. Tað sær bara heilt forfærðeligt út; øgilig sár í nátúruni.”

**1.2 Resume of interview with Svend Sivertsen,
Architect MAA at Fuglark Architects.
15th February 2019.**

Why private companies do not build apartments

The short answer to why private companies do not build apartments is that they do not gain enough profit through it. The rent has to be as low as possible and the budget is very tight and the private companies need to pay interest on the loans they take. Svend said that the cost of renting will never cover the cost of building.

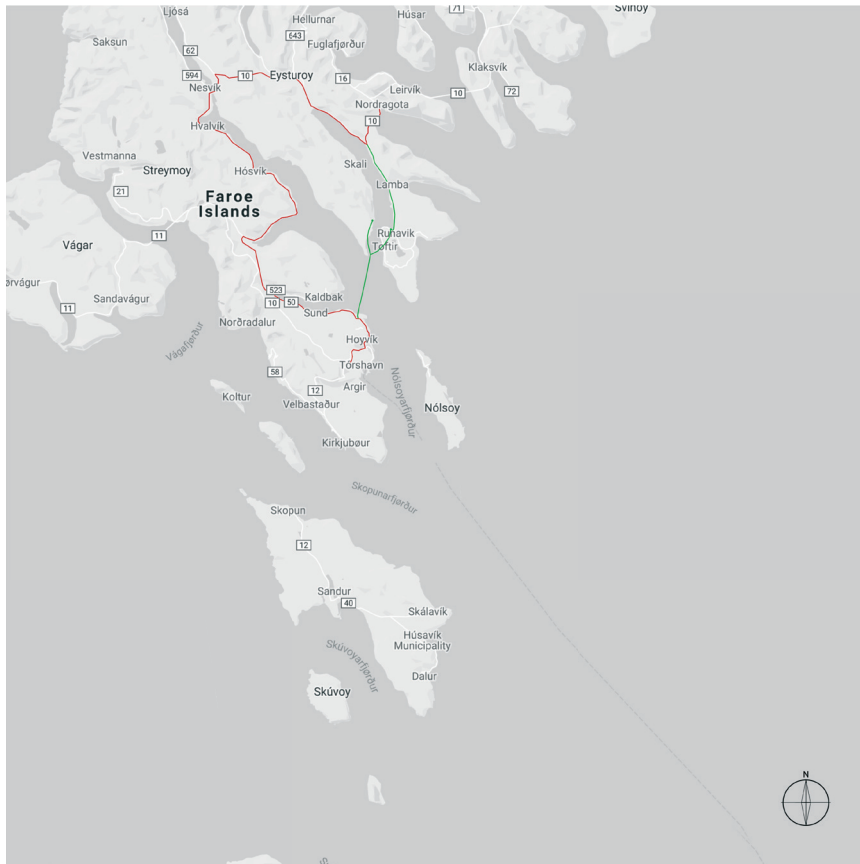
In Denmark it is possible to obtain housing support (boligsstøtte in Danish) which reduces the cost of rent. There is not housing support in the Faroe Islands. According to Svend there is a need for better social policies such as housing support in the housing policies. If this does not happen then the quality of new housing will be bad.

Svend said that the quality of the housing built by the public sector is bad, because the apartments have to be as cheap as possible. This means they will have to be renovated within a few years. He says there is a need for social policies that will make it possible to build better quality apartments while keeping the rent down.

According to Svend the housing policy needs to consider social and economic aspects in order to make it profitable and possible to build rental housing in The Faroe Islands. As it is now the law and the society does not provide good circumstances for rental housing.

The new tunnel (Eysturoyartunnillin)

The quarry is situated in Eystur municipality in Norðragøta and for people living here the tunnel will make it quicker for them to get to the capital. Svend thinks this will increase the potentials for building outside Tórshavn, because the demand for housing in the areas close to the tunnel will grow.



The red line marks the current route to Tórshavn. The green marks the new route to Tórshavn, when the new subsea tunnel is finished

1.3 Resume of interview with Eyðun Kjølbro, finance manager in Sunda municipality in The Faroe Islands. 15th February 2019.

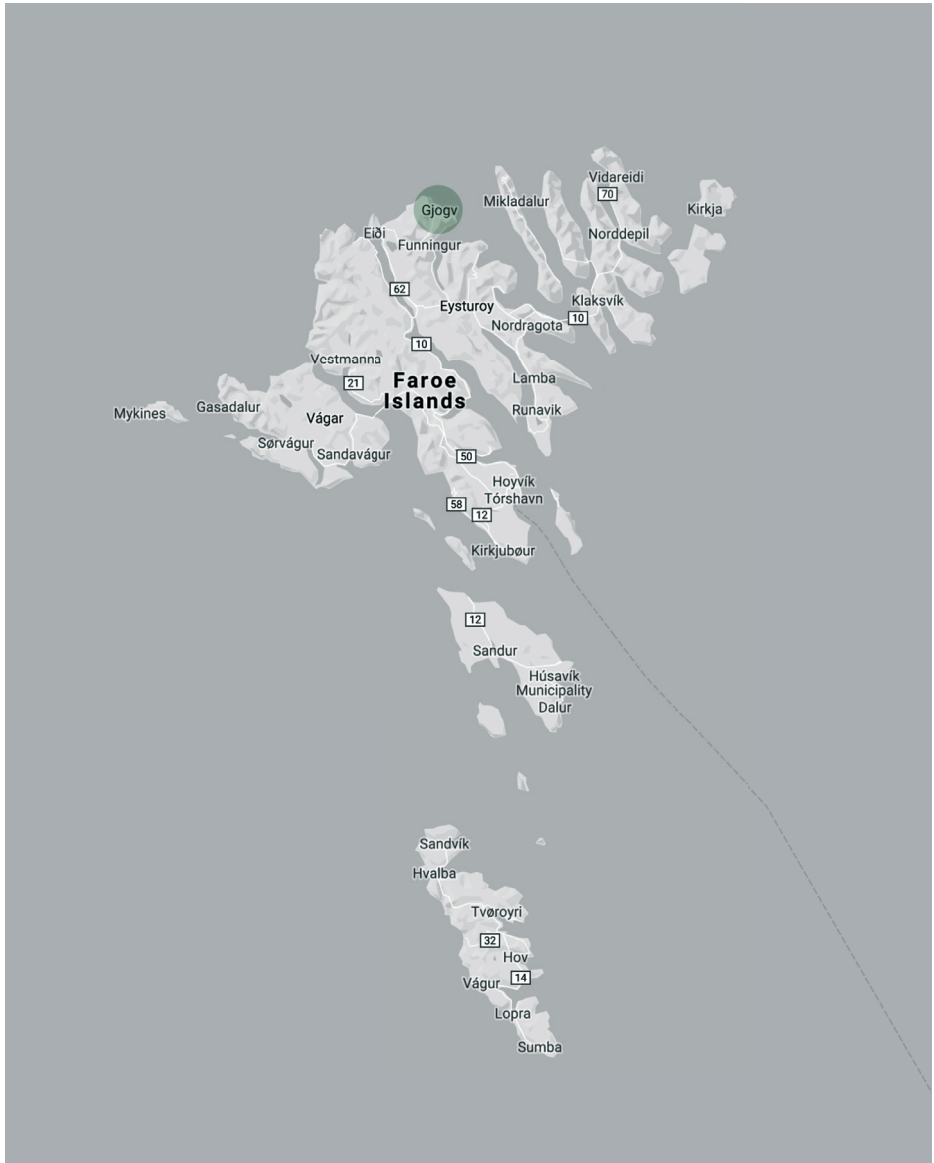
16% of houses in The Faroe Islands are empty

Last year the municipalities counted how many empty houses they had and on average 16% of the houses in The Faroe Islands are empty. Eyðun thinks that the houses that are empty are mainly holiday homes. Some are also used for airbnb.

It is the small villages that have the highest number of empty houses and it is also here that a lot of people have a summer house. Eyðun said that people that have a summer house value having the opportunity to stay in the small villages in their free time, but they do not want to live there. Even if they do not use the house so much, they do not sell them. Eyðun has a summer house in Gjógv, a small village in the north. He said that he could easily sell the house, but that it would probably be used as a summer house and the people buying it would not move to Gjógv permanently. In general most people wish to live in the capital and there are not a lot of houses empty there. In Eystur municipality, where the quarry is only 4% of houses are empty.

The demand for housing

There are more apartments being built now compared to just 6-7 years ago and many more are on the way. The majority of the apartments are built in Tórshavn, the capital, because this is where most people want to live.



The green colour marks where Gjógv is

The Faroese housing association

Bústaðir is the Faroese housing association. It is a public company and they administrate and finance rental apartments all over the Faroe Islands. When Bústaðir was established they promised to make a lot of good quality apartments with a low rent. They have built some cheap rental apartments, but Eyðun does not think they have lived up to what they promised. Bústaðir is also not able to build enough apartments to meet the demand for rental housing in The Faroe Islands¹².

The biggest hindrance for private companies to build, own and rent out apartments is the lack of financing. Private companies that are interested in building housing are only able to obtain loans for 15 years. This increases the cost of renting with the result that people can not afford to live in the apartments. Bústaðir is able to obtain loans for more than 15 years and has also other competitive advantages compared to private companies. For example Bústaðir is able to buy building plots and buildings for a lower price than private building companies and there are not the same requirements for profit that private companies have.

It is good that Bústaðir builds rental housing, but because of the competitive advantages the association may stop private and public companies from investing in rental housing and Bústaðir is not able to meet the demand for housing¹³.

12 Nielsen 2018, 22nd November.

13 Nielsen 2018, 22nd November.

“Any market functions best when there is free competition between the partners. Unfortunately there is not free competition in the rental housing market in The Faroe Islands today” – Birgir Nielsen, housing economist¹⁴.

Some private companies sell condominiums, but Bústaðir is the only association that has rental housing. Eyðun thinks that the housing market needs more companies that administrate and finance rental housing. Specifically he thinks that there should be some pension companies in charge of rental housing, just like in Denmark. He thinks it is important to have a housing market with many different types of housing and different ownerships, because people’s needs are different.

¹⁴ Nielsen 2018, 22nd November.

1.4. Resume of interview with Jan Holm Jacobsen, 74 years old and resident in Jystrup Savværk cohousing community.

26th September 2018.

The interview was in Danish and the quotes have been translated by Chanette J. Hansen. The summary is divided into subjects in order to gain an overview of what we talked about. I have shortened Jystrup Savværk to JS in the summary. I have shortened Jan Holm Jacobsen to JHJ.

Jan Holm Jacobsen

JHJ and his family moved to JS 1st July 1984 and have therefore lived there right from the start. JHJ moved in with his wife and their two children in one of the 93m² apartments. When the oldest child moved to one of the s-rooms (supplement rooms), JHJ and his wife and their youngest child moved to a smaller apartment, which is the one that JHJ lives in now. When they moved, they switched apartments with another resident, that needed more space. It is possible for residents to switch apartments if they need more space or less space. When an apartment is put up for sale, the residents have priority to the apartment.

S-rooms (supplement rooms)

The s-rooms can be used as a guest room, a study room or as a small apartment for a teenager that is about to move out. Sometimes the s-rooms are also used for yoga or as a room for the children to watch tv. There are 6 s-rooms.

Flexibility: If a s-room is situated next to an apartment

the residents of the apartment may apply to make an entrance from their apartment directly into the s-room. The residents are then able to use the s-rooms as extra space for a period of time. When the extra space is not needed the entrance is filled out again.

Reasons for moving to JS

There were several reasons why JHJ moved to JS. He read about JS in the newspaper *Politikken*. At the time when they moved in there was also a lot of focus on cohousing – it was quite popular. The financing opportunities were good at the time as they did not need to pay interest on the loan and it turned out to be cheaper to live in JS than expected. Furthermore, the social aspect was also a reason for choosing to move to JS. JHJ and his family did not look at other cohousing communities, as they wanted to move to JS. JHJ and his family had not lived in cohousing before.

”I think it is the optimal type of housing, but it is of course not everyone agrees on this” - Jan Holm Jacobsen¹⁵

”I think it is the right way to have a community, because you can be together with people, but you can also be on your own. When you draw the curtains facing the interior street, people know, that you wish to be alone”. - Jan Holm Jacobsen¹⁶

15 Original quote in Danish: ”Jeg synes jo det her er den optimale boligform, men det er jo ikke alle der er enige.”

16 Original quote in Danish: ”Jeg synes det er den rigtige måde at have fællesskab på, fordi du kan være sammen, men du kan også være dig selv. Altså når man lukker gardinerne ud mod gangen, så ved folk, at så vil man gerne være for sig selv.”

Jystrup Savværk

It was four families that bought the land and started planning a cohousing community on the site. Only two of these families moved in. It took only one year to construct JS. Information about the cohousing community was published in the news as well as on the tv and this attracted more families to move in. In JS there are 65 residents. Most of them are families with small children. They do try to have a diversity of ages and types of families, but JS appeals mostly to families with small children. The building consists of two wings that form a 90-degree angle. The two wings create an L-shape plan with the common house located at the junction. Each wing has two rows of apartments facing each other with a glass-covered interior street between them.

The apartments

There 21 apartments in 5 different sizes: 60m², 68m², 80m², 93m² and 110m². The largest apartments were originally smaller but have had rooms added to them. The cohousing scheme is cooperative residential housing. The apartments that have two floors have the bedrooms and living room upstairs. These apartments also have a private balcony on the 1st floor. The kitchen is the only room that is visible from the interior street. It is common that the residents draw the curtains to the windows facing the interior street. Even if the curtains are drawn it is possible to get a glimpse into the apartments through the round opening in the doors. The apartments open up towards the interior street but close themselves towards the common garden. The living room of the apartments is more enclosed and private and is not visible from the interior street.

Events

There are several events throughout the year. On the first Saturday of September the residents eat dinner in the interior streets. Each family brings food and can invite guests. JHJ usually invites people he knows that have lived in JS before and that he is still friends with. Many of the former residents of JS live close by, so they do not completely lose contact to the residents of JS as they meet each other in the village or are invited to events at JS.

On the last Saturday of May there is a spring festival for the whole village. This is held in the yellow hall, which is one of the two original buildings, from when the site was a sawmill. Stalls are also constructed in the courtyard. It is JS that arranges this. There was no spring festival before JS. The yellow hall is normally used for storage as well as for storing bicycles and garden furniture during winter. During one of the last weekends before Christmas the residents fetch a Christmas tree for the common house. This is followed by making Christmas decorations and food.

Residents can be part of the theatre, the choir and the sports club. A lot of these activities take place in the local school's gym and music room. It is difficult to get new people to be part of the theatre. JHJ has been part of it since 1985 and most of the participants have been a part of it for many years. The participants are 50 years old or more and there are about 10 participants. It is a lot easier to get people to join, if they are making a theatre piece including children and adults. Then the families join. At the moment they do not have a lot of theatre, because they could not keep using the theatre because they did not have enough funding due to too

few participants. It is possible to reserve the common house for private guests. Residents often do this, especially on Saturdays.

Including the surrounding village

JS does not do a lot to include the people in the village, apart from the Spring Festival that is open for everyone. However, the residents of the cohousing community take part in the events that occur in the village e.g. Fastalavn or they use buildings in the local area, like the school for various sports. Jacobsen plays theatre and is part of a band. They practice in the local school. Quite a few residents are part of the sports club and some are scouts. A lot of the activities in JS occur in different locations in the village. Instead of drawing people to JS, the residents take part of events in the village and use the buildings outside their community.

Working groups

Each month there is a working-Sunday where the maintenance group and the garden group suggest things that need doing e.g. painting, repairs, cleaning and gardening. Everybody has a task and it is necessary to be very organised in order for everything to work out. JHJ takes care of part of the financing connected to the kitchen. There is also a kitchen group that takes care of the kitchen utilities and there is a children's group that arranges activities for the children. They have an administration that also takes care of the homepage.

"I do not want to have my own house and not now when I am not so able to take care of the practical tasks. And this is a requirement if you are to maintain your house" - Jan Holm Jacobsen¹⁷

Laundry

The residents wash each other's clothes in the common laundry room. Laundry is placed in a basket with washing instructions and the baskets are lined in a queue. It is not possible to sign up to wash and there is no schedule. When the washing machine is done, a resident waiting to wash will take them out and put in the next load in the queue – regardless of if it is their own clothes or not. This is something that the residents do to help each other. You have to wash other people's clothes before you can wash your own. The residents have to hang their own clothes up.

Terraces

The terraces are nested in the pockets of the facade and therefore provide some shelter. It is up to the residents how much more they want to shield and enclose this space. It is very different how private the terraces are but in general the terraces are more private spaces for the residents, whereas the interior street acts as a more social space. The terraces are semi-private.

Common dinners

One resident is in charge of organising the cooking groups – who works together and when. This is done one year at a time. It is possible to take the dinner

17 Original quote in Danish: "Jeg har ikke lyst til at have mit eget hus og så nu jeg ikke er så praktisk anlagt. Og det kræver det jo hvis man skal holde sit hus ved lige."

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home as takeaway and this is common for families with small children. There is a teenage/youth cooking group consisting of 12-17 year olds. They cook on every 6th Sunday with support from adults.

All adult residents are part of a cooking group that is responsible for cooking the common dinners for one week at a time – Sunday to Friday, every 6th week. Each cooking group consists for 6-7 people and it is possible to have 2 days off during the week, as it is not necessary for the whole group to be present during food preparation. They try and divide the days off, so there are always 4 people present during food preparation.

Common dinners are served 6 days a week at 18:30 and at 18:00 on Sundays. Most of the residents eat in the common house. If residents are not going to participate in the common dinner, they need to inform about it on the intranet. All residents pay 500 Danish kroner per month for the dinners regardless of how many days they participate. Common dinners are not served on Saturdays, during the school break, the break in the fall, Easter holiday and similar public holidays. It is possible to have the dinner set aside in case you are delayed.

JS has an arrangement with Dagli´Brugsen in Jystrup. They buy a lot of their food from here and get a discount and Dagli´Brugsen delivers large quantities of colonial goods. They also have an arrangement with an organic farm that provides a lot of the vegetables. Residents do not share any other meals together. They may eat something together during the work Sundays, but this is not organised. There is always a coffee break before the work Sundays begin.

Name tags

One of the residents has the task to decide where people sit during the common dinner. Spaces are allocated with a name tag and the residents will sit together for 4 weeks, before the name tags are moved around again. This is something JS has always done, and it is an initiative to make the residents talk to everyone and get to know everyone, as it can be easy to get accustomed to sitting with the same people all the time.

The rent

The rent includes:

Repayment and mortgage loan

Money towards maintenance

Food (communal dining)

Electricity

Laundry washing

Internet

JHJ pays 7.800 Danish kroner a month for his apartment. This includes everything apart from his private home insurance. It is generally not a problem to sell the apartments. The price has only been raised a little.

Common rooms

Apart from the common house, the laundry rooms and the 6 s-rooms there are a few other common rooms.

There are workshops in the building. In one of the original buildings from when the site was a sawmill there is a workshop with larger machines.

The children have their own play room. It is used every day. There is a sewing room which is also used as a study room sometimes. Teenagers have their own room

to hang out in in the tower. There is a bomb room. This was a requirement from the municipality when JS was built in case of a nuclear war. Today it is used for storing food and part of it for playing music. The walls are very thick, so it is ideal to use it for practicing music.

The Social Aspect

”My wife passed away two years ago. When this happened, I gained a lot of value from having the company of the other residents. The network that there is between the residents” - Jan Holm Jacobsen¹⁸

Part of the funeral ceremony took place from the common house. This had never happened before and since then it has taken place once. JHJ knows all the residents of JS. The residents spend a lot of time together. They meet when they have the responsibility of preparing the dinners, they meet together for dinner, at the common meetings, during working-Sundays and then they have a lot of informal meetings in the interior streets.

”There are so many residents that it is not necessary to be friends with everyone. Some of them I only say hello to. But we do get to know each other very well” - Jan Holm Jacobsen¹⁹

If the residents fall out it is often due to different opinions about child rearing and the different opinions

18 Original quote in Danish: ”Min kone døde for 2 år siden. Da havde jeg jo utrolig meget glæde af beboerne. Det netværk som der er imellem beboerne.”

19 Original quote in Danish: ”Der er så mange, så man behøver ikke at være venner med dem alle sammen. Nogle af dem er man bare på vej med. Men vi kommer jo til at lære dem godt at kende.”

about whether residents can take over the child rearing of children, that are not their own. These types of fall outs have once resulted in that some residents moved out.

Other

The acoustics were not very good in the dining hall. They used to have paintings hanging from local artists but have now installed sound acoustic sheets. This has helped a lot.

The residents have a calendar where all the common events are visible.

The Facebook page is not used so much. Instead the residents use the intranet a lot to organise e.g. if they want to switch dates for when it is their turn to cook.

There are some plots of land on the site for residents to use, if they wish to grow their own vegetables.

There is no heating in the interior streets and there are no rules for what the residents can occupy the interior streets with.

1.5 Resume of interviews in Lange Eng cohousing community. 14th September 2018.

In Lange Eng I spoke with six different residents. I have chosen to make them anonymous as I have not been able to contact them again to ask if I may use their names. The two main residents that I spoke with I have named A and B. The rest of the people I spoke with I have referred to as resident in Lange Eng. In the assignment Connection Through Space I have referred to all the people I spoke with as resident in Lange Eng. The residents were informed that I was recording, and the following is a summary of the interviews. The interviews were in Danish and the quotes have been translated by Chanette J. Hansen. The summary is divided into subjects in order to gain an overview of what we talked about. I have shortened Lange Eng to LE.

Anthropologist Marie Stender's field studies in Lange Eng

A mentioned that Marie Stender had been staying in LE for a period of time in order to conduct field studies and write an assignment about the cohousing community. Her point of view was, according to A, that she could see the opportunities with a cohousing community, but that the community excludes the surroundings to an extent because the residents have everything they need.

"It (Lange Eng) is almost a small closed ghetto in the city"
– A, Resident in Lange Eng.²⁰

20 Original quote in Danish: "Det (Lange Eng) er jo nærmest sådan en lille lukket ghetto i byen."

The residents do not have the same need to open up towards the surroundings. We talked about the architecture of LE: the small, narrow entrances, the private courtyard and the facade and how the building is more closed towards the surroundings and then very open towards the courtyard. We talked about how this can signal something about how open the cohousing community is towards the surroundings. There is not done a lot to shield the view into the apartments from the common garden. The windows are very large. Some places there have been planted trees and these shield a bit.

”It is not the case that we are aiming to exclude the surroundings” – A, Resident in Lange Eng²¹.

Thoughts about diversity

We talked about the original plans LE should have diversity in terms of what type of families would live there. A said that the fact that there are four different types of apartments and sizes, suggests that LE was designed for different kinds of families. However, the type of families in LE is very homogeneous as there are mainly families with small children.

B said that the municipality required that LE should only consist of private townhouses and that this has created a barrier for diversity. Not everyone is able to take a large loan for a house and therefore the ownership type excludes some people. B said that the type of ownership creates barriers for diversity. He also thought that because there are a lot of families with small children in LE, then not a lot of people move in, unless they have

21 Original quote in Danish: ”Det er ikke sådan, at vi prøver, at lukke os af for naboerne.”

children. This leads to less diversity. Some of the residents do not have children, but these are the minority. Most of the residents have lived in LE since the start.

Benefits of co-housing

We talked about the benefits of co-housing. B said:

”Consider how much traditional construction without any type of community is conducted? It is crazy. Consider how much time it saves us and all that and then you just conduct one housing block after the other without and type of community.”²²”

We talked about that social isolation currently has a lot of media attention. That there are people that are at home and do not have a network and feel isolated and B said:

”They (people that are socially isolated) would not have chance here because they would not have the social competences necessary to interact with the residents.”²³”

Story of Lange Eng

During the construction phase the bank and entrepreneur went bankrupt. When this happened the interior

22 Original quote in Danish: ”Prøv at tænke på hvor meget almindeligt traditionelt byggeri uden noget fællesskab indsats der bliver lavet? Det er helt vildt. Prøv at tænke på hvor meget tid det frigør og alt sådan noget for os og så laver man bare den ene nybyggede karré efter den anden uden noget som helst fællesskab.”

23 Original quote in Danish: ”De ville jo ikke have en chance

of the apartments was not finished, so the residents got together and installed the interior walls and finished the apartments. Therefore, the residents have also largely decided themselves how the apartments should look like.

About Lange Eng

The cinema is used a lot for children's tv programs and football.

There is an activity room for the children.

There is a café in the common house that is used as a meeting room, café and a space for teenagers to hang out in.

The different houses around LE, which A calls eggs where not there when LE was built 10 years ago. It was a big field. Only the prison was there. LE is one of the largest cohousing communities. There are 100 children and 100 adults. There are mainly families with small children. Some residents live alone and there are some seniors.

Polycarbonate on the facade

Originally there were plans to cover the top of the windows facing the courtyard with polycarbonate. It turned out that it would be very difficult to clean the windows and expensive too and therefore this idea was not realised. Both B and A were very pleased about that the windows were not covered with polycarbonate because her fordi de ville ikke have sociale kompetencer til at blande sig.”

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they thought it would have a negative impact on the lighting conditions. In each corner of the building there are common rooms e.g. storage for bikes, prams and so on.

Moving to Lange Eng

A has lived in LE for 7 years. It was a bit of a coincidence that him and his family moved to LE. The first two years they were subletting an apartment and after that they decided to move in. It is the first time him and his family have lived in a cohousing community, but they were not in doubt that it was the right decision to stay.

Kitchen duty

The food is prepared from 15:00 – 18:00. Dinner is served at 18:00. The people that have the kitchen duty have 2-3 duties over three days. This can be cooking or cleaning up after the meal – it is not the same people that prepare the meals that wash up afterwards. Concerning the kitchen duty, A said:

”It is definitely easy (to have the kitchen duty) compared to having to deal with it every day and prepare dinner every day. Then it is very easy.”²⁴”

Typically, there are 1/3 that eat together, and the rest take the dinner home with them as take-away. From Monday to Friday there is communal dining in the common house. On Sundays it is only possible to get take-away.

Lectures at Lange Eng

24 Original quote in Danish: ”Det er i hvert fald nemt (det at

The common house is sometimes used for arrangements such as storytelling, coffee-tasting and lectures arranged by the local library. These events are for everyone – residents of LE as well as citizens of Albertslund. Typically, it will be the local library that is arranging an event and the residents of LE can make an input as to what they would like to hear about. This is a way of including the surrounding citizens in the cohousing community.

Having enough people around you

According to A a benefit of living in LE is that you are closer to your neighbours. People say hello to each other and they know each other very well. A said:

”But I also think, that because we are so many, that we have enough here. The children do not have the need to go over to the neighbours to play, because there are enough children here. And I think the same applies for the adults.”²⁵

We talked about that there is a limit to how many people we wish to engage socially with on a daily basis and that 100 adults and 100 children is a lot to relate to. How many people a person wishes to engage with depends on the person of course. We talked about that LE is a small village in a village.

have køkkentjans) i forhold til, at man skal stå med det hver dag og lave aftensmad hver dag. Der er det rigtig nemt.”

25 Original quote in Danish: ”Men jeg tror også, at når vi nu er så mange som vi er, så har vi måske lidt nok i os selv. Børnene har ikke behov for at løbe derover og lege med nogen derover, fordi de har jo nok børn her. Og det tror jeg er det samme for de voksne.”

”If you open up all the time, it will also take up too much time for you. Also in terms of how much you get involved”

– A, resident in Lange Eng²⁶.

A big family

”It is like a big family here. We live together for better and for worse. And if there are any changes then you are a part of those changes. If there is a divorce or if somebody gets married or has children. It is a common thing also. This is possible, even if you are 200 people” - A, resident in Lange Eng²⁷.

Resourceful residents moving to Albertslund

We talked about how the residents of LE contribute to the local community by engaging in various associations and in the school committee. The residents are resourceful and proactive, and they engage politically and in the city council, and the school committee. A said Albertslund has gained proactive, resourceful residents through LE, that they would not have gained otherwise. It was therefore a smart decision of the municipality to supply the opportunity to create a cohousing community in Albertslund. We talked about that the ownership type attracts resourceful residents and we briefly

26 Original quote in Danish: ”Hvis man sådan hele tiden åbner op, så kommer det også til at fylde for meget for en selv. Også i forhold til hvor meget man involverer sig.”

27 Original quote in Danish: Det er også som en stor familie herude. Man lever lidt på godt og ondt med hinanden. Og hvis der sker nogle ændringer herude, så lever man sig også i deres (liv). Hvis der er en skilsmisse eller nogen bliver gift, eller nogen får børn. Det er en fælles ting også. Det kan man godt, selv om man er 200 mennesker.”

discussed if more diversity would mean that fewer resourceful residents would move to Albertslund. The apartments are expensive, and it is necessary to earn a good salary in order to live in LE.

It is a strength to be a large cohousing community

”I think it is a strength with LE, that it is so large, that you can decide for yourself how much you wish to engage and how much you wish to engage socially. Because you do not have to” – A, resident in Lange Eng.²⁸

We talked about that it is possible to retreat and only be a part of the communal dining. Or to choose not to be a part of the communal dining and only take part in the required kitchen duties every five weeks. To retreat may be necessary for some during difficult periods or when they do not feel the need to be part of a social network. And this is possible because there are so many people living in LE. A thinks that if there were only 10 families it may be more difficult to retreat from the social life. A adds:

”It is completely free to choose in terms of how much you want to be part of the community. It is up to the resident²⁹”.

It is a requirement that residents take part in kitchen duties every fifth week and to be part of a working group

²⁸ Original quote in Danish: ”Jeg synes det er styrken ved at LE, at det er så stort som det er, at man kan selv vælge, hvor meget man engagere sig og hvor meget man engagere sig socialt. Fordi man behøves ikke.”

²⁹ Original quote in Danish: ”Det er helt åbent i forhold til hvor meget man vil være en del af fællesskabet. Det bestem-

which takes care of the maintenance of the building. It is also necessary to attend two work weekends a year where larger cleaning and maintenance jobs are tackled. Apart from this residents have their own homes, similar to people that do not live in cohousing communities.

”Here (in LE) you can choose to be together with others and be social about many things or you can choose not to be. The degree to how much you engage is up to yourself”
– A, resident in Lange Eng³⁰.

”It is possible to feel alone in a cohousing community, if you do not get invited to be part of a certain group that is formed. It is not possible to take part in everything, especially if you also want to take part in social things outside Lange Eng” – Single mother, resident in Lange Eng.

”There is always somebody I can ask for help. It can maybe be a bit boring not to be able to decide what we are going to have for dinner” – 10 year old, resident in Lange Eng when asked about the good and bad aspects of living in Lange Eng.

”A downside is that all the residents have to agree on things. The process of reaching a common agreement can take a long time. Almost everyone here are academics and there are no right winged people or social democrats. The people here support Alternativet or Enhedslisten. It is people with the ”right” opinions” – Resident in Lange Eng.

mer man egentlig selv.”

30 Original quote in Danish: ”Her (I LE) der kan man vælge at være fælles og social omkring mange ting, men man kan også vælge det fra. Graden af hvor meget man engagerer sig, bestemmer man helt selv.”

”The children here meet children from other backgrounds in school” – Resident in Lange Eng

”The children gain a large network by growing up here. Maybe they will use it and maybe they will not” – Resident in Lange Eng.

”It is up to the individual resident to decide how much they wish to be a part of the community – there are some requirements for what the residents need to participate in, but apart from that it is up to themselves” – Resident in Lange Eng.

”Some people switch apartments because they need a bigger or a smaller apartment, but fundamentally there is not a lot of flexibility in terms of expanding or reducing the size of your apartment. The small apartments are popular” - Single mother, resident in Lange Eng.

”I think it is frustrating that the first room you enter in the apartment is the kitchen. That there is no real entrance space with proper storage space for coats and so on” – Resident in Lange Eng.

”It is not possible to live here if you are not willing to compromise” – Resident of Lange Eng. ”It can be difficult to move into a well established cohousing community, as a new person” - Single mother, resident in Lange Eng.

1.6 Resume of interview with Amalie Kamma Dahl Holleufer, 22 years old, resident in Fredens Hus.

Fredens Hus has apartments for students and for people over 55 years. The building is located in Østerbro, Copenhagen. There are 143 apartments. 1/4 of the residents are people over 55 years. 3/4 of the residents are students. All quotes are by the interviewee. The interview was in Danish and has been translated by Chanette J. Hansen.

7th November 2018.

Living in Fredens Hus

Amalie has lived in Fredens Hus for about 4 ½ years. In the start she lived in a one room apartment on the 4th floor and in September 2018 she moved into a 2 room apartment with her boyfriend. She was able to move into Fredens hus, because she knew the person in charge of Fredens Hus.

”If you want to be lucky to find an apartment in Copenhagen, then you need to know somebody.”

Amalie moved from home and into Fredens Hus and she struggled to live on her own in the start. It was difficult to adjust to having to take care of all the practical things that are a part of living on your own whilst going to college. She also had to work, in order to pay her rent.

”One of the reasons that I completed college is this house. I am a smoker and up on the 4th floor where I used to live, there is a balcony for smokers. Because we smoked together we became a small family. There was and still is a good social cohesion between young and old and I still



talk to them today. I know a lot of the people in this building, because we smoke together. Smoking was our reason to meet together. If you had a bad day you could go out on the balcony and you knew that somebody would come out within 20-30 minutes. It helped me a lot that there was somebody to talk to. When you go and sit on the balcony you also invite people to come and talk.”

Amalie’s parents live in Sydsjælland and because they are so far away, she has been grateful for the opportunity to get support and help from the other residents.

Fredens Hus is very well organised and the rules are all kept. The common areas and garden are well kept and clean. There is an unwritten rule, that the elderly can only live in Fredens Hus if they are able to take care of themselves. Some of the elderly have a carer, but in

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general they are very active and able to do things themselves. Amalie cuts the hair of some of the residents and she also cleans for some of the elderly and is paid for this. This is something she has taken initiative to do herself and not something she has to do.

The rooms

All the apartments have a kitchen and an in-built cupboard by the entrance.

There are 4 balconies for each floor: 2 for non-smokers and 2 for smokers.

There is no common kitchen or shared living rooms.

The students share the toilets and showers. The elderly have their own toilet and shower.

There is a gym, a billiard room, an ironing- and washing room, a study room, a library and a banquet hall. There can be 280 people in the banquet hall and it can be rented by the residents. There is a kitchen connected to it.

There is also a guest room with a bathroom and kitchen, that is very cheap to rent. There is a large common garden and parking facilities. The library and study room is not used so much as they are not so cosy. There is also a workshop for smaller things and a bike workshop.

All the elderly live in 2 room apartments and most of the apartments have 2 rooms.

Bathrooms and showers

There are two bathrooms on each floor, each containing

3 toilets. The elderly have their own toilet and shower and therefore the amount of people that share a toilet on each floor varies depending on the ratio of elderly and students on that floor. Typically 5-6 people share a bathroom. The toilets have recently been renovated and now it is not possible to hear between the cabinets anymore, which is a big improvement.

There is a shower room only for women and a shower room for men and women. The shower rooms have private cabinets and are located in the basement.

Where to hang out

Sometimes Amalie and her study group have used the banquet hall to study in. In Fredens Hus there is the hallway and balconies and then the private apartments. There is missing some rooms that are a bit private and a bit common and that can be used for having friends or family over.

”Everytime we have had visitors or have met with the other residents, we have gathered out on the balconies and sometimes we have been 10-12 people crammed together talking for many hours, because this is the only meeting space there is.”

”Sometimes it can feel very intimate to invite people into your small apartment, and therefore it would be nice to have some common rooms to meet in.”

”When you live so close together, like you do here, then you need to have these spaces where you can meet and talk. It is especially important to have some shared outdoor areas. The balconies work really well.”

Cleaning

Typically it is the students that clean the toilets, showers, staircases and hallways as a part-time job that they can apply for. People are able to decide for themselves how long they wish to be in charge of the cleaning and for how long.

”There is always a replacement that can take over the cleaning, because young people need money.”

Sharing a kitchen or sharing toilet and bathroom

Amalie would prefer to have her own toilet and shower, even if the rent increased as a result of it. However it is most important for her to have her own kitchen and for now, she is fine with sharing a toilet and shower with others. She thinks that she would struggle to share a kitchen with other people and for her it is a value to be able to cook in her own kitchen. She has not tried to live in a dorm with a shared kitchen. Amalie said that she has become used to sharing a toilet and shower. She said that maybe, if she was living in a dorm with a shared kitchen, that she would prefer to have her own toilet and shower and would be fine with a shared kitchen.

Social events

There are several social events. In December the residents get together to decorate and celebrate Christmas. The residents eat together in the common garden every month or every other month; people bring their own food and coffee, tea and dessert is provided by Fredens Hus. If the weather is bad the residents eat together in

the banquet hall.

”It is really good that we have a garden. During the summer we get to know each other a lot, because we share the garden”

People typically meet each other in the common garden in the summer, on the balconies or at the social events. People also meet in the hallways, but it is not a place where they stop up to talk for a long time. There are plans to arrange some days in the summer when the residents can get together to plant flowers and take care of the garden. Currently a gardener is paid to look after the garden in the summer. Amalie does not think that she would have gotten to know the other residents if they did not have social events together and if they did not share balconies; then there would not be any place to meet.

Cohousing

The residents eat together sometimes, but not most days of the week like a lot of cohousing communities.

”Personally I am really happy that this is not a cohousing community with common dinners. When I come home I have been around a lot of people through my internship, and therefore I often need to be on my own and not be social and talk to a lot of people. If I feel like talking to somebody I can always go up to the smokers balcony on the 4th floor. There is always somebody there I can talk to. I am happy that I have my own private space to retreat to and that I can be part of a community at the same time.”

We talked about that a cohousing community would not

work for students, because they study at different times and have lectures at different times and therefore they are not all home at the same time.

Low rent

Amalie and her boyfriend save a lot of money by living in Fredens Hus, because the rent is low. Therefore they are also able to save some money up for when they move out. They are very happy for their apartment and plan to stay in Fredens Hus until Amalie is done with her studies in 2022. They would not be able to find anything with such a good location and where the rent is so low. They pay 4.000 Danish kroner a month in rent – 2.000 Danish kroner each. If Amalie was going to live in something similar to Fredens Hus then it would be collective housing where families have their own private spaces and share some common rooms.

Windows and curtains

”Generally Danes do not like to have curtains. We (Danes) are very open in through our interiors but not quite so much when we are out on the streets.”

There are no curtains in Amalie and her boyfriend’s apartment, however people can not see out because of the location of the apartment in the building and because of the bay window. In Jystrup Savværk cohousing community there are windows out to the common hallway. I asked Amalie what she thought about this and she said that should would think this would be irritating and that she would probably cover the window. She thought that the reason she feels like this is probably because people would walk right past the window.

1.7 Resume of interview with Karin á Grønastøð. 28th February 2019.

Karin is 82 years old and lives in Klaksvík. I explained my thesis project to her and the following is a resume of the various subjects we talked about. The quotes are all by Karin. The interview was in Faroese and the quotes have been translated by Chanette J. Hansen.

Henning Larsen architects have designed 30 apartments in Klaksvík together with Bústaðir, the Faroese housing association. People interested in moving to the apartments have had to sign up and they are still waiting to hear who is going to move in. There are no common rooms.

Karin currently lives in the house where she raised her children and the house has become too big for her. She has signed up for one of the apartments because she would like to downsize and live in a smaller house. The apartments vary from 42 - 109 m². Karin would like to live in one of the smallest apartments that have kitchen and living room together and one bedroom and a bathroom. She has heard that the rent is around 8.000 Danish kroner for the smallest apartment. In Denmark it is possible to get financial support from the public which reduces the cost of rent. This is called boligstøtte in Danish. It is not possible to obtain this type of support in The Faroe Islands and this makes it expensive to rent.

“There is nothing to move to (for the elderly). The young people that move back to The Faroe Islands also struggle to find a place to live.”



The apartments in Klaksvík under construction

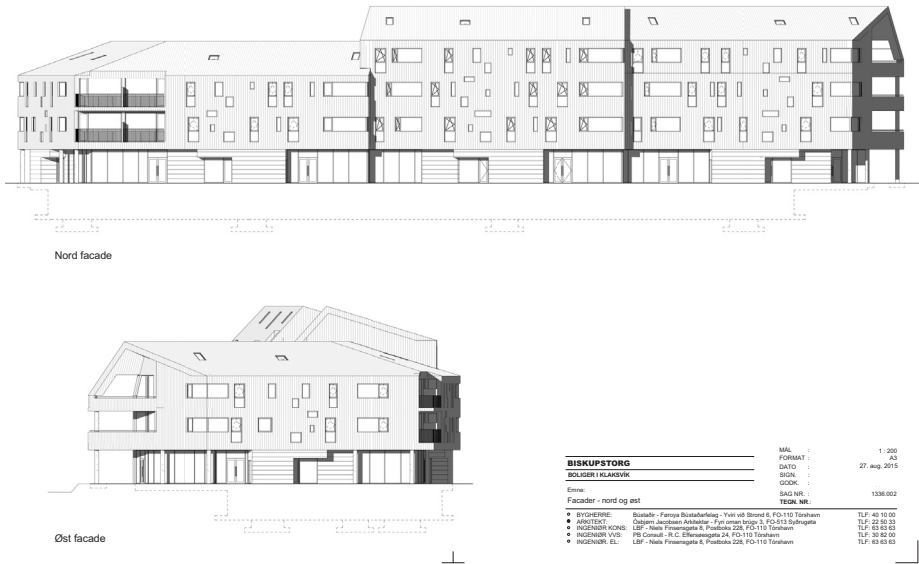
Karin has rented a room in a shared apartment in Denmark and in The Faroe Islands while she was studying, so she has some experience with living with other people that are not family. In the apartments they shared a kitchen and a bathroom. Karin said that she would be fine with sharing a kitchen again, but only if it were with 1-2 other people. 5-6 people would be too many to share a kitchen with she thinks.

We talked about how Faroese people back in time used to value having their own house and how they would spend a lot of time on maintenance and on improving their homes. Karin thinks this has changed today. She does not think the young people are interested in having their own house today because they are not interested in all the responsibilities that are part of owning a house.

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Karin would like to live in an apartment complex where there are shared and common spaces. She thinks it is nice if there are some common rooms where the residents can meet together in a semi-private space, because it can feel a bit intimate to invite people you do not know into your private small apartment. Karin would prefer if the apartment complex had people from different ages.

We talked about the problem that there are no rental contract for people that rent privately and how the person renting may risk having to move very suddenly if e.g. a family member returns from studies abroad.



Elevation drawings of the apartments in Klaksvík. The plans can be seen on the next page.

1.8 Resume of talk with Karolina Hansen, 75 years old and resident in Maritugøta in Hoyvík. 28th February 2019.

Karolina moved to Maritugøta in 2018 and she lives in a condominium. The terrace houses were built in 2005 and consist of condominiums and houses. All the condominiums are 78m². Out of the 78m², 73 m² is the apartment and 4 m² is a shed in front of the house. The condominiums have a hallway, kitchen and living room together, two bedrooms, a bathroom and a storage room. The houses have two floors and are about 156 m². All residents have their own entrance and a small garden. The houses and condominiums are heated by a district heating power plant.

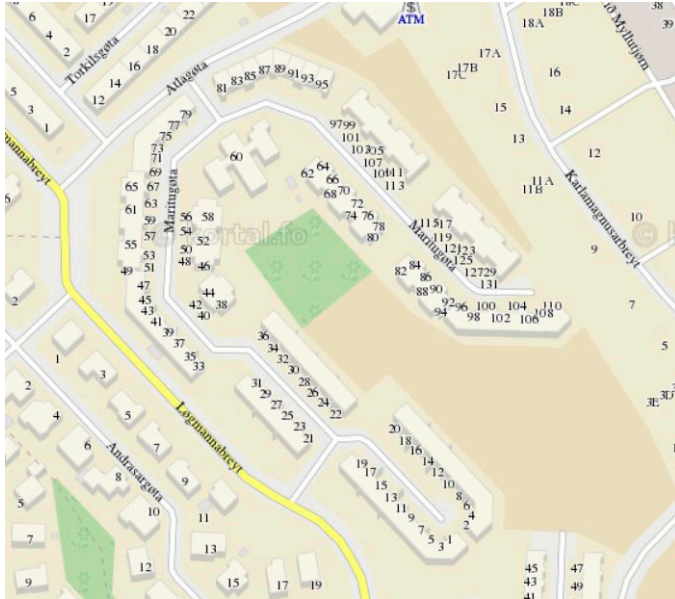
The residents have a community house called Býlinghúsið (direct translated it means settlement house). Býlinghúsið is a kindergarten for 45-60 children that also functions as a space for the residents to get together. The building is used to celebrate New Years Eve and for meetings, courses and other social gatherings. The residents have a Facebook page that they communicate through.

The women also have 'bindiklubb' (directly translated it means knitting club). This is a Faroese tradition where women meet to talk and sometimes knit, if they want to. The residents work together to maintain the area. This is usually in the spring and it is the committee that organise these days.

Karolina knows the people that live in the area, because she has met them outside. She says that they live so close together and that is how they get to know each other.

The houses and condominiums are either painted dark gray, light gray or white. The residents are not able to decide themselves what colour their house should have. A lot of children live in the area.

The following are a few images of the buildings in Maritugøta.



01 Interviews





1.9 Interviews form Tórsbyrgi

The following is information about Tórsbyrgi taken from the podcast “Við Tórði á túri í Tórsbyrgi”¹. In the podcast Tórði Mikkelsen visits Tórsbyrgi and interviews the residents. The names of the residents have been included in the following text. The interviews were in Faroese and quotes have been translated by Chanette J. Hansen.

Tórsbyrgi is located in the capital Tórshavn and the housing complex was built in 1976. Tórsbyrgi consists of 36 terrace houses in a ribbon development and there are about 100 residents². The terrace houses are divided into 3 groups (see the image on next page). The houses are not all the same, but some have the same colour. 10 out of 36 of the households that moved in in 1976 are still living in Tórsbyrgi (in 2016)³. 14 of the households have lived in Tórsbyrgi for more than 20 years (in 2016)⁴.

The residents share a community house, the heating power plant, a large storehouse, a dryer and the outdoor areas. The residents get together to celebrate New Years Eve and Christmas, to grill together, to have common dinners and for movie nights and lectures. 10-12 women meet together in knitting clubs (in Faroese bindiklubb). This is a tradition in The Faroe Islands where women get together, traditionally to knit, but it is not a requirement.

1 Mikkelsen 2018

2 Mikkelsen 2018

3 Kruse 2016

4 Kruse 2016







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The committee organises 4-5 working days a year when the residents work together to maintain and tidy the outdoor areas and to paint the houses. The residents have done a lot of work to make it look nice outside the houses and in the summer the residents work together in the gardens and it is also here that they meet and drink coffee. There are a lot of activities for the children: there is a football field, a basketball field, a playground, swings and in the summer they set up the trampoline.

Bjarni Nielsen, resident in Tórsbyrgi

The residents share one parking lot (see image on page 56). The residents are able to drive to their house, but they are not allowed to park their car outside their house. Because the cars are parked away from the houses there is no traffic around the houses and the children are safe to play outside. Several of the residents expressed that this is a quality.

”I have to walk between some of the houses to get to my house. In this way you also meet your neighbours”
- Bjarni Nielsen

When asked what is Tórsbyrgi’s best quality Bjarni said the cohesion with the neighbour.

”It is not a specific type of person that seeks this type of housing. You move here and then you become a part of the group” - Bjarni Nielsen

Guðrun and Jens Petur Gaard, residents in Tórsbyrgi

Guðrun and Jens Petur Gaard were some of the first residents in Tórsbyrgi. They moved in in October 1976,

the same year that Tórsbyrgi was built. After 11 years their house had become too small and instead of moving away, they moved to a larger house in Tórsbyrgi, because their house had become too small. When asked what is Tórsbyrgi's best quality Jens Petur said:

"I think it is the community. To live together with people, that all want this community to work. We have always said that this is like a village; a village in Tórshavn".

To the same question Guðrun replied:

"Good friendships. So many nice people live here and we get along very well."

"All age groups live in Tórsbyrgi. It is a bit similar to a family (...) This is probably one of the reasons why Tórsbyrgi is such a success (...). We remember those that have passed away just like you remember your family members that have passed away"

- Guðrun

"Everything outside is our common space, but we are allowed to do everything there. For example we have a plot to grow rhubarb and potatoes and we also have a greenhouse with salad and strawberries. You can do anything here that you are interested in. We do not have any rules that stop us from planting what we want" - Guðrun.

"This place has a soul and this is due partly to that many different types of people from different background and in different ages live here. There is never any pressure to be a certain way or that you have to participate in anything. The residents are free to decide how much they want to participate in the social activities" - Guðrun

Poulina Jacobsen, resident in Tórsbyrgi

”It is safe here (for the children), because there are no cars. All the children play together. This is actually a small village in Tórshavn” - Poulina Jacobsen

”I am very surprised about the sense of cohesion between the residents (...) That the cohesion is so good is amazing, but I know that many have lived here from the start and that people know each other very well. Even if you are new you are included right away” - Poulina Jacobsen. She moved to Tórsbyrgi in 2016.

Høgni í Stórustovu, chairperson in the owners’ association and resident in Tórsbyrgi

”This is a true community. We live close together. You get a lot of relations, that you would not have gotten otherwise and this type of place creates patience and curiosity. The community is more than 40 years old” - Høgni í Stórustovu.

”It is interesting to see how Tórsbyrgi right from the start has sought a community and I think the community house symbolises this wish” - Høgni í Stórustovu

Gunnar Hoydal, architect behind Tórsbyrgi

”This is maybe one of the projects I am most pleased about, because what seemed to be complete chaos in the start turned out to be something people were interested in – especially when they noticed that the prices were not too high” - Gunnar Hoydal

”We observed that people were interested in the private building plots that the municipality made available, but we could see that each building plot required a lot of space” - Gunnar Hoydal.

Gunnleivur Dalsgarð, resident in Tórsbyrgi

”What I think is very interesting with this place is that the 3 units of 36 houses are not dependant on each other, but each house grabs hold of the next house. There is a form of social meaning in this”
- Gunnleivur Dalsgarð

”I think that Tórsbyrgi is a quite social housing complex, but you do not need to be social to live here”
- Gunnleivur Dalsgarð

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Podcast

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