

MASTER'S THESIS

»BUT I'VE NEVER LOOKED
AT IT AS A GHETTO«

—

Negotiating Territorial Stigmatisation
in a Danish Neighbourhood

4CITIES Erasmus Mundus Course in Urban Studies

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ABSTRACT

With anti-immigrant attitudes and a fear of 'the Other' increasingly dominating political discourses and informing biopolitical practices in many European countries, also the urban spaces inhabited by these marginalised groups are increasingly constructed as places of exclusion. Besides (political) interventions within these designated areas, also the labelling contributes to the stigmatisation of these spaces. An example of such a practice is the adaptation and institutionalisation of the concept of the 'ghetto' in the Danish context, which (discursively) establishes spaces of exclusion and contributes to the spatialisation and ethnicisation of social problems. This thesis draws attention to how the 'ghetto' as a socio-spatial imaginary is constructed and gains hegemonic position in the political field and as such has not only consequences as a policy but also because of the external representations it conveys of both targeted areas and residents. To elaborate how the externally imposed socio-spatial imaginaries of the 'ghetto' intersect with the everyday lived experiences of residents, a discourse-based document analysis is employed to trace how the 'ghetto' is discursively constructed and instrumentalised. Following from this, interviews with residents and local professionals of Tingbjerg, a neighbourhood classified as a 'ghetto', highlight how the national discourse is related to and negotiated at the local scale. The findings draw attention to the simultaneity of different conceptions of space, whose possibility of public communication, however, are subject to asymmetric power relations. Residents are thus involved in symbolic struggles over representation and the formulation of counter-narratives that potentially challenge the dominant socio-spatial imaginaries conveyed by the 'ghetto' discourse. It is also demonstrated that the 'ghetto' in Denmark should not be considered in terms of material and/or socioeconomic features but must be understood as a discourse in which social and spatial demarcations and hierarchisations intersect.

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“But I have never looked at it as a ghetto.” (Interviewee S) While this statement was only expressed in the last interview of my research process, it strongly resonates with implicit notions of this very same subjective negotiation process formulated by other participants but also my own astonishment that I was first confronted with during my initial visit to the neighbourhood of Tingbjerg, a residential area at the outskirts of Copenhagen that is officially designated as a ‘ghetto’. The above statement hence points to the negotiation of this designation and the demarcation of the associative concept of the ‘ghetto’ against residents’ own everyday experiences in space.

1. INTRODUCTION

With the political institutionalisation of the concept of the ‘ghetto’ in Denmark, immigration-critical and racist discourses were projected and fixated onto selected neighbourhoods, which thus became key sites for the negotiation of national discourses on society’s social cohesion and ‘Otherness’. Labelling these neighborhoods as ‘ghettos’, however, does not constitute a mere description but is instead politically motivated. As the term is symbolically charged and evokes vivid sociospatial imaginations of decay, deviant behaviour and formation of parallel societies among a vast majority of society, it is politically instrumentalised to justify political interventions against both the spaces and its inhabitants. Since the ‘ghetto’ is thus not a ‘neutral’ term, the designation of specific neighbourhoods as such contributes to the hierarchisation of urban space and the stigmatisation of targeted areas. The political utilisation of the ‘ghetto’ concept is therefore an expression of symbolic power through labelling (Bourdieu 1989, p. 23).

Although the categorisation of urban areas as ‘ghettos’ is widely seen as inappropriate in the Danish context due to historical, social, political and structural differences (Wacquant, 2006; Wacquant, 2008; Schultz Larsen, 2011), the introduction of the term to the political debate constructed a certain symbolic reality, which constitutes the (spatial) context for residents’ everyday life in the respective neighbourhoods. As the ‘ghetto’ is an association-rich concept, I hypothesise that its deliberate instrumentalisation and the (re)production and reinforcement of sociospatial imaginaries in the ‘ghetto’ discourse influence residents’ everyday experience of the neighbourhood. At the same time, however, it is at the level of the everyday life that “relations of dominance are lived, reproduced and contested” (Garbin & Millington, 2012, p. 2072).

To therefore illuminate how the configuration of the 'ghetto' is not only conveyed at the conceptual level but also negotiated in and through everyday life, I will pose the following question:

How do externally imposed socio-spatial imaginaries of the 'ghetto' intersect with residents' everyday experiences in stigmatised neighbourhoods?

I will thus trace the discursive sociospatial construction of the 'ghetto' and point to its negotiation and (symbolic) effects on residents at the local scale.

2. METHODOLOGY

In order to examine how the discursive production of the 'ghetto' imaginary is negotiated in and intersects with the everyday life of residents in stigmatised neighbourhoods, I followed a twofold approach. First, I conducted a discourse-based document analysis of key policy papers of the Danish 'ghetto' initiative to show how a certain definition of the 'ghetto' as a place and policy problem has prevailed and been institutionalised. Thereby, I aimed to critically examine how the political problem of the 'ghetto' is embedded in the simultaneous production of spatial representations of ethnicised socio-economic problematisations. These discursively produced socio-spatial imaginaries of the 'ghetto' were then related to the lived experiences of the inhabitants of a neighbourhood classified as a 'ghetto'. Through qualitative semi-structured interviews, I intended to highlight how different stakeholders relate to and negotiate the spatial and non-spatial representations of the 'ghetto'.

A qualitative single case study approach was employed, which allowed me to establish a profound familiarity with the field despite the limited time of data collection between November 2020 and August 2021. Through data and methodological triangulation (Beitin, 2012, p. 248; Kohlbacher, 2006, p. 7), the aim was to identify "the complex interactions of factors" (Cresswell, 2013, p. 47) and gain "*an in-depth understanding of the case*" (Cresswell, 2013, p. 98, emphasis in original). To provide as much space as possible for the experiences of the participants and to learn from the field, the research process was emergent¹ (Stake, 1995, p. 8). Through this openness to the participants' accounts

¹ As is often the case in qualitative research, the research process was emergent (Cresswell, 2013, p. 47). Since the access to the field and stakeholders was complicated by the Covid-pandemic and the related lockdowns, forms of data collection were adapted to the available options and the initially planned participatory observations were dispensed with. After a first phase of data collection, the research question was adjusted and broadened so that I could consider more participants for the interviews. Accordingly, I extended the focus of my

and prioritisations I aimed to “tell the story in its diversity, allowing the story to unfold from the many-sided, complex, and sometimes conflicting stories” (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 238). Accordingly, it was not intended to derive generalisations, “but to elucidate the particular, the specific” (Cresswell, 2013, p. 157; arguing against a focus on formal generalisation in case study research, see also Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. p. 226).

Following a single instrumental case study (Stake, 1995, p. 3), the negotiation of the political ‘ghetto’ discourse among residents in Tingbjerg² was chosen as an information-rich case “that manifest[s] the phenomenon intensely but not extremely” (Cresswell, 2013, p. 158). The site selection was therefore information-oriented (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 230) and followed the criteria:

- Due to the spatial demarcation from surrounding residential areas by a ring road and green spaces, it could be assumed that officials as well as residents have a coherent place idea and perception of the geographical extent of Tingbjerg.
- Tingbjerg³ is listed as a ‘severe ghetto’ under the government’s ‘ghettolist’ and was first listed with the introduction of the list in 2010. I hypothesise that the consecutive listing of the neighbourhood contributed to the consolidation of outsiders’ perception of Tingbjerg as a ‘ghetto’. I moreover hypothesise that this consolidation contributes to the readily availability of a chain of associations of the ‘ghetto’ with regard to Tingbjerg, both among outsiders and residents.
- Due to its classification as a ‘severe ghetto’, Tingbjerg is currently undergoing a profound redevelopment in which the ‘ghetto’ imaginary are contrasted and negotiated against socio-spatial visions of a family-friendly neighbourhood in the countryside.
- With a current population of almost 6.300, Tingbjerg is the second largest ‘ghetto’ in Denmark. Due to this size, independent (neighbourhood) institutions and associations have developed here, which in turn contribute to neighbourhood life and thus promote a stronger engagement of the residents with their immediate (social) surroundings. In relation to my research question, I assume that residents therefore interact more strongly with and in their neighbourhood and thus also deal more profoundly with the stigma.

research from the negotiation of the territorial stigma among youngsters organised in youth organisations to residents in general who are involved in the neighbourhood.

² Acknowledging the specific social, political, and spatial embeddedness of the residents’ experiences, I decided against anonymising the place. This was also informed by the fact that “anonymization wrongly assumes that the theoretical insights from place-based research can be unproblematically distilled and applied across other research settings” (Warr, 2005, p. 290).

³ For an introduction to the neighbourhood, see Appendix A.

- As claims have been formulated by various organisations in Tingbjerg to abolish the ‘ghettolist’ nationwide, I assume that there is an awareness of the impacts of the term and that these are also being discussed within the neighbourhood.

2.1 Discourse-based document analysis

As employing the term ‘ghetto’ in official policy making is neither neutral nor descriptive but instrumentalised in the discursive struggles for the occupation of dominant social and political positions (v. Freiesleben, 2016, p. 10), I conducted a discourse-based document analysis to account for the intersection of material and semiotic practices. Following a post-structuralist approach, language is hence considered to play a constitutive role in the social production of meaning (Hastings, 1999, p. 10). Accordingly, discursive practices are also central to the symbolic appropriation and production of spaces and their hierarchisation (Belina & Dzudzek, 2021, p. 124). In this context, discourse analysis can contribute to “make [...] the connection between language use and power relations [apparent]” (Jacobs, 2006, p. 47).

Discourse is here considered as the expression of

“a particular conceptualisation of reality and knowledge that attempts to gain hegemony. This ‘will to knowledge’ attempts to embed particular values and ways of seeing and understanding the world as natural, so that they become taken for granted and slip from critical gaze. It is thus an institutionalisation and fusion of articulation processes and practice forms, which generates new forms of knowledge and rationality, and frames what are considered to be legitimate social actions.” (Richardson & Jensen, 2003, p. 16)

Consequently, discourses do not represent an ‘objective reality’, but rather create the subjects they are dealing with (Wellgraf, 2014, p. 208). Approaching the Danish ‘ghetto’ initiatives as a discourse hence implies that the ‘problems’ that inform the ‘ghetto’ discourse emerge as problematisations through discursive struggles (Bacchi & Goodwin, 2016, p. 6). The ‘ghetto’ is thus “simultaneously material and semiotic in character” (Fairclough, 2013, p. 178).

In order to trace the shifts in meaning and the increasing ethnicisation and spatialisation of the ‘ghetto’ issue, I conducted a discourse-based document analysis of the government’s 2004, 2010 and 2018 ghetto initiatives, which mark nodal points in the discursive production of spaces of exclusion and stigmatisation. I thereby aim to illuminate how the discursive framing of certain areas and people and the labelling of these spaces as ‘ghettos’ is used to (re)produce, maintain and naturalise relations of dominance and social injustice (van Dijk, 1993, p. 254). As the focus is thus on the dialectical relationship between language and power, I followed a critical discourse analysis approach (Hastings, 1999, p. 9-10; Jacobs, 2006, p. 45).

The policy documents are understood here as “situated products” (Prior, 2003, p. 26) that emerged from discursive practices. To account for both these contextual as well as intratextual dimensions in the analysis, I adopted Fairclough’s (Lees, 2004, p. 104) three-dimensional framework for critical discourse analysis which comprises (1) text analysis (evaluation of linguistic structure and content), (2) discursive practice (consideration of the contextual embeddedness of the document in (public) debates) and (3) social practice (conceptualisation of “the more general ideological context within which the discourses have taken place” (Lees, 2004, p. 104)). The analysis thus not only refers to the mere content level, but also includes the discourse’s contextual production process as well as its wider (socio-political) effects.

Due to the limited scope of this thesis, however, I am not able to consider the context of the ‘ghetto’ discourse in-depth. Instead, I will focus on three key policy papers and respective speech transcripts that marked a further institutionalisation of the ‘ghetto’ discourse in political practices. While the consideration of only a few documents can potentially lead to selective accentuation and an inaccurate representation of the discourse, I understand the analysed documents as ‘micro-discourses’ which, due to their centrality in structuring the ‘macro-discourse’, are still able to point to issues of hegemony, exclusion and power as negotiated in the Danish ‘ghetto’ discourse (Strauss & Feiz, 2013, p. 312-313). I thus assume that (political) negotiation processes converge and condense in these documents. Moreover, the policy papers examined here also provide the discursive framework for legislation and are hence central to the reproduction and reinforcement of the hegemonic position of the discourse. However, as the deliberation process of this hegemonic position is not further elaborated in the context of this thesis, my approach can be described as a discourse-based document analysis.

2.2 Interviews

In order to elaborate how the discursive production of the ‘ghetto’ as the spatial context for everyday life of residents is negotiated on the neighbourhood scale, I conducted qualitative semi-structured interviews with nine residents and eight local professionals in Tingbjerg between November 2020 and August 2021 (for an overview of the interviewees and the interview settings, see Appendix D). The interviewed local professionals were in different ways associated with the social comprehensive plan of Tingbjerg and hence occupied an “interstitial role [...] in-between the state and authorities and the local communities” (Birk & Fallov, 2021, p. 266) and as such mediate between the production of the ‘ghetto’ discourse from above and its negotiation from below.

I conducted ten individual interviews, two interviews with two people each and one interview with three people⁴. Except for the local professionals, the participants were free to choose whether they wanted to conduct the interview in Danish or English⁵ and through (video)call or in person. The participants were thus offered a degree of control over the research setting, which seemed appropriate both with regard to the ongoing Corona pandemic and the (partly) sensitive topics discussed (Hanna, 2012, p. 239; Weller, 2017, p. 619).

The selection of the participants followed a purposeful sampling. For the group of local professionals, the main objective was to include those that can provide different perspectives and worked at different levels that are associated with the social comprehensive plan for Tingbjerg. The contact to this group was mainly established through a gate keeper. Initiating contact to residents was difficult due to the ongoing Corona pandemic, with many events being cancelled or limited in terms of the number of participants, but also due to the summer holidays, which coincided with the primary period of data collection. Eventually, contact was initiated via a neighbourhood Facebook group, where I contacted some residents based on their activities in the group I had observed over several weeks. In addition, I wrote a post in the group myself, in which I specifically addressed people who describe themselves as being engaged in the neighbourhood. In response to this post, I got in touch with another five people.

While the criteria of being involved/volunteering is not in itself a necessary condition for answering my research, through its inclusion I aimed to gain deeper insights despite the limited scope of my thesis. The identification of the targeted sample was thus informed by my assumption that individuals who self-identify as active and engaged residents of Tingbjerg would be more concerned with negotiating the effects of the 'ghetto' label for the representation of and lived experiences in the space. I thus did not aim to identify individuals who could speak as representatives for certain groups of residents, but instead "respondents are relied upon to speak primarily of and for themselves" (Tracy, 2012, p. 141).⁶ I thus follow Crouch & McKenzie (2006, p. 492), who stated for their own research that

⁴ Interviewees O and P were interviewed together at their own request. The other two multi-person interviews were conducted as such for practical reasons. In hindsight, I considered the interaction among the participants as valuable, as it allowed participants to "create meaning or supplement each other's answers" (Beitin, 2012, p. 245).

⁵ Although I myself am not proficient in Danish, I wanted to give the participants the opportunity to express themselves in their mother tongue / the language they use in their everyday life, as I assumed that the interviewees could describe their experiences more nuanced in their own language. This was also central to the analysis of the interviews, in which I was especially interested in the specific word choice.

⁶ Since 'the residents' do not constitute a homogeneous group, I do not claim to be able to represent the experiences of and with the 'ghetto' label for the group *in toto*. Still, limitations arise due to the small number of interviews conducted and the selection of participants. I only spoke to one male resident and the participants

“[r]ather than being systematically selected instances of specific categories of attitudes and responses, here respondents embody and represent meaningful experience-structure links”.

The interviews were structured around the participants' subjective perception of Tingbjerg, the neighbourhood community and their motivations to get engaged in the latter⁷. The interviews were based on flexible interview guidelines (Tracy, 2012, p. 139) and more precise (follow-up) questions evolved in the course of the interview. Accordingly, the questions were not pre-formulated but kept open “so that the participants can construct the meaning of a situation” (Cresswell, 2013, p. 24). Since it was important for me to understand the participants' choice of words, focus and framing in describing their everyday experiences of and in Tingbjerg, I introduced the aim of the study very broadly in the opening of the interviews as an investigation of the sense of neighbourhood community in Tingbjerg⁸. In order to avoid reducing residents' experiences to the 'ghetto' discourse and the stigmatisation of the neighbourhood, I have therefore only taken up this topic after it was brought up by the participants themselves in the course of the interview. The interviews were recorded and then transcribed. If the interviews were in Danish, I identified the passages relevant to the research question and translated them⁹. The transcripts were then anonymised and, in the case of the professionals' job titles/organisations, very broadly worded to address the concern of deductive disclosure (Kaiser, 2012, p. 457).

Since the residents relate different experiences and subjective meanings to living in Tingbjerg, it is significant for me as a researcher to “look for the complexities of views rather than narrowing meanings into a few categories or ideas” (Cresswell, 2013, p. 24). I have therefore not applied a priori classifications and categorical frameworks to the data analysis, but rather developed themes inductively (Cresswell, 2013, p. 24). Interpretation thus became central, whereby I as a researcher adopt a central position and less 'findings' than 'assertions' emerge from the research process (Stake, 1995, p.

were all either working, in education or already retired. It would have been particularly interesting to also include the perspective of younger male residents of an ethnic minority background, as these were identified by other participants to embody intersectional stigmata.

⁷ Due to the shift of focus in my research interest, the interviews with residents H, J, K, L focused mainly on their affiliation to and engagement in youth organisations. The interviews with interviewees A-G were not only conducted for the purpose of this thesis but were also used for a research project on the imaginaries involved in the current redevelopment of Tingbjerg. Although written and/or oral consent was obtained prior to the interviews, the change of the research focus raises issues with regard to informed consent. However, as this is mainly a shift in relation to the studied group rather than the topic itself, it is not considered problematic in the context of this study.

⁸ The specific purpose of the study was then revealed in the debriefing after the interview.

⁹ Participants were also given the opportunity to make changes after the transcription. Four participants made use of this opportunity, mainly for clarifications.

8, 42). To get familiar with the content of the interviews, transcripts were read successively and were then subject to a first cycle open and in vivo coding to capture the participants' attribution of meaning (Saldaña, 2013, p. 91, 100). In a secondary cycle coding, data was examined for common meta-themes by focused and axial coding. Through focused coding, “the most salient categories in the data corpus” (Saldaña, 2013, p. 264) could be extracted, which were related to each other through axial coding (Saldaña, 2013, 261; Wicks, 2010, p. 154). In this way, I was able to compare and contrast both the overarching categories as well as the different nuances of the respective participants, linking together the concepts raised.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 The ghetto as a sociospatial device

Referring to the *ghetto nuovo* of Renaissance Venice, Wacquant (2010a, p. 166) traces how the ghetto emerged as a “sociospatial device permitting the joint economic exploitation and social ostracization” of Jews in Medieval Europe and, since the 20th-century, African Americans in the US context. While the respective seclusion fostered a rich cultural life, the development of independent institutions and close social bonds between the residents, the ghetto also constituted a means of social and spatial fixation and confinement employed by those in power, so that both the ghetto space as well as its residents were subject to extensive social, cultural and political restrictions (Slater & Anderson, 2012).

As such, in both the Medieval Jewish and the 20th-century American ghetto, the ghetto as an “*institutional form*” constitutes a “spatially-based concatenation of mechanisms of *ethnoracial control and closure*” (Wacquant, 1997, p. 343, emphasis in original). According to Wacquant (2006), the space of the ghetto is instrumentalised to reconcile the conflicting goals of economic exploitation of the confined population and the simultaneous exclusion of these population groups, which are “regarded as socially contaminating and corrosive” (Hancock & Mooney, 2013, p. 55). The resulting formation is a discrete space inhabited by a (racially) homogeneous group deemed undesirable (Slater & Anderson, 2012).

As a “janus-faced institution” (Wacquant, 2006, p. 136), the ghetto fulfils opposite functions for the two collectives it binds: for the dominant group, it serves as an efficient means of control and subordination to its material and symbolic advantage, while for the subordinated group it represents an integrating and protective institution, insofar as it shields its members from constant contact with the dominant group and promotes cohesion and community building within the restricted sphere. Within this sphere, the enforced spatial and institutional enclosure intensifies social exchange and cultural participation (Wacquant, 2006). The forced inward orientation thereby distracts from class and cultural differences between those living in the ghetto and contributes to an increased sense of solidarity and community (Wacquant, 2006).

Following Wacquant (2011, p. 5, as cited in Hancock & Mooney, 2013, p. 55), four components are thus central to a sociological understanding of the ‘ghetto’: “(i) *stigma*, (ii) *constraint*, (iii) *spatial confinement* and (iv) *institutional parallelism*” (emphasis in original). The understanding of the ‘ghetto’ as a social and institutional form hence differs from the widespread descriptive use of the term as a segregated and impoverished urban area and instead shifts the focus to questions of power as well as the role of the state for the formation and perpetuation of the ghetto. It does not constitute a “natural area” (Wacquant, 2006, p. 12) that has emerged from ecological dynamics, as it was, for example, conceptualised by Wirth (1928), but is an expression of a particular form of collective violence concretised in urban space (Hancock & Mooney, 2013; Wacquant, 2006). Accordingly, the process of ghettoisation is not uncontrolled and unplanned but brought about by state mechanisms (Wacquant, 2006).

Drawing on the US American context, Pattillo (2003) highlights racial segregation and subjugation as “key identifiers of ghettos” (p. 1047). While the ghetto is racially segregated, especially historically, it was an economically diverse area (Wacquant, 1997). Furthermore, Wacquant (2006) emphasises that while all ghettos are segregated, not all segregated areas are ghettos. For an urban area to be considered a ghetto, the segregation must be imposed and all-encompassing with the area exhibiting demarcated parallel institutions that enable the enclosed group to reproduce itself (Wacquant, 2006).¹⁰

Different forms of spatial separation can be distinguished from the ghetto, displaying unique characteristics and emerging from differing structural dynamics. According to Marcuse (1997, p. 231), “immigrant or cultural enclaves” differ in terms of the voluntary nature of segregation. Wacquant (2008b), again, contrasts the ghetto to another type of spatialised marginality which he denominates ‘ethnic cluster’. Since the ‘ethnic cluster’ is first and foremost based on class and not race, it contains a heterogeneous group. Moreover, marginalisation here is usually attenuated by state action. As such,

¹⁰ In this regard, segregated areas of the urban elite are not considered a ghetto as this segregation is voluntary.

the 'ethnic cluster' "can work as a springboard for assimilation through processes of cultural learning and social and spatial mobility whereas the ghetto constitutes a rather manifest barrier to integration because it creates both material and symbolic isolation" (Bakkær Simonsen, 2016, p. 87).

For the US American context, Wacquant (2008a, 2008b, 2016) further argues that the Black communal ghetto collapsed after the height of the civil rights movement and gave rise to the 'hyperghetto'¹¹ as a new organisational constellation. Marked by deindustrialisation and the shift to financial capitalism, the communal ghetto lost its economic function as a reservoir of unskilled labour. It henceforth functioned only as an exclusion mechanism of an outcast group whose members were now also economically excluded. At the same time, its institutional desertification advanced, for communal organisations "have been replaced by state institutions of social control" (Wacquant, 2008a, p. 114). As a result, "hyperghettoisation is economically underdetermined and politically overdetermined" (Wacquant, 2016, p. 1079) and the communal ghetto of the first half of the 20th century developed into a "mere receptacle for the stigmatized and superfluous fractions of the black proletariat: the unemployed, welfare recipients, criminals and participants in the booming informal economy" (Wacquant, 2008a, p. 114).

3.2 The 'ghetto' as a sociospatial imaginary

Although the denotation as 'ghetto' is widely considered inappropriate for any area in contemporary Europe (Schultz Larsen, 2011), it is "one of the most pervasive folk concepts" (Hancock & Mooney, 2013, p. 54) employed in both everyday contexts and politics as an umbrella term for varied urban problems such as (racial) segregation, delinquency, poor housing conditions and deprivation. Adopting the concept of 'ghetto' in the European context implies an apparent convergence between poverty and race relations in the US American context and socio-spatial expressions of urban marginality in Europe (Wacquant, 1993). As such, the term is instrumentalised in the political context to evoke and mobilise negative images and emotions in the wider public in order to justify political interventions in the respective urban areas (see chapter 3.5.3).

Whilst zones of urban deprivation in both the US and European context omit the same position "at the bottom of the material and symbolic hierarchy of places that make up the metropolis" (Wacquant, 2016, p. 1080), European working-class districts differ in structure, function and scale, as well as in the political interventions they receive (Schultz Larsen, 2011; Wacquant, 2016). For the European context, Wacquant (1993, p. 368) highlights that declining neighbourhoods instead constitute

¹¹ Marcuse (1997) uses the term 'outcast ghetto' to refer to this socio-spatial constellation.

'ethnic clusters' which are produced by different institutional logics and mechanisms of segregation than the Black ghetto in which "exclusion operates on the basis of colour reinforced by class and state" whereas in the French (and European context more generally) it operates "mainly on the basis of class and mitigated by the state". These declining neighbourhoods in Europe are furthermore characterised by rising ethnic heterogeneity, the absence of parallel institutional structures, "an absence of a collectively held identity" (Hancock & Mooney, 2013, p. 56) and porous boundaries allowing for geographic and social mobility of the inhabitants (Hancock & Mooney, 2013; Slater & Anderson, 2012; Wacquant, 1993; Wacquant, 2008a; Wacquant, 2016). According to Wacquant (2008a, p. 118, emphasis in original), such areas constitute the opposite of ghettos and are more aptly understood as "*anti-ghettos*". The discourse on ghettoisation in the European context is hence said to spatialise and ethnicise social problems instead of relating those to the precarisation of wage labour in a post-Fordist economy. It "partakes of the symbolic demonization of lower-class districts, which weakens them socially and marginalizes them politically" (Wacquant, 2008a, p. 115). If the term 'ghetto' is employed in the European context, the relationship between poverty, concentrated deprivation and disadvantage, and ethnic clustering is obscured, as are the (political) mechanisms that produce them (Birk, 2017; Hancock & Mooney, 2013; Schultz Larsen, 2011).

Particularly since the 1990s, the 'ghetto' trope is increasingly circulating in the European context and relates to a new crisis consciousness, in the course of which economic insecurity and migration issues are condensed into discussions about urban decline (Wellgraf, 2014, p. 207). In many European countries, an associative and effective 'ghetto' discourse can thus be identified even without 'real' 'ghettos'. Following Laclau, Wellgraf (2014, p. 206) therefore argues that the 'ghetto' in the European context functions as an 'empty signifier' which links a chain of disparate elements and thereby puts them into a discursive context. The term 'ghetto' can only become a discursive node by largely losing its specific meaning and ultimately standing as a hollow cipher for an equivalence relationship between different problem constellations, whereby their specificities and different structural causes are obfuscated.

Recourse to the trope of 'ghetto' is therefore in general seen as problematic in the European context, especially as it informs policy making (Bakkær Simonsen, 2016; Hancock & Mooney, 2013; Schultz Larsen, 2011). Since 'ghetto' is not a neutral term, it is not simply descriptive but an expression of symbolic power through naming (Bourdieu, 1991). In this regard, the political and media instrumentalisation of the term is aiming "to shock public conscience by activating the lay imaginary of urban badlands" (Wacquant, 2016, p. 1080). Thus, employing the term does not merely reflect but "*enacts a reality*" (Birk, 2017, p. 770, emphasis in original) for "urban environments and urban problems do not

exist independently of categories of perception” (Tissot, 2018, p. 152; see also Ahearn, 2001; Bakkær Simonsen, 2016).

While the ‘ghetto’ is thus not appropriate as an analytical concept for addressing urban marginality in Europe, Pinkster et al. (2020, p. 524) argue that “it is nevertheless relevant as a sociospatial imaginary”.

“Spatial imaginaries help shape material practices molding geographies through their linguistic circulation and embodiment. Part of this agency stems from spatial imaginaries (re)producing, and changing, social perceptions about places even among those whom have never been there. Thus, while the imagination is often thought of as individual in nature, spatial imaginaries refer to ideas about spaces and places shared collectively.” (Watkins, 2015, p. 509)

As works on the ‘welfare ghetto’ (Hancock & Mooney, 2013), ‘reputational ghetto’ (Slater & Anderson, 2012) or ‘ghettos of the mind’ (Byrne & Chonail, 2014) illustrate, the ‘ghetto’ imaginary “is used to identify a mythical other place that is characterised by crime, gangs and societal breakdown and forms the home of a deviant urban underclass” (Pinkster et al., 2020, p. 524-525). Spatial imaginaries are thus closely interwoven with social imaginaries and mainly refer to characteristics of the US American ‘hyperghetto’ as conceptualised by Wacquant (Watkins, 2015, p. 510). Although they do not represent an objective ‘reality’, they are regularly taken as common sense and thereby contribute to differentiations between people and places and the normalisation of urban inequalities (van Gent & Jaffe, 2017, p. 553).

These socio-spatial imaginaries, again, are mobilised in “processes of othering” (Pinkster et al., 2020, p. 523), which reflect the power relations within a society. Othering describes a “power in representation” through which the dominant group has “the power to mark, assign and classify [...] to represent someone or something in a certain way” (Hall, 1997, p. 259). For the Danish context, the ‘ghetto’ is discursively constructed as ‘outside’ of ‘proper society’ and takes on a symbolic function as a “*spatialization of otherness*” (Bakkær Simonsen, 2016, p. 90, emphasis in original; see also Glasze et al., 2012; Johansen & Jensen, 2017). As this spatial Othering constitutes a hierarchical organisation of (urban) space and its populations, a consequential demarcation between ‘them’ and ‘us’ is drawn, which “allows for generalised conceptions and collective beliefs to frame the constructed group [...] as an abstract and impersonal ‘other’” (Schultz Larsen & Delica, 2019, p. 551). With the ‘ghetto’ being constructed as the space of these ‘Other’, it is conceptualised as both the spatial and social margin of society. However, Johansen & Jensen (2017, p. 298) note that this margin is “not far away but central to the reproduction of the state, since the state and the margin are continuously defined in opposition to each other through the invocation of images of the proper citizen” (see also Das & Poole, 2004).

As spatial Othering, however, is inherently connected to the exercise of power of a dominant group, the agency of the dominated groups is often overlooked. Turning to the concept of ‘bordering’,

again, points to the reciprocity and the negotiation involved in the production of urban spaces as multiple. In this context, Scott & Sohn (2019, p. 298) interpret bordering “in terms of creating, re-creating and contesting socio-spatial distinctions at the formal (e.g. political) as well as everyday level”. Bordering is thus closely related to both place narratives and place-making. As a process, it “often involves a tension between ‘official’ and instrumental forms of place-making and informal, everyday narratives of place” (Keresztély et al., 2017, p. 1081). Scott & Sohn distinguish between three bordering mechanisms and in doing so point to the interconnectedness of social and discursive dimensions:

“we define three practices that communicate place ideas and give place borders: attribution, appropriation and representation. [...] *Attribution* points to the characteristics that are cognitively associated with place (functions, lifestyles, milieu, social image). [...] *appropriation* relates to the everyday practices of using/experiencing urban places that allow for identification with place and transformations of place identities (for example, the naming of places, uses of public places, performative practices, coding of physical space). *Representation*, finally, refers to the socially communicated place ideas that generally include the first two bordering mechanisms.” (Scott & Sohn, 2019, p. 301, emphasis in original)

While in contemporary Europe, (the construction of) the ‘ghetto’ space is an expression of a process of (spatial) Othering, the concept of bordering draws attention to the negotiation processes involved in its (re-) production and potential contestation. Hence, the analytical focus shifts from physical and/or social features that make up the ‘ghetto’ space to the construction of social boundaries and structural contexts and mechanisms from which it stems (Blokland, 2008, p. 377). Since the ‘ghetto’ trope is associated with value-laden notions of immigration and extensive (socio-economic) problems, stigmatisation contributes to its construction as a marginalised space in the urban hierarchy. In the Danish context, the ‘ghetto’ as both a label and an institutionalisation is therefore closely related to the concept of territorial stigmatisation, which Wacquant (2007, p. 67, emphasis in original) introduces to capture what he terms a “*blemish of place*” that is “superimposed on the already existing stigmata traditionally associated with poverty and ethnic origin or postcolonial immigrant status, to which it is closely linked but not reducible”.¹²

¹² Territorial stigmatisation is often conjugated with racialised stigma. In this context, deprived urban neighbourhoods are racialised “through selective accentuation or fictive projection: The populations of these disparaged districts are nearly always painted in darker and more exotic hues than their demography warrants” (Wacquant et al., 2014, p. 1274). Jensen & Christensen (2012) note in this context that while territorial stigmatisation has structural causes, individual cultural markers are used at the micro level to fuel stigmatising discourses. Slater & Anderson (2012) similarly describe how stigmatising discourses in St Paul’s, Bristol, are fixated on the Black community despite their status as a minority within the deprived neighbourhood. Hancock & Mooney (2013), Rhodes (2012) as well as Junnilainen (2020) again point to the conjugation of territorial stigmatisation, class stigma and stigmatisation directed towards (residents of) social housing estates.

3.3 Territorial stigmatisation and advanced marginality

Arguing against the notion of a transatlantic convergence of US American ghettos and French banlieues, Wacquant (2008a, p. 115) emphasises that instead, “a new regime of urban poverty [is emerging] on both sides of the Atlantic”, which he refers to as “*advanced marginality*” (emphasis in original).

“This *advanced marginality* is fed by the fragmentation of wage labor, the reorientation of state policy away from social protection and in favor of market compulsion, and the generalized resurgence of inequality – that is, it is marginality *spawned by the neoliberal revolution*.” (Wacquant, 2008a, p. 115, emphasis in original)

Hence, the focus of analysis shifts from the examination of the concrete manifestations of urban marginality to their characteristic properties and the structural logics that produce and drive it. In this context, Wacquant distinguishes four structural logics which fuel advanced marginality: “occupational dualization and the resurgence of inequality (macrosocial), the desocialization of wage labour (economic), the retreat of the social state (political), and concentration and defamation (spatial)” (Dangschat, 2009, p. 835). In light of rising levels of insecurity and accompanied by the decrease of public and private resources, more and more people experience “relegation to decaying neighbourhoods” in which residence is accompanied by “heightened stigmatization” (Wacquant, 2008b, p. 25).

Wacquant argues that six distinct yet interconnected properties of advanced marginality can be derived: (i) deregulation and degradation of wage labour; (ii) “functional disconnection from macroeconomic trends” (Wacquant, 2008b, p. 236), implying that most deprived groups and neighbourhoods remain unaffected of periods of economic growth; (iii) “territorial fixation and stigmatisation” (Wacquant, 2008b, p. 237) referring to the concentration of marginalised groups in specific urban areas which are (publicly) regarded as degraded and degrading; (iv) territorial alienation and “dissolution of ‘place’” (Wacquant, 2008b, p. 241), meaning “the loss of a humanized, culturally familiar and socially filtered locale with which marginalized urban populations identify and in which they feel ‘at home’ and in relative security” (Wacquant, 2007, p. 69); (v) “loss of hinterland” (Wacquant, 2008b, p. 243) such that residents of deprived neighbourhoods can no longer take recourse to collective (informal) support networks and institutions within the area; and furthermore (vi) “social fragmentation and symbolic splintering” (Wacquant, 2008b, p. 244). Constituting a core feature of the regime of advanced marginality, the causes and consequences of territorial stigmatisation can thus only be understood against the backdrop of the interaction of these properties.

The concept of territorial stigmatisation was introduced by Wacquant (2007, 2008b) building on his comparative sociological work on French working-class banlieues and the Black American ghetto, noting that “advanced marginality tends to concentrate in isolated and bounded territories

increasingly perceived by both outsiders and insiders as social purgatories, leprous badlands at the heart of the postindustrial metropolis where only the refuse of society would accept to dwell” (Wacquant, 2007, p. 67). Many empirical studies have subsequently approached territorial stigmatisation and applied it – with different focuses on either the production of (see chapter 3.5) or responses to (see chapter 3.6) it – in different sociocultural and political contexts. While the findings of some of these studies support Wacquant’s assumptions and conceptualisation, others point to issues of transferability to contexts with, for example, a different welfare regime or shortcomings regarding the assumed (non-)agency of residents in light of territorial stigmatisation¹³. While these empirical works complement and/or expand the concept, Wacquant’s work remains the seminal point of reference.

Acknowledging that neighbourhood taint as such is not a new and distinctive phenomenon in the urban landscape, Wacquant et al. (2014, p. 1273, emphasis in original) argue that “the disgrace that afflicts contemporary boroughs of dispossession differs from the spatial smear of earlier epochs in at least five ways”: (i) the territorial stigma of such places is “closely tied to, but has become partially *autonomized* from, the stain of poverty, subaltern ethnicity [...], degraded housing, imputed immortality, and street crime” (p. 1273); (ii) “territorial stigma has become *nationalized* and *democratized*” (p. 1273) insofar as in each country, certain neighbourhoods are renowned as places of urban degradation and their name is circulated in public discourses “as synonyms for social hell” (p. 1273); (iii) these neighbourhoods are represented as “vortexes and vectors of social *disintegration*” (p. 1274); often discursively constructed with regard to (iv) “*racialization through selective accentuation or fictive projection*” (p. 1274); and (v) the stigmatised districts are subjected to “stern corrective reactions driven by fright, revulsion, and condemnation” (p. 1274) and performed by the dominant actors.

Wacquant’s concept of territorial stigmatisation draws on and combines Erving Goffman’s interactionist theory of stigma and Pierre Bourdieu’s theory of symbolic power as “to link subjective experiences of stigma to a structural analysis of how stigma is socially, symbolically, and politically produced” (Schultz Larsen & Delica, 2019, p. 540). Following Goffman (1963, p. 9), stigma¹⁴ – understood as an attribute that is “deeply discrediting” – disqualifies its possessor “from full social acceptance”. Hence, stigma is not conceptualised as static or fixed but relational, as it only emerges through interactions between “normals” (p. 15) and individuals that possess “an undesired

¹³ Wacquant’s inattention to the agency of residents in stigmatised neighbourhoods has, for example, been criticised by Gilbert (2010), Jensen & Christensen (2012) and Kirkness (2014).

¹⁴ In a differentiated elaboration, Link & Phelan (2001, p. 367) define stigma “as the co-occurrence of its components labeling, stereotyping, separation, status loss, and discrimination” that unfold in a power situation. While this definition refers to stigma in relation to individuals, it is still useful to consider in the context of territorial stigma as the definition points to the multidimensionality and simultaneity of several components involved in the stigmatisation process.

differentness from what we had anticipated” (p. 15). In this respect, Goffman (1963, p. 14) distinguishes between three broad aspects to which stigma can refer: “abominations of the body”, “blemishes of individual character”, and “tribal stigma of race, nation and religion”. Wacquant (2007, p. 67) adds to this the “blemish of place”, thereby revealing the importance of “space as a distinctive anchor of social discredit” (Wacquant et al., 2014, p. 1272). In order to connect this perspective of territorial stigmatisation from below with questions of institutional mechanisms of relegation and stigmatisation, Wacquant employs Bourdieu’s (1991) understanding of symbolic power as “a *deeply consequential form of ramifying action through mental and objectal representations*” which as such “affects how myriad agents feel, think, and act as it percolates down and diffuses across the social structures of the city” (Wacquant et al., 2014, p. 1275, emphasis in original). While Bourdieu focusses on how symbolic power contributes to generating groups, Wacquant “adds the *crucial mediation of place as material container, social crossroads, and mental imagery* carrying deep emotional valences, in and through which collectives will emerge (or not) through struggles to establish claims over the built environment” (Wacquant et al., 2014, p. 1272, emphasis in original). Hence, territorial stigmatisation is said to involve socio-spatial group makings and category constructions that are integrated in “multilevel structural processes whereby persons are selected, thrust, and maintained in marginal locations” (Wacquant, 2016, p. 1078).

By bringing the two theories together, Wacquant fosters an understanding of urban marginality from above and from below:

“Bourdieu works from above, following the flow of efficient representations from symbolic authorities such as state, science, church, the law, and journalism, down to their repercussions upon institutional operations, social practices, and the self; Goffman works from below, tracing the effects of procedures of sense-making and techniques of ‘management of spoiled identity’ across encounters and their aggregations into organizations. They can thus be wedded to advance our grasp of the ways in which noxious representations of space are produced, diffused, and harnessed in the field of power, by bureaucratic and commercial agencies, as well as in everyday life in ways that alter social identity, strategy, and structure.” (Wacquant et al., 2014, p. 1272-1273)

3.4 Excursus – Production of space

In Wacquant's account of territorial stigmatisation, space is thus not conceptualised as static and fixed, but instead the importance of the (symbolic) struggles for representation in the production of stigmatised territories is emphasised. As these categorisations imply a hierarchisation of urban space, space can be understood as one element of the creation and maintenance of social inequality (Neely & Samura, 2011, p. 1940). Accordingly, an understanding of prevailing power structures is essential when examining and framing spatial processes and representations (Neely & Samura, 2011, p.

1935). (Power) struggles over space enable elites “to make place, define its borders and its contents as well as the people who legitimately can occupy it as a group” (Sandbjerg Hansen, 2021, p. 8). In this context, Bourdieu (1991, p. 239) emphasises that it is above all the labels given to places, people, activities and objects that construct realities. Space is hence multidimensional and understood as both material and semiotic.

Based on the premise that space is created through “a mix of legal, political, economic, and social practices and structures” (Martin et al., 2003, p. 114), Lefebvre (1991, p. 26, emphasis in original) concludes that “([s]ocial) space is a (social) product” and accordingly both socially and historically specific. Thus, Lefebvre argues that space is continuously (re-)produced and contested, so that the focus shifts “from *things in space* to the actual *production of space*” (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 37, emphasis in original). Lefebvre hence develops the concept of the spatial triad, which interprets space as the dialectic interplay of three dimensions: (1) *spatial practice*, (2) *representation of space*, and (3) *spaces of representation* (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 38-39).

Spatial practice refers to the perceived space, which describes the “material dimension of social activity and interaction” (Schmid, 2008, p. 36). The material features of a place serve as the basis of spatial practices and accordingly shape the everyday life of its inhabitants (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 38). The second dimension, *representations of space*, describes the conceived space and thus the “rationally abstracted space [...] where ideology, power and knowledge dominate” (Buser, 2012, p. 284), which is mediated at the level of language and discourses. Hence, although representations of space are primarily abstract, through their implementation in plans and designs they are momentous for physical social relations (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 41). The third dimension, *spaces of representation* refers to the subjectively imagined or felt aspect of space. Lefebvre identifies this as the lived space, which due to subjectivity also allows for “alternative imaginations of space” (Simonsen, 2005, p. 7). It is “directly *lived* through its associated images and symbols, and hence the space of ‘inhabitants’ and ‘users’”(Lefebvre, 1991, p. 39, emphasis in original).

Based on Lefebvre's spatial triad, space is understood as the reciprocal relationship of the three equal and simultaneous spatial dimensions and accordingly also processual. Since the evaluation of the relationship of the three dimensions is individually conditioned, Lefebvre (1991, p. 27) points to the “multiplicity of spaces”, “characterised by a ‘contemporaneous plurality’” (Bork-Hüffer et al., 2016, p. 135). However, this multiplicity “may give rise to various tensions and conflicts over the use of places” (Brun, 2001, p. 20) and highlights their political nature as both encompassing and displaying uneven power geometries while also offering the potential for contestation and rearrangement of those (Bork-Hüffer et al., 2016). While space is thus potentially open, spaces of inclusion as well as

exclusion can be established both physically and discursively through the utilisation of power (Bork-Hüffer et al., 2016).

3.5 Production of territorial stigmatisation

The exercise of power is thus also inherent to territorial stigmatisation, which directs the focus to the production of territorial stigmatisation as an intentional process. The notion of ‘production’ of territorial stigma in this context implies that “symbolic systems do not simply mirror social relations but help constitute them” (Slater, 2017a, p. 117), shifting the focus to the actors in this process and the structures within which they operate. Accordingly, one strand of research analyses “the symbolic power of negative images that are reproduced by the media, politicians or other public actors” (Geiselsart, 2017, p. 216). Another strand again discusses “how stigmatised territories are ‘made’ through the physical and symbolic construction of spatial concentrations of poverty, marginality, and disadvantage” (Sisson, 2020, p. 2). Ultimately, these examinations refer to two sides of the same coin, since in addressing the production of territorial stigma the motives of (state) institutions have to be considered within a broader political economy of neoliberal capitalist accumulation (Tyler & Slater, 2018; Wacquant et al., 2014). Urban marginalisation is thus analysed “as the outcome of symbolic power through which elites impose and justify their own interests by defaming the places of the ‘other’” (Cuny, 2018, p. 888). Hence, asymmetrical power relations are inherent to the conceptualisation of territorial stigmatisation – “it takes power to stigmatize” (Link & Phelan, 2001, p. 375).

In order to address how territorial stigma is socially, symbolically, and politically produced on a structural level, Tyler & Slater (2018) argue for an understanding of territorial stigma as a “social process” (p. 728) which “functions as a form of power” (p. 721). Wacquant (2008b, p. 24), again, refers to stigma as a form of “violence from above” and thereby points to both its source as well as mechanism. In this context, the intimate link between stigmatisation and neoliberal governance in the forms of “attempts to manage and/or change the behaviour of populations through deliberate stigma strategies which inculcate humiliation and shame” (Tyler & Slater, 2018, p. 727) is highlighted. These ‘stigma strategies’ are employed by individuals, communities and the state to (re)produce social inequality and thus relations of domination and subordination (Sisson, 2020). With the introduction of the concept of territorial stigmatisation, Wacquant links the subjective experiences of stigma to these macro-contexts and the intensification of urban marginality under neoliberal urban governance.

3.5.1 Making of spatial concentration

Constituting a synergy of state policies, financial interests and market forces, also the structure of the housing market contributes to the production of territorial stigmatisation as its structure and allocation policies unequally distribute agents, social categories and capital across physical space (Schultz Larsen, 2014; Schultz Larsen & Delica, 2019). In this context, social housing estates in particular are subject to territorial stigmatisation due to both the (perceived) built structure and the socio-economic composition of the residents (Hastings & Dean, 2003, p. 172). Their stigmatisation is mostly related to 'residualisation' and the allocation of the poorest and most vulnerable people and households to the housing stock of the social housing sector (Schultz Larsen, 2014; Sisson, 2020). Resident groups possibly already stigmatised at other levels and therefore constructed as 'Other' in dominant discourses are thereby concentrated "within physical environments which are often aesthetically distinctive and increasingly neglected by housing authorities, thus compounding stigmatisation" (Sisson, 2020, p. 4; see also Leaney, 2020). In his study on the making of spatial concentration of deprived households in Copenhagen, Schultz Larsen (2014) portrays how differentiated forms of housing subsidies and housing allocation mechanisms contributed to the concentration of dispossessed households in specific places. He argues that the institutionalisation of a dualised and asymmetrical housing market with the Danish government favouring homeownership fostered spatial concentration and defamiation of neighbourhoods with a high share of social housing.

3.5.2 Representing discredited places

In order to understand how certain areas "become so widely shunned, feared and condemned over time" (Slater, 2017a, p. 116) the circulation of dominant representations of these spaces in media and political discourses have to be taken into account. Territorial stigmatisation is exercised by a range of actors both within and outside the state "whose social, political or economic position allows them to create or promote territorial stigma, sometimes for economic ends" (Butler et al., 2018, p. 498). While in the context of this thesis only the most dominant forces in the field, namely media and politics¹⁵, are addressed, it is recognised that these actors do not act independently, but are deeply embedded in and constitutive of the dominant political-social nexus¹⁶.

¹⁵ Most authors refer to 'the media' and 'politics' as producers of territorial stigmatisation in general and not to journalists, commentators, politicians or public representatives as individualised actors. Territorial stigmatisation is hence a collective activity. The focus of analysis is thus shifted to the structural and systemic forces which inform and spawn territorial stigma (for an exception, see Schultz Larsen, 2014; Slater, 2017a).

¹⁶ Marelli (2019) points to this embeddedness in macro-level structures even for organisations working within the neighbourhoods on de-stigmatisation strategies. As these organisations depend on (financial) resources from

The media is widely referred to as being central in the production of territorial stigma, as media coverage tends to focus on “sensationalistic portrayals of people and places” (Sisson, 2020, p. 7) and to reproduce dominant representations, thereby reinforcing the views of dominant groups (Kirkness, 2014; Sisson, 2020; Slater, 2017a). As stated by Kirkness (2014), however, the media are not solely responsible for the processes of labelling and stigmatisation but pick up on and circulate (urban) policy discourses.

Public institutions and actors hence contribute to the production and reinforcement of territorial stigmatisation. Slater (2017b, p. 244) points out that the state is not a “bureaucratic monolith delivering uniform goods” but is active in shaping discourses through the production, distribution and representation of ‘problem’ categories and the policies derived from it (Garbin & Millington, 2012; Kirkness, 2014; Wacquant et al., 2014). Hence, the state is said to constitute a “potent stratifying and classifying agency that continually moulds social and physical space, and particularly the shape, recruitment, structure, and texture of lower-class districts” (Slater, 2017b, p. 244).

A “network of representations” (Kirkness, 2014, p. 1282) of the tainted areas is produced through a synergy of urban policies and the instrumentalisation of statistics, mappings and naming, which designate particular areas as spaces of intervention (Birk, 2017; Garbin & Millington, 2012). These representations “make territory appear as pre-given or innate, as opposed to actively produced political constructs” (Sisson, 2020, p. 15) and thereby obfuscate processes of political-economic restructuring and policy interventions that produced them in the first place. Wacquant (2016) illustrates this process by referring to the instrumentalisation of the trope of the ‘ghetto’ in the European context. Through the labelling of an urban area as ‘ghetto’, the state becomes active in producing a certain reality by evoking depictions of these spaces as “urban purgatory” (Wacquant, 2016, p. 1083) and thereby mobilising public anxieties. Labelling thus “closes off alternative diagnoses and facilitates the implementation of policies of removal, dispersal or punitive containment” (Wacquant, 2016, p. 1083).

Wacquant's conceptualisation of territorial stigmatisation hence has a strong discursive dimension building on the more general understanding of the “production of space as a discursive process” (Glasze et al., 2012, p. 1193). It is the labelling of certain urban areas as *Problemquartier* (in Germany), *quartieri degradati* (in Italy), *banlieue-ghetto* (in France) or *krottenwijk* (in the Netherlands) which evokes and facilitates (negative) mental representations and emotions (Wacquant et al., 2014, p. 1273). Language is used “as a form of social practice that constructs and attaches reputations, stigmas and stereotypes to certain geographies and those who live there” (Butler et al., 2018, p. 497). Wacquant notes that territorial stigmatisation does not necessarily have to reflect ‘real’ conditions in

the outside, the stigma is taken up, reproduced and instrumentalised to generate funding. This ‘commodification of stigma’ thus contributes to its consolidation while the acquired funds are used on de-stigmatising initiatives.

order to have material and psychological effects: “[w]hether or not these areas are in fact dilapidated and dangerous, and their population composed essentially of poor people, minorities and foreigners, matters little in the end: the prejudicial belief that they are suffices to set off socially noxious consequences” (Wacquant, 2007, p. 67). Naming thus always implies the exercise of power (Tuan, 1991, p. 688).

3.5.3 Political activation of territorial stigma

Within the political sphere, territorial stigma is hence deployed to justify and publicly legitimate both broad political and financial agendas as well as particular (small-scale) interventions. Tyler (2013) notes in this context that territorial stigma is often used as a consensus-building tool to justify punitive state interventions directed at those living at the bottom of the class structure. Thus, the production and mediation of territorial stigma is seen not simply as an expression of neoliberal ideologies and policies, but as a “core organ” of “neoliberal governmentality” (Tyler, 2013, p. 212; see also Hancock & Mooney, 2013; Schultz Larsen & Delica, 2019). As such, territorial stigmatisation has been central to the “legitimation of neoliberal welfare reform agendas, which have often been accompanied by stigmatising discourses that portray welfare recipients as ‘undeserving’ and intervention as therefore fair and just” (Sisson, 2020, p. 6). These interventions are designed to both manage populations and their behaviour¹⁷ as well as to produce and extract value (Sisson, 2020; Slater, 2017a).

State and urban policies directed at stigmatised urban areas often open up profitable opportunities for different enterprises. Since the “symbolic denigration of places that are physically deteriorated builds public support for redevelopment and ‘primes’ them for reinvestment” (August, 2014, p. 1319), the tainted yet often distorted associations evoked by the stigma provide a justification for the valorisation of social housing estates and their reinsertions into the real estate circuit (Sisson, 2020, p. 6). Different authors thus point to the direct relation between the defamation of place and processes of gentrification (August, 2014; Kallin & Slater, 2014; Slater, 2017a; Slater & Anderson, 2012).

¹⁷ Johansen & Jensen (2017) use the example of Gellerupparken in Denmark to show that the transformation of physical space in the context of a state-initiated regeneration project is closely linked to the “perceived need to reform residents through a host of biopolitical interventions” (Johansen & Jensen, 2017, p. 297). Birk (2017), through his concept of ‘infrastructuring the social’, also shows how the circulation of professionals into marginalised residential areas follows a normative agenda and aims to “*reintegrate* the areas and residents designated as problematic into [...] capitalist relations of work and a notion of ‘Danish society’” (Birk, 2017, p. 769, emphasis in original).

The recourse on territorial stigma seemingly legitimises and justifies state interventions that can perpetuate or even exacerbate structural problems (Sisson, 2020; Tyler, 2013). As Wacquant states:

“Once a place is publicly labelled as a ‘lawless zone’ or ‘outlaw estate’, outside the common norm it is easy for the authorities to justify special measures, deviating from both law and custom, which can have the effect – if not the intention – of destabilizing and further marginalizing their occupants, subjecting them to the dictates of the deregulated labour market, and rendering them invisible or driving them out of a coveted space.” (Wacquant, 2007, p. 69)

The deliberate mobilisation and instrumentalisation of territorial stigma by and through policy discourses thus contributes to the further marginalisation of residents of stigmatised areas while producing (financial) value for the elites.

3.5.4 Obfuscating structural problems

It is widely acknowledged that real (social) problems exist in stigmatised areas. However, scholars criticise that the focus of media attention and public (policy) discourses is often solely directed towards the individuals and/or their spaces of residence, thereby obfuscating the underlying structural and systemic causes of poverty, marginality and disadvantage as well as the political and economic processes which produce them (Hancock & Mooney, 2013; Sisson, 2020; Slater & Anderson, 2012). Structural problems are thereby increasingly individualised, (in some cases racialised) and spatialised.

Negative representations of social housing estates, the notion of neighbourhood effects (Slater, 2017b) and the social mix paradigm¹⁸ (Birk, 2017; Johansen & Jensen, 2017; Slater & Anderson, 2012) inform discourses through which certain neighbourhoods “*become the problem* rather than the expression of the problems to be addressed” (Slater, 2017a, p. 121, emphasis in original). The spatial concentration of marginalised people is thereby represented as the cause of poverty and marginality so that the “spatiality of problems” become “problem spaces” (Sisson, 2020, p. 9), thereby “making poverty, marginality and deprivation seen and treated as the responsibility of the poor, marginalised, and deprived themselves” (Sisson, 2020, p. 5).

¹⁸ Research on neighbourhood effects is often criticised as to neglect structural and institutional dimensions involved in the construction of urban marginality and thus to represent the neighbourhood as the essential problem (Slater, 2017a, p. 121). Likewise, research on the benefits of social mixing locates the problems primarily in the concentration of certain population groups in certain urban areas, thus neglecting the role of (symbolic) structures that contributed to this concentration in the first place.

3.6 Negotiating territorial stigmatisation from below

Territorial stigmatisation is thus neither a static urban phenomenon nor a neutral process “but a consequential and injurious form of *action through collective representation fastened on place*” (Wacquant et al., 2014, p. 1270, emphasis in original). Hence, the “blemish of place” (Wacquant, 2007, p. 67) has consequences for the self-image and the conduct of residents, the actions of private businesses and public bureaucracies, as well as the policies of the state towards the deprived urban areas (Wacquant, 2016). However, the actors affected widely differ regarding their involvement in the production of the stigma, their (potential) scope of agency and thus their strategies and tactics in light of territorial stigmatisation. For the residents of degraded neighbourhoods, the territorial stigma constitutes “a lived everyday experience” (Junnilainen, 2020, p. 46). As often the stigma of the place becomes the stigmatisation of its residents (Slater, 2017b, p. 245), it is possibly affecting employment prospects, receipt of social assistance, approval of mortgages, or educational attainment of residents (see for example Kirkness & Tijé-Dra, 2017; Slater, 2017a; Slater & Anderson, 2012; Wacquant, 1993, 2008a).

In order for (local) elites to instrumentalise territorial stigma, it is constructed with recourse to simplified and overtly negative imaginaries, “prejudices and collective fantasies” (Schultz Larsen & Delica, 2019, p. 552), and as such influences outsiders’ perception of the respective neighbourhood and its residents *in toto*. Although these external views may impact how residents themselves perceive their neighbourhood, it is widely emphasised that their overall attitude towards their place of residence is mostly positive or at least ambivalent, hence pointing to a significant divergence between residents’ perceptions and dominant representations of stigmatised areas (August, 2014; Birk, 2017; Hastings & Dean, 2003; Jensen & Christensen, 2012; Kirkness, 2014; Slater & Anderson, 2012; Wacquant, 1993). This misrepresentation as identified by the residents, as well as the stigma it spawns, is therefore understood as an “injustice” (Garbin & Millington, 2012, p. 2072), compelling residents to mediate between negative external perceptions and the endeavour to maintain a positive self-image (Christensen & Toft Hansen, 2018; Leaney, 2020).

Accordingly, most of the ethnographic studies find that residents are aware of the stigmatising depiction and can invoke the associations implied by it (see, for example, Cairns, 2018; Garbin & Millington, 2012; Jensen & Christensen, 2012; Wacquant, 1993, 2007; Warr, 2005). Regardless of the (presumed) deprivation of the neighbourhood, the stigma itself is thus often identified as the “most persistent issue” (Warr, 2005, p. 299) for residents of defamed places. The concrete consequences of the stigmatisation become particularly evident in residents’ interactions with institutions and actors outside the neighbourhood. Independent of a subject’s coping/resisting strategy or the individual perception of the area, territorial stigma may thus evoke sentiments of guilt and shame which potentially

undermines a sense of belonging and local solidarity and thereby may accelerate existing problems in stigmatised areas (Wacquant, 1993, 2008b, 2016; Warr, 2005; for studies challenging this notion, see August, 2014; Garbin & Millington, 2012; Kirkness, 2014; Pereira & Queirós, 2014; Slater & Anderson, 2012).

However, based on their own experiences, residents of stigmatised areas usually perceive both the spatial characteristics and the social composition of the respective area in a more nuanced and heterogeneous way than external imaginaries convey (Byrne & Chonail, 2014, p. 15; Cairns, 2018, p. 1230; Permentier et al., 2008, p. 836). In this regard, Schultz Larsen & Delica (2019, p. 554) note a "structural asymmetrical representation of the stigmatised territories". As negatively exaggerated and therefore distorted imaginaries imposed from outside and above often prevail and are hence reproduced and reinforced in everyday discourse, media, and political discussion, residents of stigmatised neighbourhoods often only have a minor influence on their own external representation, limiting the possibilities of formulating alternative and positively connoted counter-narratives and communicating them publicly (Wacquant, 1993). Yet, this does not imply that residents remain passive and accept the externally imposed stigma for themselves unchallengedly. As stated by Jensen & Christensen (2012, p. 88) "[w]hat is internalized, then, is not the discrediting itself, but rather awareness of being discredited".

Residents are perceived as agents (Cuny, 2018, p. 890) who adopt different strategies to negotiate and counter territorial stigmatisation, ranging from exit strategies and the internalisation of stigma to more explicit, overt, and externally identifiable forms of resistance (Kirkness, 2014, p. 1282). As the different strategies are not hierarchised or mutually exclusive, various strategies usually occur side by side, each employed by different groups of residents (Garbin & Millington, 2012; Jensen & Christensen, 2012; Kirkness, 2014; Pereira & Queirós, 2014; Slater, 2017a; Wacquant et al., 2014). The recourse to specific responses is attributed to "individual differences in access to personal, social and economic resources" (Junnilainen, 2020, p. 44) as well as context specific "structures of opportunities" (Pereira & Queirós, 2014, p. 1299). As Junnilainen (2020) notes, also the particular places and their historical and cultural context shape residents' responses to stigmatisation. However, not only the reaction to the territorial stigma differs between individuals, but also the experience of it, depending on both ethnic and socio-economic characteristics as well as societal structures.

3.6.1 Submissive strategies

Wacquant argues that various forms of submission – especially the internalisation of the stigma – “tend to be the dominant (if not exclusive) strategies employed by residents of degraded urban zones” (Slater, 2017a, p. 120). Residents would ultimately strive to exit the neighbourhood, but as most are lacking financial and social capital for moving, other submissive strategies are employed. Territorial stigma is thus said to incite

“residents to engage in coping strategies of mutual distancing, lateral denigration, retreat into the private sphere and neighbourhood flight that converge to foster diffidence and disidentification, distend local social ties and thus curtail their capacity for proximate social control and collective action.” (Wacquant, 2016, p. 1083)

However, ethnographic work in different contexts indicates that submissive strategies generally and internalisation of the stigma more concretely are only one potential response among others (see for example Cuny, 2018; Jensen & Christensen, 2012; Junnilainen, 2020; Slater, 2017a). Kirkness (2014), Warr (2005) and Garbin & Millington (2012) note that when internalisation is observed, it is usually limited to certain elements of the stigma.

Another submissive response to territorial stigmatisation identified by Wacquant is dissimulation (Tyler & Slater, 2018). As territorial stigma is not immediately perceivable from the outside, residents of stigmatised neighbourhoods may intend to ‘pass’ and thereby “protect themselves from association with a tarnished place” (Wacquant et al., 2014, p. 1271) by hiding their address or denying their belonging (Kirkness, 2014; Warr, 2005). In this context, Warr (2005, p. 303) moreover observes that some people limit their interactions with people outside their neighbourhood in order to avoid being confronted with the territorial stigma.

A further strategy identified is the retreat into the private sphere and thus a “rejection of the public sphere as an arena for neighbourhood sociability” (Slater, 2017a, p. 119; see also Wacquant, 2010b, p. 218). Pereira & Queirós (2014, p. 1315, emphasis in original) observed in the Portuguese context the emergence of a “subsistence sociability”, implying that residents mainly stay and act within the private realm and “limit their public sociability to a *subsistence* level”. As the stigma is less apparent in the private sphere, Warr (2005) states that residents tend to feel safer and more comfortable in these settings. However, it is still noted that the retreat into the private sphere and the implied alienation from other residents may undermine social networks and cohesion within the neighbourhood (Warr, 2005, p. 285).

While outsiders often perceive stigmatised areas as uniform and homogenous (Slater, 2017a; Wacquant, 1993), residents generally are aware of their often diverse demographic composition and cultural characteristics. This nuanced understanding enables residents to identify micro-differences

which allow for the construction of internal dividing lines between oneself and potentially troublesome individuals or groups (August, 2014; Schultz Larsen & Delica, 2019). By pronouncing these micro-differences, the stigmatisation is diverted away from oneself onto a “faceless, demonized other” (Wacquant, 2007, p. 67). For oneself or one’s group, the applicability of the stigma is negated, yet, for the neighbourhood in general, it remains uncontested (August, 2014; Cuny, 2018; Jensen & Christensen, 2012; Leaney, 2020; Warr, 2005).

3.6.2 The notion of resistance

Recent research on residents’ responses to territorial stigmatisation mainly identifies individual coping and contesting strategies from below¹⁹, which in the following both are regarded as (potential) forms of resistance. In this context, Sisson (2020) introduces the concept of “*territorial struggles*” (p. 2, emphasis in original) in order to stress that “territorial stigmatisation is contestable rather than inevitable or innate” (p. 2). Different ethnographic studies support this notion of agency among residents of stigmatised areas, thus challenging Wacquant’s assumption of internalisation of stigma as dominant response (see for example Gilbert, 2010; Jensen & Christensen, 2012; Kirkness, 2014). Garbin & Millington (2012, p. 2079), again, emphasise that all strategies employed to respond to stigmatisation inevitably partake in the reproduction of the stigma: “resistance can never proceed from a position ‘beyond’ the territorial stigma”. While resistance can thus never be in a position of exteriority in relation to the stigma, it is however noted that “alternative practices and representations of territory can and do change these structures” (Sisson, 2020, p. 16; see also Garbin & Millington, 2012, p. 2079).

As has been stated, residents are usually aware of the devalued representations of their place of living and therefore have to “negotiate a positive sense of self within dominant discourses” (Leaney, 2020, p. 392). In addition to the pronunciation of micro-differences, this is said to be primarily achieved by emphasising the positive aspects of (living in) the respective neighbourhood (August, 2014, p. 1329). In this context it is noted by Kirkness (2014, p. 1289) that also stigmatised areas “have some real emotional value to their residents”. It is observed that residents often experience belonging and attachment to the area despite its tainted representations (August, 2014; Jensen & Christensen, 2012; Kirkness, 2014; Kirkness & Tijé-Dra, 2017). In addition, August (2014) and Kirkness (2014) point to the emergence of a strong sense of community within stigmatised neighbourhoods. Growing up in a defamed area can moreover become the source of a feeling of pride as it is perceived as a sign of inner

¹⁹ Only few studies engage with collective strategies (for exceptions, see for example Junnilainen (2020) and her work on two Finish neighbourhoods, and Pereira & Queirós (2014) in their examination of community strategies in Porto).

strength, resilience and individual adaptability (Cairns, 2018; Garbin & Millington, 2012; Kirkness, 2014). Slater & Anderson (2012), Christensen & Toft Hansen (2018) and Garbin & Millington (2012) identify senses of pride despite, and as a defensive response to, external defamation. The source of the sense of pride is mainly the cultural diversity of the respective neighbourhood. In addition to a symbolic appropriation of the neighbourhood, these feelings of pride foster place attachment which in turn contributes to a physical appropriation, in that people gain visibility in 'their' neighbourhood and use its (public) spaces for everyday activities. The stigma of the neighbourhood as being exceptional and unwelcoming is thereby challenged by residents' everyday interactions in and with space (Kirkness, 2014, p. 1286).

It is widely argued that symbolic territorial struggles are brought forward by residents through alternative representations of the area and the formulation of counter-narratives (August, 2014; Cairns, 2018; Cuny, 2018; Garbin & Millington, 2012; Kirkness, 2014). Being able to represent one's own place of living despite dominant discourses contributes to the "symbolic work of re-scripting place" (Cairns, 2018, p. 1239) and hence its (re-)appropriation. The counter-narratives mainly address positive attributes of the area and point to often overlooked or misrepresented positive dimensions of spatial concentration such as sense of community, accessibility, or provision of physical amenities (August, 2014; Cairns, 2018; Garbin & Millington, 2012; Kirkness, 2014; Slater & Anderson, 2012). Furthermore, Kirkness (2014) and Slater & Anderson (2012) describe how negatively connotated words of the dominant discourse are inverted by residents, associated with positive connotations and thus appropriated.

While these subtle, mundane, and often fragmented forms of resistance are frequently found in the most diverse variants in degraded neighbourhoods, they are seldom recognised as such due to their 'everydayness'. Even more fundamentally, it is questioned if / to what extent residents' desire to cope constitutes a moment of resistance (Ortner, 2006, p. 56). Yet, as also these everyday activities may challenge dominant representations of space, I will follow Garbin & Millington (2012, p. 2079), who argue that "resistance often occurs while people are busy doing other things".²⁰

²⁰ As more visible yet less prevalent forms of resistance to territorial stigmatisation, few studies also describe how residents intervene in the physical space through alternative territorial practices. Ranging from artistic interventions (Garbin & Millington, 2012) to the creation of "counter-public space" (Sisson, 2020, p. 13) or street protest (Wacquant, 1993, p. 372), these physical territorial struggles deliberately are aimed at "forc[ing] a rupture in the stigma" (Garbin & Millington, 2012, p. 2077).

4. ANALYSIS

4.1 Discursive construction of the Danish 'ghetto'

As Wacquant et al. (2014) argue, territorial stigmatisation is not static, which implies that also “the contextual structures that support the symbolic structures of urban marginality” (Birk & Fallov, 2021, p. 268) have to be accounted for. In order to contextualise the symbolic (re-)production of the ‘ghetto’ as a space of territorial stigmatisation in the Danish context, I will therefore critically examine the government’s ‘ghetto’ initiatives. I will thereby illustrate how the representation of the ‘ghetto’ and its residents and symbolic boundary drawing culminates in territorial stigmatisation and a hierarchisation of (urban) space. In the following document analysis, I will discuss three key policy documents²¹ that mark nodal points in the institutionalisation of the concept of ‘ghetto’ in Denmark and thereby trace its increasing spatialisation and ethnicisation²²:

- ‘The government’s strategy against ghettoisation’ (58 pages) from 2004, issued by a centre-right coalition government;
- ‘Return of the ghetto to society. Taking action against parallel societies in Denmark’ (48 pages) from 2010, issued by a centre-right coalition government;
- ‘A Denmark without parallel societies – No ghettos by 2030’ (40 pages) from 2018, issued by a centre-right coalition government.

Moreover, I will consider the preceding speeches of the ‘ghetto’ initiatives, with which the respective heads of government set the discursive framework for the policy papers.

²¹ While these policy papers might convey a closed and consistent discourse, even within parliamentary debates and especially within civil society, contestation is formulated, mainly regarding the use of the term ‘ghetto’, its delimitation and the problematisation of the residents on the basis of ethnicity (see for example v. Freiesleben, 2016, p. 163). The focus of analysis here is thus not on the negotiation of the ‘ghetto’ as such, but how the hegemonic discourse is structured.

²² With a change of government in 2011, the social-democratic coalition published its strategy paper ‘Vulnerable housing areas – the next steps. The government’s proposal for a strengthened effort’ (Regeringen, 2013) in 2013. The criteria for designating neighbourhoods as ‘ghettos’ were expanded from previously three to five, so that now also income and education level in the neighbourhood were taken into account (see also Appendix C). This marked an attempt to shift focus away from the previously strong ethnicisation of the ‘ghetto’ to a more holistic socio-economic examination of the policy problems identified. However, while in the strategy paper itself the term ‘ghetto’ was substituted by ‘vulnerable housing areas’ to avoid further stigmatisation, the term was still used in the annually published ‘ghettolist’. Despite increasing discussions in the political field about the appropriateness of the ‘ghetto’ trope and its delimitation and framing, the hegemony of the ‘ghetto’ discourse was not substantially challenged.

The aim of the following analysis is not to present or evaluate the policy measures proposed to address the identified problems in detail²³, but to trace how the ‘ghetto’ is constructed and represented as both a spatial and social entity²⁴. I will demonstrate how the representation of the ‘ghetto’ as a place and a policy problem in a state of exception has prevailed, thus allegedly legitimising far-reaching interventions, and how the delimitations of the ‘ghetto’ have been institutionalised. Since the concept of the ‘ghetto’ is not neutral, its matter-of-course transition from everyday language into policy making and hence its institutionalisation is not accidental but instrumentalised as a political tool in the discursive occupation of dominant social and political positions (v. Freiesleben, 2016, p. 10). It is therefore important to emphasise how the designation of certain areas as ‘ghetto’ is employed as an object of political action and as such affects the way we analyse problems and organise society. I will hence show how these processes of production and problematisation contributed to the development of a hegemonic ‘ghetto’ discourse in which power is exhibited (van Dijk, 1993, p. 259).

In the public debate in Denmark, the notion of ‘ghettoisation’ gained momentum in the 1990s, when the concentration of migrant population groups and refugees in certain social housing estates was increasingly problematised (Frandsen & Hansen, 2020, p. 15; Seemann, 2020, p. 6). While these encompassed problem constellations of integration and housing policies alike, the dominant discourse was primarily determined by the perceived challenges posed by the increasing number of (labour) migrants and refugees and the risks emanating from their spatial segregation. In addressing the ‘problem’, the focus thus shifted from a multidimensional examination of immigration policies, allocation mechanisms and the development of an asymmetrical dual housing market (Schultz Larsen, 2014, p. 1400) – which spawned the concentration of certain population groups in social housing estates in the first place – to an allegedly linear cause-effect relationship of immigration and ‘ghettoisation’.

While the ‘objective’ material conditions in the neighbourhoods in question have thus not changed significantly, the intense concern of ‘ghettoisation’ since the 1990s and especially after 2001 is due to an immigration-sceptical climate in Denmark and the concurrent rise of populist right-wing parties (Bakkær Simonsen, 2016, p. 84). Against this background, the adaptation of the term ‘ghetto’ into the political discourse is central to classifying space and implementing new and stricter policy measures. As also Tissot (2018, p. 152) notes for the French context, the representation of the ‘ghetto’ as a state of exception “built legitimacy for a spatial vision of social ills, which in turn paved the way

²³ For an overview of the priority areas identified in the respective policy papers, see Appendix B.

²⁴ Due to the limited scope of this thesis, I will thus focus on a few aspects only. As there are moreover different motifs that are taken up in all three of the policy papers, I will not repeat those as I am not aiming to reproduce the problematisations of each individual paper. The focus is instead on the representation of the ‘ghetto’ throughout the policy papers.

for the explicit stigmatization of these populations and for locally targeted, repression-based programs”.

4.1.1 ‘The government’s strategy against ghettoisation’ (2004)

The center-right coalition government in power since 2001 “brought about a profound shift in the country’s immigration policy, with an increased focus on assimilating immigrants and individuals of ‘non-Western’ origin into Danish society and on tightening access routes to residence and citizenship” (Seemann, 2020, p. 8). In this context, ‘The government’s strategy against ghettoisation’ (Regeringen, 2004) was published in May 2004, in which the term ‘ghetto’ was employed in a policy paper for the first time. Already in his 2004 New Year’s speech, the then head of government Fogh Rasmussen set the discursive frame by linking ‘ghettoisation’ to immigration and a lack of integration:

“Years of failed immigration policies have created immigrant ghettos where men are unemployed, women are isolated and families speak only the language of their home country. Children grow up without learning proper Danish. Some are influenced by hard-line criminals. They come to confuse Danish liberal-mindedness with capriciousness. Danish freedom with emptiness. Danish equality with indifference.” (Fogh Rasmussen, 2004)²⁵

By drawing a value-based distinction between ‘us’ – the people who comply to Danish values like freedom and equality – and ‘them’ – the people who lack or disregard these values – the ‘ghetto’ as a place of concentration of allegedly poorly integrated immigrants is constructed as a policy problem. ‘Ghettoisation’ would hence lead to “violence and crime and confrontation [...] And we cannot and will not accept that in Denmark” (Fogh Rasmussen, 2004).

The perceived connection between immigration, lack of integration and ‘ghettoisation’ is also taken up centrally in the strategy paper. Although no decisive delimitation of the ‘ghetto’ as a place is made, eight residential areas are exemplarily designated as ‘ghettos’ based on the following characteristics: a high proportion of adult residents living on transfer payments, low education levels, a dominance of subsidised housing estates, asymmetric moving patterns with resourceful tenants moving out and socio-economically disadvantaged tenants moving in, and an overall lack of private investment (Regeringen, 2004, p. 15). Following the non-discriminatory basis of Danish policy, the problem constellations identified in the context of ‘ghettoisation’ are thus ostensibly ascribed to class indicators. However, the framing of the policy paper indicates that ‘ghettoisation’ is primarily attributed to the concentration of immigrants and descendants of non-Western backgrounds in certain social housing estates (Regeringen, 2004, p. 12). Structural social problems such as unemployment are thus framed

²⁵ In this chapter, I translated the quotes of policy papers and speeches from Danish to English.

as problems of ethnic minorities embedded in and spatially limited to the 'ghetto' space. Although not an official criterion, the problematisations and ideals expressed in the policy paper hence revolve strongly around culture and ethnicity.

Furthermore, it is argued that residents of 'ghettos' would contribute less to the welfare state compared to other segments of the Danish population. This deviation is attributed to the perception that 'ghetto' residents would not adhere to basic values " – simply because there is no knowledge of the core values" (Regeringen, 2004, p. 11). 'Ghettoisation' would hence also entail the risk that immigrants and descendants of non-Western origin would withdraw into "true ethnic enclaves or parallel societies without significant economic, social and cultural contact to the wider society" (Regeringen, 2004, p. 12), which would "constitute a serious barrier to integration" (Regeringen, 2004, p. 7). A causal connection is thus established between specific locations and the formation of parallel societies. The 'ghetto' as a spatial expression of the identified problems is thus imagined as a potential threat to social cohesion and the functioning of the welfare contract.

The 'ghetto' is represented as a place that is "physically, socially, culturally and economically isolated from the rest of society and where the everyday life of the individual is characterised by limitations and lack of opportunities" (Regeringen, 2004, p. 7). While the physical isolation of the 'ghetto' area is mentioned, this physical isolation is relative and mainly associated with social isolation, so that the former is supposedly conditioned by the latter. Based on these problematisations, the measures proposed evolve around spreading out ethnic communities by changing housing allocation procedures, introducing more flexible letting rules and introducing stricter policing and education programmes to the areas. At the same time, the introduction of private housing to the areas is used to encourage (Danish) citizens with greater resources to move in²⁶. The 'ghettos' are thus to become places where non-Western immigrants can "meet with Danes. Where networks are established across personal and cultural differences. Where you hear and learn Danish" (Regeringen, 2004, p. 11). Thereby "knowledge of the norms and values that apply here [in Denmark]" (Regeringen, 2004, p. 11) should be increased. In addition to the differentiation of 'we' and 'they', a line is also drawn between 'here' (Denmark) and 'there' ('ghettos'). Even without explicit criteria for its distinction, the discourse of the 'ghetto' and its inhabitants as outside Danish society is thus already established in 'The government's strategy against ghettoisation' In 2004.

²⁶ The proposed measures hence do not address the existing problems but aim at resolving their spatial concentration.

4.1.2 'Return of the ghetto to society. Taking action against parallel societies in Denmark' (2010)

In 2010, this narrative is taken up again and further institutionalised by the introduction of an official 'ghettolist' with corresponding 'ghetto criteria'. The very title of the paper in which these are outlined presents the 'ghetto' as outside Danish society and establishes a causal connection between 'ghetto' and parallel societies.

In his opening speech of parliament in October 2010, then prime minister Løkke Rasmussen addressed 'ghettos' as what he termed "holes in the map of Denmark" where "Danish values are obviously no longer leading":

"Ghettos are areas where a large proportion of residents are unemployed. Where many criminals live. And where many Danes with an immigrant background live. [...] We want to tear down the walls. We want to open up the ghettos to society. [...] Ghettos are stone deserts with no links to the surrounding society. These are the fortresses we must break through." (Løkke Rasmussen, 2010)

In his speech, Løkke Rasmussen underlined the need for decisive action and announced the imminent publication of a strategy paper focusing on both "the walls" and "the people behind the walls" (Løkke Rasmussen, 2010). The 'ghetto' is referred to with spatial metaphors, which are also taken up in the subsequently published strategy paper. In this way, the alleged social distance and divergence of 'ghetto' residents and the "surrounding society" (Regeringen, 2010, p. 5) is discursively expressed as a physical distance between the "isolated" (Regeringen, 2010, p. 9) 'ghetto' space and its surrounding. 'Wall' thus becomes a metaphor for a shielding and opaque barrier between 'us' and 'them' as well as 'here' and 'there' and thus refers to both mental and physical demarcations, while the recourse to the metaphor "fortress" (Regeringen, 2010, p. 6) conveys that this segregation emanates from the 'ghetto' and its inhabitants.²⁷ The space within this 'fortress' is portrayed as a 'stone dessert' and thus discursively related to both bleak architecture and a general 'lack of'. Already in 2004, the government presents itself as the institution that wants to "build bridges between the ghetto and the outside world" (Regeringen, 2004, p. 41) and thereby lead it both materially and socially back to society. The metaphor of the 'bridge', however, always implies a preceding separation. By stating that 'ghettos' are to become "ordinary Danish urban areas" (Regeringen, 2010, p. 6) again, the discursive construction of the 'ghetto' hence also spawns a temporal dimension. The 'ghetto' is represented as a break in the country's unity that needs to be restored through its "return to society" (Regeringen, 2010, p. 9), implicating

²⁷ Due to this self-attributed isolation, it is also seen as the responsibility of the immigrants and descendants of non-Western background themselves to integrate into Danish society, which is also emphasised again in the strategy paper 2018: "The individual immigrant themselves has the greatest responsibility. To learn Danish. To get a job and become part of the community. To integrate in their new home country. Too few have seized the opportunities Denmark offers" (Regeringen, 2018, p. 5). Poverty, low education levels and unemployment are thereby presented as self-inflicted.

that in its current state, the 'ghetto' space and its residents are imagined as located outside Danish society.

In contrast to the 2004 policy paper, the 2010 paper provides a precise 'ghetto' definition, which was subsequently enacted into law. Based on this definition, the government publishes an annual 'ghettolist' (see Appendix C). In 2010, three criteria for its delimitation are specified, of which at least two criteria have to be fulfilled to qualify as a 'ghetto': low employment levels, high crime rate and a high share of non-Western immigrants and descendants (Regeringen, 2010, p. 5). By including ethnicity as a legal criterion for the designation as a 'ghetto', the spatial and ethnic were thus further coupled and the 'ghetto' as a policy problem was explicitly presented as an ethnic and cultural problem and not (only) as a socio-economic one. With the introduction of the 'ghettolist' and the formulation and institutionalisation of official criteria for its delimitation, 'ghettos' have moved from everyday language and the front pages of newspapers to being a state-sanctioned reality that has subsequently been maintained and supported bureaucratically as well as politically (Schultz Larsen, 2011, p. 48). The problematisation of the 'ghetto' as a state of exception outside Danish society is furthermore utilised as a legitimisation for extraordinary political measures spatially limited to the 'ghetto' space: "Normal solutions are not sufficient. We face special problems, which demand special solutions" (Regeringen, 2010, p. 6).

While the goal of achieving a more balanced composition of residents within the 'ghetto' areas is also formulated in 2010, there is nevertheless a clear break in the understanding and problematisation of the underlying issue: "Today, more than six out of ten residents of the 29 ghettos are immigrants or descendants from non-Western countries. This is not acceptable. No area should have a predominance of immigrants and descendants from non-Western countries" (Regeringen, 2010, p. 15). In contrast to 2004, it is not the spatial segregation of socio-economically disadvantaged immigrants that is problematised, but the high concentration of immigrants in certain areas in general. The 'ghetto' is thus no longer framed as a social problem, but primarily as a problem of an alleged lack of integration. Following this line of argument, the 'ghetto' is again associated with the formation of parallel societies, in which "a high concentration of immigrants means that many remain more attached to the country and culture they or their parents come from than to the Danish society they live in" (Regeringen, 2010, p. 5). Integration of individuals residing in 'ghettos' into Danish society is thus seen as a prerequisite for dissolving parallel societies. At the same time, however, the incompatibility of the values and norms allegedly prevailing in 'ghetto' areas with Danish society is emphasised.

Overall, many of the motifs and problematisations formulated in the 2004 strategy paper are reiterated but with a more explicit focus on ethnicity, hence discursively contributing to an ethnicisation of structural problems. Moreover, the value-based distinction between 'we' and 'they' is further

emphasised by employing 'we' as the grammatical subject throughout the document and thereby conveying a sense of unity and cohesion.

"In Denmark, over generations, we have built a safe, rich and free society. The crucial glue has been and still is our values. Freedom to be different. Equal opportunities for men and women. Responsibility for community. Democracy. Respect for society's laws. A basic trust in wanting each other to be well."
(Regeringen, 2010, p. 5)

The enumeration of these supposed Danish values without further context or explication forms a chain of equivalence that, in interplay, lends meaning to 'Danishness'. Thus, in the first paragraph of the policy paper, solely Danish society and the Danish values that characterise it are outlined, only to be contrasted in the next paragraph with the 'ghetto', "where Danish values are no longer leading" (Regeringen, 2010, p. 5)²⁸. The discursive framework for understanding the 'ghetto' as a problem is thus already clearly defined at the beginning: in opposition to the Danish 'we', the 'ghetto', due to its perceived lack of integration, represents a deviant and problematic identity. The 'ghetto' discourse is hegemonic at this point and both perpetuated and reinforced through its institutionalisation in the 2010 strategy paper and the introduction of the 'ghettolist'.

4.1.3 'A Denmark without parallel societies – No ghettos by 2030' (2018)

Until 2018, the representation of the 'ghetto' as a state of exception is further consolidated, particularly through circulation in the media in connection with the annual publication of the 'ghettolist'. This discourse, which is established by this time, is also taken up by then prime minister Løkke Rasmussen in his New Year's speech. He once again rhetorically sharpens its problematisation by stylising the 'ghetto' as a coherent entity with an inherent will:

"the ghettos also send out tentacles out on the streets, where criminal gangs create insecurity. Into the schools, where neglected kids hang on the edge. Down to the finances of the municipality, where the tax income is smaller, and the expenses are larger than they have to be. And out in the society, where Danish values as equality, open-mindedness and tolerance lose ground." (Løkke Rasmussen, 2018)

This framing, which is also employed in the yet most far-reaching strategy paper 'A Denmark without parallel societies – No ghettos by 2030', accentuates the perceived "threat against our modern society"

²⁸ A similar chain of equivalence is employed to frame 'Danishness' in the 2018 policy paper: "The government wants a cohesive Denmark. A Denmark based on democratic values such as freedom and legal certainty. Equality and freedom. Tolerance and equality. A Denmark where everyone actively participates." (Regeringen, 2018, p. 4) These are contrasted with an enumeration of supposed characteristics of immigrants and descendants of non-Western background and replete with associations: "But there are too many who do not actively participate. Parallel societies have emerged among people with non-Western backgrounds. Too many immigrants and descendants have ended up disconnected from the surrounding society. Without education. Without a job. And without knowing adequate Danish." (Regeringen, 2018, p. 4)

(Regeringen, 2018, p. 5), which would emanate from the 'ghettos'. Against these narratives of threat, the government's intervention with decisive and far-reaching measures is seemingly legitimised.

Within the subsequent strategy paper, this claim is further taken up by using 'ghetto' and 'parallel society' synonymously and derive from this the necessity to eliminate the 'ghetto' "once and for all" (Regeringen, 2018, p. 6). Since 2018, three different types of deprived residential areas are differentiated, which are targeted by different policy measures according to the problem situations identified in the respective categories. Residential areas would now be defined as 'vulnerable areas' if it met two out of the following four criteria: (i) The share of residents between 18–64 of age outside labour market exceeds 40%; (ii) The share of criminal convicts exceeds 2,7%.; (iii) The share of residents between 30 and 59 years of age with no more than basic school education exceeds 60%; (iv) The average gross taxable income for individuals between the age of 15 and 64 is less than 55% of the regional average (Regeringen, 2018, p. 11). A residential area is designated a 'ghetto', again, if it meets the criteria of a 'vulnerable area' and, in addition, the share of immigrants and descendants of non-Western origin exceeds 50%. Ethnicity thus becomes an essential criterion of the 'ghetto' definition. Finally, the label of the 'severe ghetto' is introduced for areas that have been on the 'ghettolist' for (more than) four consecutive years. The classification as 'severe ghetto', again, is associated with significant authoritative policy measures and area-based interventions²⁹, which do not target residents as individuals, but apply to all residents alike qua their place of living. Hence, the 'ghetto' policies "have introduced a *spatialized* citizenship ideal in which an individual is no longer viewed in relation to their individual contribution to the welfare state, but also in terms of their social and ethnic environment, as translated into geographic territories" (Seemann, 2020, p. 16, emphasis in original).

Following on from 2010, the metaphor of "holes in the map of Denmark" (Regeringen, 2018, p. 5) is again invoked in reference to 'ghettos'. These 'holes' are described as residential areas in which

²⁹ The representation of certain areas as being problematic legitimises stern corrective measures in the public debate, while the introduction of a legal definition makes the enactment of different measures legally binding. The designation as a 'ghetto' is thus consequential for the areas and their residents alike. The most far-reaching measures have so far been formulated in relation to the policy paper published in 2018. Non-profit housing associations in areas classified as 'severe ghettos' are obliged to reduce the social housing stock to a maximum of 40 % by 2030. This can be done through demolition, privatisation, new construction or relabelling, in accordance with a development plan submitted by the non-profit housing associations to the Ministry of Transport and Housing for approval. The current non-profit housing stock is thereby to be transferred to the private market in order to change the residents' composition in 'ghetto' areas and to achieve a higher valorisation of the housing stock. Moreover, welfare recipients may no longer be allocated to 'ghetto' areas and family reunification is suspended. Instead, the non-profit housing associations must give preference to wage-earners, individuals in education, in an apprenticeship or self-sufficient residents. Further regulations have been introduced regarding mandatory Danish-language day care for all children above the age of one and double sentencing for crimes committed by residents of 'ghettos' (Regeringen, 2018, p. 22-31). These spatially targeted and punitive measures thus curtail the equality of 'ghetto' residents.

“many live in more or less isolated enclaves. Too many citizens are not taking sufficient responsibility. They do not participate actively in Danish society and the labour market. We have a group of citizens who do not adopt Danish norms and values. Where women are considered to be of less value than men. Where social control and lack of equality place narrow limits on the individual's freedom of expression.” (Regeringen, 2018, p. 5)

The recourse to the metaphor of ‘holes’ evokes the imagination of something destroyed, of something that is torn apart. ‘Ghettos’ would therefore constitute areas in which the substance of ‘Danishness’ was no longer present and henceforth as such challenged the cohesion of society. It is thus discursively conveyed that these places, and synonymously the people who live in them, need to be ‘repaired’ in order to become part of “ordinary Denmark” again (Regeringen, 2018, p. 7).

This cleavage of ‘ghettos’ and ‘ordinary Denmark’ in both spatial and social terms is again taken up when referring to the ‘perils’ the ‘ghettos’ would pose. By referencing different statistics regarding alleged deviant norms and values of people of non-Western background throughout the policy paper, the government underlines the ‘threat’ and insecurity emanating from the ‘ghettos’ due to incompatible cultures. This framing, then, justifies stern corrective measures of the government to restore public security. By identifying parallel societies as the policy problem, the perceived solution is the elimination of parallel societies and hence ‘ghettos’ as the places where these evolve: “In some of the ghetto areas, the challenges with parallel societies, crime, and insecurity are so massive that the only solution, politically and economically, is a total demolition of buildings and to start over” (Regeringen, 2018, p. 14). It is implied that some ‘ghettos’ are already ‘beyond salvation’, so that the state would have to intervene with authoritative force to break the “negative spiral leading to counterculture” (Regeringen, 2018, p. 5). While this statement refers mainly to the areas classified as ‘severe ghettos’, it is also generally stated that “All ghettos must go. All.” (Regeringen, 2018, p. 7) The government thereby expressly underlines that only when the ‘ghettos’ are “completely gone” (Regeringen, 2018, p. 6) and thus also parallel societies are “broken down [...] Denmark can be Denmark again” (Regeringen, 2018, p. 6).

4.1.4 Statistical representation of the ‘ghetto’

The discursive construction and categorisation of the ‘ghetto’ through labelling and (rhetoric) delimitation is further reinforced by the statistical representation of the respective areas. Hence, the ‘ghettolist’, which was introduced in 2010 and has since been published annually³⁰, “*through* its

³⁰ Currently, the ‘ghettolist’ is published by the Transport and Housing Ministry. The criteria and threshold values for classification as ‘ghettos’ have been changed several times since its introduction. The most significant changes to date were made in 2013, when two additional criteria were added to the original three, and in 2018, when

territorial stigmatization and *through* its connection to the otherings of Danish policies participates in *making space*" (Birk, 2017, p. 770, emphasis in original). Furthermore, it establishes the legal definition and demarcation of the 'ghetto' space, so that "targeted measures could now become binding and legally enforced in these areas" (Seemann, 2020, p. 12).

The 'ghetto' ostensibly became a measurable and concrete thing. The statistical representations, however, disguise the structural production of (urban) marginality by presenting the data as a mere depiction of 'objective realities' (Birk & Elmholdt, 2020, p. 158). As Sisson (2021, p. 410) states, "when they are (or are made to appear) guided by quantitative data and statistics, systems of classification and hierarchization that might otherwise be highly contentious or objectionable, along with the policies and interventions that reify them, can proceed as rational and fair" and thereby support the discursive claims. Different indicators are invoked to underline that particular residential areas would constitute state of exceptions and thus justify their designation as spaces for intervention (Fallov & Birk, 2021, p. 5; Frandsen & Hansen, 2020, p. 15). Their statistical representations are thus neither 'neutral' nor 'objective' descriptions but are employed "as enablers and legitimisers of certain kinds of government action" (Birk & Elmholdt, 2020, p. 161)³¹.

Furthermore, both the discursive framing and the 'ghettolist' itself make "the ghetto a decontextualised space; the differences between the local areas disappear, as do their individual histories, their populations, their local politics" (Birk & Elmholdt, 2020, p. 150). Despite some great variations between the residential areas, their grouping under the term 'ghetto' implies sameness and comparability so that 'one-size-fits-all' interventions are employed. Birk (2017, p.770) therefore remarks that "the list enables a totalizing topographical depiction of particular spaces as ones of disorder and marginality".

three different types of vulnerable housing areas were distinguished. The respective threshold values were also subject to change. For a detailed breakdown, see Appendix C.

³¹ Accordingly, criticism is repeatedly voiced regarding both the selection of criteria and the threshold values. For example, many of the qualifications acquired abroad are not recognised in the calculation of the education level, it is criticised that the threshold values for the recording of crime levels have been changed in such a way that more areas fall into the 'ghetto' designation and, in addition, changes are only shown with a delay, as the data always refer to the last two years. Another point of criticism is that the income level is set in relation to the average income of the region and not of the country, which means that especially in Copenhagen, where the regional average is above the national average, some areas are classified as 'ghettos', which, if they were located in other parts of the country, would fall out of the criterion and thus out of the 'ghettolist'. "In addition, this quantified definition of the ghetto implies that some areas may turn into 'normal' residential areas from slight changes in one of the criteria, if they are near the threshold, while other areas may suddenly turn into ghettos" (Bakkær Simonsen, 2016, p. 93).

Throughout the policy papers, the 'ghetto' is mainly denoted as a space. However, its delimitation refers to socio-economic criteria, so that social and spatial imaginaries are closely interwoven in the 'ghetto' discourse. While there is no causal relationship between the criteria for classification as a 'ghetto', a chain of equivalence is constructed by subsuming these criteria and the problematisations associated with them under the 'ghettolist'. The structural and systemic embeddedness of these problematisations is thus obfuscated in a discursive process of spatialisation and instead represented as an encompassed problem in a certain space and of a certain segment of society. Since the socio-economic criteria included in the 'ghettolist' are discursively primarily attributed to ethnicity and a high share of non-Western immigrants and descendants constitutes a necessary condition for the classification as a 'ghetto' since 2018, also an ethnicisation of the 'ghetto' discourse can be discerned. Perpetuated by the 'ghettolist', structural problems are hence spatialised and ethnicised by attributing them as inherent to and fully encompassed within the 'ghetto' space.

4.1.5 The Danish 'ghetto' as a discourse

The 'ghetto' has been constructed as a problem at the convergence of poverty, unemployment, immigration/integration, and crime/safety. The political 'ghetto' discourse is based on the use of the term in everyday language, while the representations conveyed in everyday language and media are again influenced by the political institutionalisation of the 'ghetto' as a problem category. Hence, a circuit of references is discursively established through which the categorisation is ratified as supposedly applicable. With the constant reproduction of these socio-spatial imaginaries associated with the 'ghetto', the actual physical and social conditions in the respective residential areas are relegated, so that the 'ghetto' becomes a generic, decontextualised and homogenising container term of diverse problem categories. These are attributed as inherent to the residents due to their non-Western background and are represented as fully encompassed within the 'ghetto' space. Hence, structural problems are ethnicised and spatialised through the 'ghetto' discourse.

By adopting the 'ghetto' term in political discourse and charging it with allegedly spatially encompassed problematisations, the state (symbolically) classifies and stratifies urban space. Since its introduction in 2004, the 'ghetto' discourse, which establishes a chain of equivalence of spatial concentration of immigrants and descendants of non-Western background, 'ghettoisation' and the formation of parallel societies has gained hegemonic status through increasing institutionalisation and mostly consensual application in the political sphere. With the introduction of the categorisation of 'severe ghetto' in 2018, the discourse is translated to concrete policy actions with major legal consequences for the designated areas.

The 'ghetto' policy problem is framed as an issue of lack of integration, due to which it would constitute a threat to the country's cohesion and hence the functioning of the welfare state:

"The securitization both has an economic dimension, which presents immigrants as a burden to the welfare system because they detract more than they contribute, and a cultural dimension, which presents immigrants as a challenge to the cultural homogeneity of society because they do not support the values responsible for maintaining social cohesion." (Bakkær Simonsen, 2016, p. 85)

The proposed solution is hence the integration of the 'ghetto' and its inhabitants into Danish society, which however is understood as a one-sided assimilation, for "what is sought is restoration (of society) through subversion (of the ghetto)" (Bakkær Simonsen, 2016, p. 95). At the same time, the 'ghetto' discourse again acts as an exclusionary mechanism by circulating negatively charged socio-spatial imaginaries that prevent the integration of both spaces and residents. The 'ghetto' thus constitutes a form of spatial Othering, in which the 'Other' is constitutive of the own. Thus, while it is proclaimed that the 'ghetto' should become part of Danish society again,

"Danish national identity needs the ghetto as a negation that allows Danishness to appear as a fixed and full identity. The Ghetto Plan [of 2010] thus unites Danish society against the common threat that the ghetto represents, and [...] this implies the impossibility of the ghetto's integration into Denmark." (Bakkær Simonsen, 2016, p. 84)

The recourse to a value-based differentiation between 'us' and 'them' is moreover "used to justify inequality through paired complementary strategies: positive representations of one's own group, and negative representations of 'others'" (Mullet, 2018, p. 119). This representation presupposes a homogeneous and fixed identity on either side, thereby further expanding the difference between the two as antagonistic entities (Bakkær Simonsen, 2016, p. 89). This distinction of 'we' and 'they' also has a spatial dimension in that the 'here' as an 'ordinary Denmark' is contrasted with 'ghetto' space as an 'isolated fortress' (Regeringen, 2010, p. 6). Dominance and inequality are thus legitimised through the symbolic hierarchisation of the 'normal' and the deviant 'Other'.

In the critical examination of the 'ghetto' initiatives, it becomes apparent that the meaning of the 'ghetto' space is contingent and potentially open. Processes of symbolic boundary drawing, delimitation, and categorisation from a position of power hence bring the 'ghetto' into being. "This indicates the value of analyzing the ghetto as discourse rather than a physical space since that space is not constant over time." (Bakkær Simonsen, 2016, p. 93) The spaces produced in the discourse in turn constitute the spatial context of residents' everyday experiences. In order to understand how the national discourse intersects with and is negotiated at the neighbourhood level, I will turn to the everyday

experiences of residents and local professionals in Tingbjerg, a neighbourhood classified as a 'severe ghetto' under the government's 'ghettolist'³².

4.2 Negotiating the 'ghetto' at the neighbourhood scale

By conducting interviews with residents and local professionals in Tingbjerg, I aim to illustrate what significance they attribute to the 'ghetto' label, how the socio-spatial imaginary constructed in the hegemonic discourse intersects with everyday experiences in targeted residential areas and hence how the national discourse is negotiated at the neighbourhood scale. Since the 'ghetto' label through its discursive framing contributes to and spawns territorial stigmatisation, I will understand the 'ghetto' not as a policy but as a lived everyday experience³³. It is thus assumed that the 'ghetto' discourse influences how phenomena are experienced. However, these experiences are not overdetermined by the hegemonic discourse, but implicitly and explicitly negotiated and challenged by residents' everyday practices. Against the tension between the politically induced and instrumentalised representation of the 'ghetto' and the lived experiences of the space by residents, the findings suggest that territorial stigmatisation is not internalised but that residents of Tingbjerg are involved in a variety of symbolic and socio-spatial practices that potentially challenge the dominant 'ghetto' discourse.³⁴ These everyday struggles over representation of space, however, are characterised by asymmetric (symbolic) power relations.

Although the interviews indicate that the 'ghetto' label has an influence on the lived everyday experiences of residents in Tingbjerg, not every statement should be interpreted as a sign of dealing with territorial stigma³⁵. As also emphasised by the residents, Tingbjerg is more than the 'ghetto' label

³² For an introduction to the neighbourhood, see Appendix A).

³³ This notion refers to Junnilainen (2020, p. 46), who understands stigma as a "lived everyday experience".

³⁴ Due to the limited scope of this research and the small number of interviews conducted, I do not claim to represent the diversity of strategies that may be identified in Tingbjerg. Furthermore, it should be noted that territorial stigma and its impact is experienced differently by different residents depending on their social situation and position (Sandbjerg Hansen, 2021, p. 168). This became particularly evident in the interviews I conducted with two older White residents. Since the territorial stigma is closely interwoven with individuals of non-Western background through its construction in the 'ghetto' discourse, Interviewee O and Interviewee P can supposedly cope with the impact of the stigma more easily as they can dismiss it from themselves as subjects. The interviews with residents of an ethnic-minority background, again, opened up a very different perspective, since in the dominant discourse they are constructed as the subjects who embody the stigmas identified as the source of the neighbourhood's discredit. This in turn influences how they negotiate the territorial stigma.

³⁵ Especially so as the 'ghetto' label and the effects of Tingbjerg's external representations on everyday life were not introduced as the explicit topics of the interviews but only taken up once addressed by the interviewees

and the negotiation of it. Due to the limited scope of the thesis, however, I will not be able to take into account these holistic representations of Tingbjerg and the neighbourhood life as formulated by the interviewed residents, but instead will focus on those aspects that implicitly and explicitly point to the impact of the 'ghetto' discourse on residents' life.

'But I have never looked at it as a ghetto'

The dissonance between Tingbjerg's reputation and the insiders' perception of the area is pronounced by all interviewees. The outside perception is mainly influenced by discursive media and political representation of the ghetto space as characterised by crime, deviance, isolation and physical decay. The stigma of Tingbjerg hence resonates with elements of a global imaginary of the 'ghetto' as well as connotations of parallel societies brought about by the Danish 'ghetto' discourse, so that cultural, ethnic and material dimensions intersect in the construction of outsiders' perception of Tingbjerg. Tingbjerg is thus primarily perceived as a 'ghetto', whereby place-specific features take a back seat to the generic label. The labelling as a 'ghetto' through the state is therefore decisive for the outsider's perception of the area, as noted by Interviewee F:

"[the labelling] of course had a negative effect, because the bad reputation has [...] been even 'badder' because of the 'ghetto' label, it's like we already know that this is an area where there is social problems, and now we should all be aware of it and media should talk about all the time, and the people who live there should be aware of it."

The residents are thus aware of the negative reputation, but due to their lived experiences in space describe the neighbourhood more nuanced and hence depict it in a more positive way. Interviewee S, who moved to Tingbjerg three years ago, described this not only as a subjective perception, but as common within the neighbourhood: "We are all very happy for living here [...] I mean it's only people from outside that have a negative image from Tingbjerg." Her own positive experiences in and with the neighbourhood are thus contrasted with the dominant representations from outside, which she also attributes to the designation as a 'ghetto'. For herself, however, Interviewee S states: "But I have never looked at it as a ghetto". The statement reveals a process of negotiation about the meaning and the socio-spatial imaginaries associated with the term 'ghetto' and the extent to which these apply to Tingbjerg and are appropriate to conceive residents' everyday experiences in and with the particular space. The meaning and appropriateness of employing the term 'ghetto', however, is not only negotiated between residents and outsiders, but also between residents on the neighbourhood scale.

themselves. It was thus only in the analysis that I as a researcher related certain statements to the negotiation of the 'ghetto' discourse on the neighbourhood scale.

By referring to the official 'ghetto' criteria as comprehensible indicators for the designation of an area as a 'ghetto', Interviewee M perceives the labelling of Tingbjerg as justified for it would reflect real existing problems in Tingbjerg, yet it would also constitute something that was induced from the outside – something that 'happened' to them:

“there are politicians who have labelled us a ghetto. And that is in relation to how many people from non-western countries live here, how many don't have an education and how many crimes are committed. So based on these you are categorised as ghetto. And that happened to us.”

While on the one hand Interviewee M accepts the labelling by acknowledging that “we are one [ghetto]”, the 'we' implies an agentic dimension of the residents for potential change that emanates from the neighbourhood itself. In this respect, Interviewee M reproduces the narrative of the dominant discourse, which locates the responsibility for the dissolution of the 'ghetto' within the targeted subjects.

Other residents, however, negate the appropriateness of the 'ghetto' label both for Tingbjerg but also for any residential area in Denmark in general. The chains of associations with the term 'ghetto' that they draw on are not based on the Danish 'ghetto' criteria, but instead on (global) socio-spatial imaginaries of the 'ghetto' as spaces of deviance, decay and isolation. These residents therefore express their incomprehension about the choice of the term, which they argue is not descriptive but politically motivated:

“all the characteristics of the ghetto, you can't see. But I don't know why they call it ghetto. There are no poor people, who live on the street. There are also no ones who don't eat during the day. There is also not so much crime or people who beat you up on the street. So, basically the students' level in school, that is very good. We have many young people that get an education. We have many that are on the labour market.” (Interviewee R)

The designation of the neighbourhood as a 'ghetto' would therefore evoke associations that do not reflect the actual characteristics and lived experiences and would thus constitute a distorted yet powerful and consequential representation of Tingbjerg. The resulting dissonance between outsiders' and insiders' perspective, however, cannot be overcome by the residents themselves. As the outsiders' perception of Tingbjerg is dominated by its categorisation as a 'ghetto' and hence draws back on the hegemonic 'ghetto' discourse, Interviewee J identifies the source of Tingbjerg's bad reputation in the employment of the 'ghetto' trope in the political field. Addressing the politicians, she thus asks: “when are you going to stop calling a place like Tingbjerg for a ghetto?”.

Interviewee R therefore emphasises: “I can say actually, and I have said that all the time, that Danish politicians play a big role in all ghetto areas. Negative roles.” Politicians are hence not only made responsible for the instrumentalisation of the 'ghetto' label, but also for the emergence of the spatial concentration of ethnic minorities in the first place, which was then problematised in the

discourse. Interviewee N therefore states that “when the politicians start talking about ghetto, they should maybe also look into where people,- how people come to Tingbjerg”, indicating that these are not deliberate choices but determined by allocation policies and the structure of the housing market more generally.

‘It should not sound like Tingbjerg is bad’

While the ‘ghetto’ discourse fixates on problematisations, these represent only a fraction of residents’ everyday life experiences. Hence, in their accounts they associate Tingbjerg also with green areas, quality housing and neighbourhood sociability. Residents’ connotations with Tingbjerg are thus not embedded in the dominant ‘ghetto’ discourse but are formulated in distinction to it. The validity and applicability of the discourse is thereby contested through lived experiences.

Although the people I interviewed did not deny that there are problems in Tingbjerg, the representation of the neighbourhood should not be reduced to these. Interviewee O, after listing some of the challenges he identified in Tingbjerg, is eager to emphasize that “it should not sound like Tingbjerg is bad”. The outsiders’ perception is thus not intended to be reproduced and reinforced, but instead to be expanded by a more nuanced and thus supposedly more accurate representation. The problematisations formulated in the context of Tingbjerg are seen as concerning society as a whole but would be exaggerated by media and politics if they were related to Tingbjerg, as it would feed the narrative and thus ostensibly justify the categorisation of the neighbourhood. The residents are thus involved in a symbolic struggle over distinction and representation, in which demarcation from the socio-spatial imaginaries conveyed within the dominant discourse is sought through the formulation of counter-narratives.

Within these counter-narratives, affirmative accounts otherwise neglected and receding behind the stigmatising ‘ghetto’ label are emphasised in an effort to move beyond the hegemonic discourse of ghetto areas. Interviewee J, for example, describes how as a member of a youth organisation she shares her experiences in Tingbjerg with young people from other areas, “trying our best to promote Tingbjerg in the most positive way that it can be”. At the same time, however, even in formulating these counter-narratives she has to engage with the dominant representations that seem to be ubiquitous. While lived experiences are thus neither overdetermined nor are the residents passive recipients in the face of outsiders’ representations, they often wield more limited symbolic power and thus less capabilities in actually influencing the orientation of the public discourse. Interviewee J remarks:

“some of my friends that I knew in that grade, they were like: ‘Oh, so you live in Tingbjerg? Aren't you afraid to live there? I heard that they stab each other, the guys over there. I heard that the police is always there. How do you feel safe?’ So, the questions there let me think how do they see it. But when I actually try to tell them that it's not bad, they got a problem. And the problems that they hear about are only television, on the media. They will be like: ‘Yes, but the media shows us something else what you're telling us is something else.’ So, if you know somebody who lives in Tingbjerg, they will always tell you that it's a nice place.”

Due to the constant reproduction and hence reinforcement of negative images of Tingbjerg, the validity of her accounts is questioned and despite familiarity she loses control over the public representation of her place of residence. Although some residents are thus consciously formulating counter-narratives, these are often disregarded outside the neighbourhood as they do not confirm to the hegemonic discourse. This results in a simultaneity of different imaginaries, whose (possibilities of) communication, however, are based on asymmetric power relations³⁶.

‘I know this is weird, but I feel Tingbjerg is my home’

The external perception thus has an influence on residents’ everyday life, as they cannot position themselves completely outside the ‘ghetto’ discourse. For example, Interviewee M was initially reluctant to move to Tingbjerg two years ago, “because you are hearing so much about it”. Due to a lack of alternatives, she eventually had to move but did not feel confident about it:

“In the beginning I would have done anything to move. I was fighting against the municipality, against ‘boligselskab’, police, all possible - emergency housing, ... I have fought, fought, fought a whole year just to get away. And that was hell, because I could not calm down and settle in my new home, I could not enjoy to be in my new home, I could not enjoy.”

³⁶ These power imbalances in Tingbjerg's external communication become also evident in the context of the current redevelopment, with real estate developers involved in formulating counter-narratives. Interviewee F, who works for one of the housing associations and closely collaborates with the private developers, states in this context: “[...] basically we are working with changing the image of Tingbjerg from the ghetto label and the ghetto perception into what Tingbjerg actually is [...] it is very green, there is a lot of nature around it, surrounding it. It's quite small-scale architecture, so you get a lot of light and air, and you will still get a lot of light and air although we are - not we, but NREP, the private partner are building some small houses in the big - the green areas between the houses that we have today.” Challenging the stigmata attached to Tingbjerg with its listing as a ‘ghetto’ is thus primarily motivated by the potential valorisation of the area. Interviewee F further remarks: “In the years when Tingbjerg was called a ghetto, there hasn't been much focus on, you know standing up against that label [...] So now we are using the development of Tingbjerg [...] to gain the interest from the media and to hold the interest from the media on that perspective, and we feed into that perspective in the media, and we also try to feed in to the change of like normal people, how they look into Tingbjerg and of course [...] we have people's ear because they now get the possibility to actually buy quite cheap, private housing in Tingbjerg.” It would thus be due to the (symbolic) position of these new actors involved that the counter-narratives are now also perceived beyond the local scale. However, these are instrumentalised for valorisation purposes, which implies that the empowering element of formulating counter-narratives among residents is omitted and public representation of Tingbjerg (once again) denied to the current residents.

Interviewee N, who moved to Tingbjerg in the early 2000s³⁷, describes similar experiences: “When I started looking for apartments in my younger days, I never put Tingbjerg on my list. I didn’t want to move to Tingbjerg. [why?] Because of the stories at that time. People selling drugs everywhere.” Even though both Interviewee N and Interviewee M knew Tingbjerg from own visits before moving, it were the external (media) representations that dominated their evaluation of Tingbjerg as a potential place to live³⁸. Although some of Interviewee M’s initial fears were confirmed, her everyday experiences of and in the neighbourhood expanded the dominant external representations, which are therefore no longer the only source for her perception of Tingbjerg. Meanwhile, Interviewee M can hence state, that “It is nice [to live in Tingbjerg]. I got used to it”.

By living in Tingbjerg and hence making experience-in-place, the neighbourhood has changed in perception from a state of exception to a place that acquires personal meaning for the residents. This is particularly pronounced in the case of Interviewee R, who describes herself as ‘Tingbjergner’ and is referred to by others as ‘Interviewee R Tingbjerg’. Despite the negative perception from the outside, her place of residence is thus a source of self-identification. Although Tingbjerg is thus referred to as ‘home’ by many residents, also this notion is not unaffected by the ‘ghetto’ label. Interviewee J notes:

“I know this is weird, but I feel Tingbjerg is my home. Not, not only because in the place that I live in, but I feel the whole Tingbjerg is my home. And all these people who live in Tingbjerg is quite a family for me, because I know them all.”

She assumes this statement could be perceived as ‘weird’ from the outside, as the ‘ghetto’ label implies that Tingbjerg is not a place where one can feel comfortable and to which one can establish positive connections in terms of both the place and the people. According to Kirkness (2014, p. 1268) the attachment expressed here constitutes a subtle challenge to the dominant discourse, since the state of exception conveyed by the ‘ghetto’ label is contested in its validity through positive experiences in and with the space. Interviewee S is also involved in formulating such implicit counter-narratives by emphasising that I should stress in my thesis “that I [Interviewee S] want to stay here”.

³⁷ The negative reputation of the area thus precedes the institutionalised ‘ghetto’ discourse. However, the term ‘ghetto’ was already before associated with Tingbjerg in everyday language.

³⁸ Interviewee S, too, describes that she was aware of the negative reputation of Tingbjerg before her move, but that for her, her own positive perception, which she associated in particular with the green spaces in Tingbjerg, prevailed. Although the move was thus a conscious decision, it still proved to be an evaluation process of her own experiences and external perceptions.

'If I'm not gonna do it then who's gonna do it'

This interweaving of awareness of the stigma and the negative reputation on the one hand and the own positive connotated experiences in neighbourhood on the other hand is then again mentioned by the residents interviewed as a source of motivation for their own engagement in the neighbourhood. They thus do not distance themselves from their neighbourhood, as some other studies on territorial stigma have noted, but instead get involved and actively shape neighbourhood life³⁹: "Tingbjerg is my neighbourhood, that's where I live and where my son lives and where my childhood friends come and visit me. So, I really wish that it stays attractive area where you can feel yourself safe" (Interviewee R). Interviewee R expresses a certain ownership of and attachment to both place and the community. Accordingly, the externally attached stigma of Tingbjerg is experienced as a stigmatisation of one's own person. Tingbjerg thus has significance for Interviewee J's own engagement in that

"it is very important for me because I live there, I was born there, I grew up there. So the fact that somebody is like talking about the place I live in, in a negative way makes me mad and sad at the same time. It's like nobody else can say something about my place. Nobody."

She thus experiences the externally imposed (mis)representation of her place of living as a deprivation of her possibility to publicly represent the place and related to this also her own person.

The contestation of the 'ghetto' label becomes the subject of an open protest formulated from within the neighbourhood. However, since the claims made in this protest do not only refer to the local level, but address problems of society as a whole, an upscaling of this protest beyond Tingbjerg can be identified:

"So, the problems that we have in Tingbjerg is also one of the problems that we have in whole Denmark and all other countries, like racism [...] So, when I'm talking about the stigmatisation there in Tingbjerg, I'm also talking about the more global." (Interviewee J)

Interviewee J is therefore involved in a local youth organisation that campaigns for the abolition of the 'ghettolist'. In this context, she feels a special responsibility as a young person and Muslim from Tingbjerg, who embodies intersectional stigmas, and thus deduces "so, if I'm not gonna do it then who's gonna do it". Her own experiences of being stigmatised thus serves as a motivation to speak out against the 'ghetto' label as an expression of a profound racist discourse in Denmark:

"Because all of the things that I have went through, is one of the things that keep me activated in this organisation [...] that I have this feeling that 'ok, some day or some time there will be something that doesn't - that nobody will call Tingbjerg for a ghetto'. Or this racism that there are wouldn't be here

³⁹ However, this assertion is biased as I only interviewed residents who self-identified as being engaged. The results presented here are thus not representative of residents in general. As Interviewee S states: "It seems like there is a certain section of the residents in Tingbjerg that are very passive." Moreover, the stigmatisation is not experienced as a source of motivation by all residents, so that Interviewee G observes that "the continuous racist discourse that exists, also we experience like it demotivates people to participate".

soon, I hope. So, all these things that I went through, is helping me and motivating me, to like keep focusing on all this.” (Interviewee J)

In the context of the current redevelopment of Tingbjerg, which originates from the neighbourhood's classification as a ‘severe ghetto’⁴⁰, the local protest against specific building projects and expropriations is taken up and related to a national discourse. Through this upscaling of local protests against the effects of both ‘ghetto’ policies and ‘ghetto’ discourse, locally formulated specific causes are related to and feed into a criticism of the (political) system. While the ‘ghetto’ discourse for the residents is thus concretely negotiated on the neighbourhood scale, it emanates and hence remains embedded in national struggles. Consequently, the initiatives brought forth against the ‘ghetto’ initiatives in Tingbjerg are inherently both local and national and thus have an (implicit) aspiration of upscaling.

‘It doesn’t fit with what they expect’

As the (media) representation of Tingbjerg as a ‘ghetto’ space is ubiquitous, it is mainly through the own experience of the neighbourhood that these mostly negative perceptions of Tingbjerg among externals are challenged. Interviewee F, who works with promoting the area, describes:

“I have been to Tingbjerg with a lot of people that didn't know Tingbjerg before [...] and they were all very surprised by the looks of Tingbjerg, because of the bad reputation, I think they [...] thought that it would be like a concrete kind of area, and they are quite surprised that it's so cozy out there, like a cute small-scale architecture. So I'm happy to find that the people who are visiting and discover Tingbjerg quite fast actually have this new idea of Tingbjerg. It's like it changes the perception - it doesn't fit with what they expect. And that's a good thing. But of course it's still a problem that there is a lot of people who have never visited Tingbjerg and they still have an idea of Tingbjerg to be something that it is not. [...] Like when we tell them Tingbjerg is actually very beautiful, Tingbjerg has a lot of potential, Tingbjerg is full of green, maybe people be quite sceptical when you start talking to them about this, but then when we take them out to Tingbjerg, the green, like they say 'well, we see this, I don't understand why it has such a bad reputation'.”

The ‘ghetto’ label thus evokes a certain expectation of the neighbourhood, which is primarily mediated by media coverage but also the recallable associations of the ‘ghetto’ term. The actual qualities of Tingbjerg thus take a back seat to its ‘ghetto’ image. For outsiders, Tingbjerg is thus not a neighbourhood among many on the outskirts of Copenhagen, but a ‘ghetto’ discursively charged with the decontextualised socio-spatial imaginaries of the same. While one’s own experience in and with the neighbourhood may potentially ‘correct’ or at least nuance these negative reputations, the latter usually prevent the own experience of it in the first place:

⁴⁰ Due to the designation as ‘severe ghetto’, the share of social housing stock has to be reduced to 40 % by 2030. In Tingbjerg this is to be achieved by adding private housing units in the current green areas as well as some demolitions and evictions. Especially the demolition of housing units for the disabled is resisted in Tingbjerg. For a more detailed explanation, see Appendix A.

“We conducted a survey, it was a big questionnaire where around 2.000 Copenhageners answered, and it was clear that [...] a majority of them, like 90 % of them, think that Tingbjerg has issues with crime, crime-related problems, and people who live here, or visit can't feel safe walking around. And all of them had never been here before. That's like a typical picture. And none of them wanted to move here. [...] And their reasoning for that was Tingbjerg's bad reputation. It is definitely a vicious circle that keeps on going and going.” (Interviewee B)

'The media also blows it up'

This bad reputation is mainly attributed to media coverage of Tingbjerg and 'ghettos' more generally, which reproduces and thus reinforces the dominant 'ghetto' discourse. These are often exaggerated, so that problem situations which exist throughout Denmark are increasingly problematised in Tingbjerg, as these negative and sensational images conform to dominant imaginaries of the area. By relating national discourses on integration or deviant behaviour to specific residential areas, these become 'located' and thus tangible for the general public. About the role of these circulating images, Interviewee O hence states that “the media also blows it up”. The media thereby contributes to the territorial stigma being nationalised and democratised (Wacquant et al., 2014, p. 1273) by locating “everything bad that happens [...] in Tingbjerg” (Interviewee N):

“every time something happens in the vicinity of Tingbjerg, they will use a clip of Tingbjerg, they will say it is in Tingbjerg, even though all of us living in the area know that it's not. It's in Husum, or it's in Brønshøj, it's actually in Gladsaxe, but because the people living in the other parts of the country don't know these places, they will always just say it's here at our place, even though it's, it isn't.” (Interviewee A)

The residents are then also permanently confronted with these representations:

“I think it is still a topic [...] in work, when I'm out with my friends and when I'm home. Because you see it everywhere, you see it on the media, social media, you see, ... you hear it in some other places. Like, if you go out, some people will just say it out loud 'just go back to the ghetto'. [...] So, this topic is, would never like 'close'. I think it will only like close when the politicians are stopping using the word 'ghetto'.” (Interviewee J)

Again, a close connection between the use of the 'ghetto' term in a political context and the external representation of Tingbjerg can be discerned. The origin of the media discourse is thus traced back to the political instrumentalisation of the 'ghetto'.

'They feel that they are seen as something different'

This constant confrontation then also has an effect on the self-perception of especially young residents, who may relate these external representations to themselves and internalise them. Interviewee L hence cautions:

“But now the thing is it's everything, so political comments, Rasmus Paludan who comes to the area and on YouTube, on the phone, Instagram, TikTok, it's everywhere. So a child of eight years sees it if they have a mobile phone, have a smartphone, then they can read. And if you as a child keep hearing the same thing over and over again, [...] they make it part of their identity.” (Interviewee L)

Interviewee M, a mother of a teenage son in Tingbjerg, expresses her fear of a self-fulfilling prophecy, especially for young men, who are well aware of the stigmatisations they are confronted with:

“And I know many who dream about becoming something big, and be a good person but if you always hear about the negative, negative, negative, it becomes difficult. That doesn't contribute to something positive if you always are nonetheless that negative. So you could just be negative. Especially as a young person, they have a hard time [...] That makes them realize that they are seen, they feel that they are seen as something different, that they are not a part. It is just hard to grow up here.”

Interviewee M hence identifies the lack of recognition of young people based on their ethnicity and place of residence as the aggravation that makes life in Tingbjerg difficult and has a concrete impact on the young people's life chances. The stigma of Tingbjerg thus becomes the stigmatisation of youth. Interviewee L, who as a young adult in Tingbjerg is involved in a youth organisation, in this context remarks:

“the young people are much more than just being from Tingbjerg. And that's kind of what I think is forgotten when talking about it overall. It becomes all about 'you are from this and this place', but you're much more than that.”

Based on their place of residence, certain expectations and negative perceptions would be placed on the young people. They would thus not be recognised as individuals with their own abilities but would be reduced to a stigmatised imaginary informed by the representation of their place of residence. Interviewee R conceives this equalisation imposed by the 'ghetto' discourse as an expression of dehumanisation: “basically, I hate the word 'ghetto' or all the words, which are negative. They minimise the human of us human beings.”

The stigmas associated with the 'ghetto' label are also readily available to the residents themselves:

“Actually, when you say 'a ghetto', so you think completely negative. Because when you find yourself in a ghetto place, you become very very concerned. Because the problem of the ghetto,- that means that you are inactive in the society, that means that you're exposed, that means that you're vulnerable, that means that you are criminal.” (Interviewee R)

In order to not be related to these connotations and reduced to 'being-from-Tingbjerg', young people in particular conceal their address when applying for a job.

However, how the affiliation with Tingbjerg is evaluated from the outside also depends on one's status and whether one fulfils the other stigmas associated with the 'ghetto' label. Interviewee P, an old White female, emphasises:

"I will always tell that it's nice to live in Tingbjerg. When the people ask, 'where do you live?', so, are there many who say 'no, I'm just living in Brønshøj or in Husum'. But I say, 'no, I'm living in Tingbjerg'. 'In Tingbjerg?' So, I say 'yes, there it is really good out here', I tell them. Because the journalists nonetheless promote it as a bigger problem than it actually is. [...] 'Well, I thought that it was so terrible to live out there' and when I see them I am not afraid to say that I live out there."

'And that hurts'

While the 'ghetto' in the Danish context spans both a discursive and a legal dimension, for the people I interviewed, the personal impacts are mainly ascribed to the external representation. Although many residents thus express that they like living in Tingbjerg they are not unaffected by the territorial stigmatisation it is subjected to. Residents with an ethnic minority background expressed that they feel othered by the majority society. Though this experience of 'Othering' is not only attributed to their place of residence, it however intersects with the construction of the mutually exclusive categories of 'Dane' and 'Muslim' in the 'ghetto' discourse and its spatial fixation. In this regard, Interviewee J expresses that her belonging is categorically denied by some state representatives just because she is a Muslim. She recalls a discussion with a politician from the right-wing populist Danish People's Party:

"And I was like: 'Ok, but... So you would never accept a person like me?'" And he was like, he was answering me: 'Yeah, I would never do that, because you are not a Danish person.' I was like: 'But I live here, I'm born here in Denmark. [...] At the end they were like: 'Ok, but how could you accept me then if I don't live in Tingbjerg? How could you accept if I go out and I actually study? I do work. I do go and do all these things that you want me to do. But at the same time, you will never accept me.' And one of the guys was like: 'How could you accept me for ... all these - you would never accept me for all these things, but you are the ones who told me that I will never be anything. I will never be someone Danish.'"

Interviewee J describes this denial of her belonging and the rejection of her as a person because of her religious affiliation as a painful experience: "And that hit me very very very good, that hit me very good". The demarcation formulated in the 'ghetto' discourse thus does not remain on the discursive level but is consequential and hurtful for the targeted people. Interviewee N, too, describes hearing about the associations of outsiders with her place of living and hence implicitly also herself as a person as a painful awareness: "And then they hear I'm living in Tingbjerg. "Oh my god, how can you live in Tingbjerg?" - "What do you mean?" - "But it's a place for criminals." So, it's basically known as a place for criminals. And that hurts."

The residents I interviewed are thus aware of the stigmatisation they and their place of living are subjected to. Accordingly, the designation as a 'ghetto' and the associations and prejudices that emanate from it are identified as one of the most significant problems of Tingbjerg. Interviewee R states in this regard: "And as Tingbjerg became a ghetto, so with that come just all kinds of problems."

As mentioned above, it is thus not primarily 'real' problems that are experienced as exerting a negative influence, but the political labelling and the restricted possibilities to address the problematisations due to their framing in the discourse.

When asked what it would mean for her personally if Tingbjerg was no longer on the 'ghetto list', Interviewee M replies:

"That means that we no longer have to be embarrassed to be a part of Tingbjerg. That we're not getting denounced so much anymore. That the people who don't want to come to Tingbjerg because they are afraid of going here, and that's seriously how it is. They think they'll get shot if they come to Tingbjerg. All of these prejudices you have."

Interviewee M expresses a certain shame for living in Tingbjerg because of the external representation of the area, which again potentially undermines an affirmative self-identification with the neighbourhood. At the same time, this statement underlines the interactional dimension of the stigmatisation as mainly experienced in contact with externals. Interviewee N elaborates how the stigmatisation influences her (social) life outside of Tingbjerg in that colleagues are surprised when they hear that she is from Tingbjerg, while her daughter has to deal with avoidance by friends: "When my daughter, she tells someone that she is living in Tingbjerg, most of her friends' parents won't allow them to come here and visit her, because it's not a good place, it's a ghetto." The stigmatisation of the area is also perceived when applying for a job. Interviewee J shares: "It is like quite hard to apply for a job or something, because they know about Tingbjerg." This alleged 'knowledge' of outsiders and the resulting rejection of both the area and the residents themselves is in turn mainly mediated through dominant (media) representations and the general 'ghetto' discourse and hence does not reflect outsiders' own experiences.

However, the socio-spatial imaginaries evoked by the 'ghetto' discourse do not only have an external but also an internal effect:

"But also this media circus about Tingbjerg and about Islam have started a hate between people, also in Tingbjerg. If you read the [facebook] group [...] you will see a problem is 'oh, they haven't cut the grass'. Ok, booh. But before you know that 'It's also because with those brown people they just throw their garbage anywhere'. So it develops into something negative and it develops around to people who have not the same skin colour. So I'm afraid that the development is going the wrong way." (Interviewee N)

Again, responsibility is attributed to the media and politics, which challenge the cohesion of residents by projecting national discourses onto the neighbourhood scale and thereby potentially contribute to a distancing between ethnic Danes and ethnic minority groups:

"I feel it's the media which ruins a lot of things for people around here by giving them names or putting their religion in it. Or politics or something like that. But otherwise, I see a lot of people who get so good along with each other" (Interviewee N)

'But I'm in really close contact with my neighbours'

Even though such positive accounts of neighbourly relations predominate among the interviewees, I cannot elaborate on them further in the context of this thesis⁴¹. Instead, I will only briefly discuss here the emphasis that the participants put on the neighbourly contacts beyond their own ethnic group. Interviewee M accentuates⁴²:

“But I am in really close contact with my neighbours. I have a woman living in the apartment below me, who is Danish. Then I also have my neighbour living above me who is Turkish. And on the other side is living someone from Somalia. And we are actually doing pretty well, I think.”

These and other similar accounts, which were all formulated by residents with ethnic minority backgrounds, challenge the dominant narrative about Tingbjerg and more generally 'ghettos' in two respects. On the one hand, the construction of the residents as a homogeneous group from the outside is contested. Interviewee M states: “I've always said that Tingbjerg is many minorities within a minority. Because the society sees Tingbjerg only as one minority. But if you live here, you see that here are many different minorities.” On the other hand, these descriptions negate the imaginary that parallel societies that have no contact to the Danish majority society are evolving in the 'ghetto' areas⁴³.

⁴¹ Likewise, I cannot go further into detail on strategies to address the territorial stigmatisation other than the ones identified so far (mainly the formulation of counter-narratives). To just shortly mention these, the residents I interviewed also engage in the pronunciation of micro-differences and the projection of the stigmatisation on deviant others.

⁴² A majority of the residents I talked to made similar statements, pronouncing the ethnicity of their neighbours and the positively perceived interactions among those.

⁴³ At the same time, however, both ethnic minority members and White Danes criticise that the groups tend to keep to themselves beyond their immediate neighbours. These differences between the groups are described by Interviewee O and Interviewee P, both White Danes, as a division, because in their opinion Danes are not taken into account and welcome in many neighbourhood activities: “You don't take Danes with you to that kind of activities in the community. There are maybe some of the activities that happen over in the garden, where there also come foreigners and so on. I've also talked with Interviewee P, they don't want to spend time with us, I think. They rather want their own.” (Interviewee O)

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

While the 'ghetto' is thus constructed and symbolically charged in the political field, the socio-spatial imaginaries and (discursive) hierarchisations it evokes are concretely negotiated at the local level. The aim of this thesis was hence not to assess the appropriateness of the application of the 'ghetto' label in the Danish context (such an assessment is made in Schultz Larsen, 2014), but to focus on its effects.

As 'ghetto' is not an innocent or neutral term, the spatial and social chains of association it evokes are instrumentalised in the Danish context to justify anti-immigration policies and biopolitical interventions. Moreover, through the institutionalisation of the 'ghetto', discursive spaces of exclusion are established and societal problems are increasingly spatialised and ethnicised. Even though the meaning of space is thus potentially open, the prevailing discursive representations of the 'ghetto' space anticipate externals' attribution of meaning of the targeted space and hence potentially pre-determine experiences-in-space. The example of the Danish 'ghetto' thus illustrates that "place is deeply linked to power, in terms of whose accounts gain legitimacy, and the way these accounts authorise forms of inequality and exclusion" (Cairns, 2018, p. 1225).

The 'ghetto' constitutes an "urban categor[y] of classification" (Tissot, 2018, p. 152) under which diverse urban realities are subsumed and hence recede, so that the 'ghetto' evolves as a decontextualised container term for various problem constellations. The label is thus central to the reproduction and fixation of the hegemonic discourse in specific neighbourhoods. Accordingly, the residents identify the abolition of the 'ghetto' label as a prerequisite for the symbolic resignification of the respective area.

The findings support that the 'ghetto' spawns both a spatial and social dimension, while the perceived consequences are mainly attributed to the social stratification and hence the discrimination it evokes. These are also traced to the chains of association that are discursively linked to the 'ghetto' and further instrumentalised by politicians to justify interventions. The findings hence point to the significance of the representation of space for processes of socio-spatial Othering and the production of territorial stigmatisation⁴⁴. The strategies employed by residents confirm those identified in the

⁴⁴ Due to the increasing ethnicisation of the 'ghetto' discourse, spatial and social stigmas are closely interwoven. Contrary to what Wacquant et al. (2014, p. 1273) state, it thus cannot be assumed that the territorial stigma in the context of the Danish 'ghetto' is autonomised from other stigmas. Instead, the "links between the stigma attached to the negative branding of a place and the stigmata of poverty, class, ethnicity, crime etc. are very strong indeed, to the point of being interchangeable" (Slater, 2017b, p. 245).

literature, mainly the pronunciation of micro-difference and thus the rejection of the validity of the stigma for oneself, and the formulation of counter-narratives.

The findings also confirm the role of the state and the media in the construction of territorial stigmatisation, mainly based on the classification inherent to labelling and the circulation of the socio-spatial imaginaries conveyed in the discourse. Following Bourdieu, through labelling the state exerts a “symbolic power”, which is “the power to make things with words” (Bourdieu, 1989, p. 23). The discourse thus does not represent an objective reality but reproduces the categorisations and social and spatial entities it deals with (Wellgraf, 2014, p. 208)⁴⁵. As such, the representation of the ‘ghetto’ space is potentially detached from the actual lived experiences of the residents.

Owing to the dominance of these external representations, residents have to engage with the ‘ghetto’ discourse and position themselves. The findings suggest that even those accounts that were not explicitly linked to the ‘ghetto’ often reflected a connection or demarcation to the dominant representations of both the neighbourhood and the residents. However, while the hegemonic discourse structures the situational context, it does not overdetermine it (Sandbjerg Hansen, 2021, p. 193). Residents’ experiences of place are thus at once “constructed, and especially communicated, through social negotiation, including conflict and difference” (Pierce et al., 2011, p. 60).

Residents exhibit an agentic orientation through which they formulate deliberative responses informed by the perceived contrast of external representations and their own experiences-in-space (Garbin & Millington, 2012, p. 2075). Engaging in (symbolic) struggles for representation, residents are active in the appropriation of space and its attribution of meaning and thereby “subvert the rationality of powerful institutions” (Scott & Sohn, 2019, p. 5). While these are sometimes articulated as overt (collective) resistance against the ‘ghetto’ initiatives, the findings show that the power relations inherent to the ‘ghetto’ discourse are mainly “interpreted, transformed, even subverted at the level of everyday life” (Scott & Sohn, 2019, p. 6).

The discrepancy between the external and internal representation of the researched neighbourhood is attributed to its labelling as a ‘ghetto’ and the according chains of associations solidified in the discourse. Due to lived experiences, the residents (and professionals) have a more nuanced perception in contrast to outsiders, whose perception is predetermined by the simplified and stigmatised dominant representation. These are thus an expression of the power relations that the production of space is embedded in and the hegemonic position of the ‘ghetto’ discourse, against which the public communication of alternative representations as formulated by residents is restricted. Hence, the

⁴⁵ Within the discourse, however, this representation is constructed and communicated as an objective reality. Hence, a certain essentialism is employed in the discourse, whereby problem constellations are attributed as inherent to the corresponding neighbourhood. The actors and the processes involved are thereby obfuscated.

prevailing “problem image creates barriers to the spread of knowledge and change” (Hastings & Dean, 2003, p. 171), while at the same time residents cannot significantly challenge the hegemonic narrative due to their “lack of active or controlled access to [the] discourse” (van Dijk, 1993, p. 256). This in turn influences the role of the residents in the production of space. The findings of Garbin & Millington (2012, p. 2071, emphasis in original) for French banlieues may thus be transferred to the context of the Danish ‘ghetto’:

“Simply put, some individuals or groups have more influence over the production of cityspaces than others. In the banlieues, the deprived status of most residents means that their productive activities are usually (although not exclusively) limited to the *perceived* or *lived* realms that in technocratic, advanced capitalist societies are dominated.”

Referring to Lefebvre's conceptualisation, however, the potential for the disruption of dominance is always already implied in the production of space (Vogelpohl, 2014, p. 27). Residents' formulations of counter-narratives are primarily located in the realm of spaces of representation, which thus also becomes the realm of symbolic struggles over representation and the resignification of space (Cuny, 2018, p. 890). According to Garbin & Millington (2012, p. 2074), the negotiation of the ‘ghetto’ as an ideologically informed representation of space in the lived realm is to be understood as a reaction to the territorial stigma which “incites residents to enter a representational space, or field, where they encounter dominant technocratic and media representations of space and, critically, envisage a transformed space”. These are thus in tension with the construction of the ‘ghetto’ through essentialisation and (statistical) representations in the realm of the conceived space, which hence intervenes in the lived space. At the same time, the lived space of the ‘ghetto’ is not only imbued by residents, but also negotiated in the media, artistic accounts and even in the political sphere. It thus points to the simultaneity of different, contested and even contradicting imaginaries whose public communication, however, is affected by the different power positions of individuals and institutions.

To conclude, the findings emphasise that the construction and the representation of the ‘ghetto’ space in Denmark have consequences for both spatial practices⁴⁶ and spaces of representation. This thesis contributed to the de-naturalisation and de-construction of the ‘ghetto’ and thereby points to the underlying processes and socio-spatial imaginaries that inform the intentional employment of the term in the Danish context as a justification for political interventions. The inclusion of the residents' experiences highlights how the negotiation and challenging of dominance is inherent to the production of space, so that while the ‘ghetto’ discourse and the socio-spatial imaginaries it conveys intersect with residents' lived experiences, the discourse does not overdetermine these.

⁴⁶ However, due to the limited scope of this thesis I was not able to go into detail about the bodily experience of the material space and the concrete spatial practices of the residents. The influences are thus assumed according to the reviewed literature.

6. OUTLOOK

While the accounts of the residents also highlight the importance of media in consolidating external representations and thus mediating territorial stigma, within the framework of this thesis I was not able to further elaborate on how the discourse of the political field is reproduced and adapted in media representations. Furthermore, the inclusion of residents who do not volunteer in the neighbourhood and who embody several stigmas associated with the 'ghetto' would be insightful for follow-up studies to address the negotiation of the external representations in a more nuanced way.

For Tingbjerg in particular, attention should be drawn to the effects of the current restructuring and the concomitant resignification of the neighbourhood. With the redevelopment primarily informed by market logics, the 'ghetto' discourse provides the political justification for interventions. Yet, the redevelopment threatens the very elements that the participants of this study identified as most valuable in the area, namely the green spaces and the low-threshold neighbourly interactions. Hence, overt protest is formulated against both the concrete building projects and more fundamentally the 'ghetto' policies that inform these. While the development is still in process, the current dynamics point to the ongoing negotiation of who can and may represent the neighbourhood and thus also who may formatively intervene.

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The word "APPENDIX" is centered in a large, bold, black, sans-serif font. It is enclosed within a thick, olive-green rectangular border. This inner border is offset slightly to the left and bottom from a larger, thin, light-grey rectangular border. A thin, black horizontal line extends from the left edge of the page, passing through the center of the word "APPENDIX".

APPENDIX

APPENDIX A – TINGBJERG

Tingbjerg is located in the Northwest of Copenhagen, about eight kilometres from the city centre and adjacent to the green areas of *Utterslev Mose*, *Gyngemose* and *Vestvolden*. The settlement was planned in the 1950s by the architect and urban planner Steen Eiler Rasmussen in collaboration with the landscape architect C. Th. Sørensen as a model town in response to housing shortage and deteriorating living conditions in inner Copenhagen in the 1940s (Trafik-, Bygge- og Boligstyrelsen, 2019). The intention was to establish an independent urban unit with own institutions and common green spaces around which the buildings are arranged and neighbourhood life was to be organised. However, due to this envisioned seclusion – which in spatial terms is emphasised by the street layout with a ring road that encloses the entire settlement and allows vehicle access through one street only – Tingbjerg appears both physically and in terms of (social) institutions delimited from its surroundings.

Tingbjerg's main housing stock was completed in two stages of development between 1955 and 1972 and today comprises about 2.200 non-profit housing units administered in equal shares by the non-profit housing associations SAB/KAB and fsb (Landsbyggefonden, 2020). With more than half of the housing units being three-bedroom apartments, the neighbourhood was primarily designed for working-class families who moved away from the congested city centre. Due to the city's housing allocation policies, more migrant families moved to Tingbjerg, especially since the 1990s, while at the same time, many of the working-class families who had previously lived in the area relocated. Today, immigrants and descendants of non-Western backgrounds make up 73% of Tingbjerg's population (Transport- og Boligministeriet, 2020). Against the backdrop of the intensifying national discourse on migration and integration, the image of Tingbjerg thus gradually changed from a green city-within-a-city for 'Danish' working-class families to a neighbourhood associated with immigrants, (gang) crime and supposedly 'failed' integration and as such become renowned beyond the locale. The resulting relative isolation and stigmatisation of Tingbjerg were further reinforced by the introduction of the 'ghettolist' in 2010, on which Tingbjerg⁴⁷ has been listed. With a share of 72,4% of the residents having completed primary education only and an income level of 53,4% of the average in the region⁴⁸, two

⁴⁷ On the 'ghettolist', Tingbjerg is listed as 'Tingbjerg/Utterslevhuse' according to the area's official name. However, to account for the common denomination of the neighbourhood used by both residents and officials in everyday use, I will continue to refer to it as 'Tingbjerg'.

⁴⁸ As mentioned above, these figures cannot be considered 'neutral' numbers reflecting an objective reality. In terms of educational attainment, a 2019 KAB analysis based on figures from Statistics Denmark shows that the proportion of 24-26-year-olds in Tingbjerg who have completed upper secondary education has increased from 47% in 2008/09 to 64% in 2016/17. The same analysis also shows that the proportion of 27-28-year-olds who

out of four criteria of the 'ghettolist' besides ethnicity were met in Tingbjerg in 2020. Since the neighbourhood is listed for more than four consecutive years, it is now categorised as a 'severe ghetto' (Transport- og Boligministeriet, 2020).

While deprived neighbourhoods in other countries are often characterised by structural decay and state withdrawal, Tingbjerg is characterised by an architecture considered of 'high preservation value' and significant presence of the welfare state. Since the beginning of the 2000s, the housing associations in Tingbjerg have carried out extensive modernisation measures, which were complemented by several 'boligsociale helhedsplaner'⁴⁹ (comprehensive social housing plans) (Morgen et al., 2020, p. 216). However, these efforts neither contributed to improving the prevailing urban imaginaries of Tingbjerg nor lifted the area out of the 'ghetto' criteria.

In accordance with the 2018 adopted 'ghettopakken', the non-profit housing stock of Tingbjerg as a 'severe ghetto' is thus to be reduced to a share of 40% by 2030 (Regeringen, 2018). With a current 96% share of non-profit housing, the officials in Tingbjerg decided to meet these requirements by densifying the open green spaces with private housing estates⁵⁰ and converting some of the existing flats to elderly and youth housing. On completion, the number of residents is expected to increase from the current 6.300 to about 10.000 in 2030 (Trafik-, Bygge- og Boligstyrelsen, 2019). The employed regeneration narrative is informed by promoting Tingbjerg as an attractive place for families with a high architectural value in the vicinity of both nature and the Copenhagen city centre. Intending to address more resourceful residents with higher income and education levels (Landsbyggefondens, 2020), the introduction of mixed ownership forms in the neighbourhood is hence envisioned as a means for Tingbjerg to drop out of the 'ghetto' criteria by 2025 (Trafik-, Bygge- og Boligstyrelsen, 2019).

have completed vocational education has increased from 34% in 2008/09 to 52% in 2016/17. However, the positive trend in educational attainment of young people under 30 in Tingbjerg is not considered in the overall assessment of the area with regard to the 'ghetto' criteria, as only the educational attainment of 30-59-year-olds is considered here. In the context of the below-average income level, it has to be noted that Tingbjerg is located in and thus compared to the average income level of the capital region, which is higher than in the rest of the country. The example of Tingbjerg thus underlines that if the criteria were defined only slightly differently, Tingbjerg might not be designated as a 'ghetto' (Morgen et al., 2020, p. 222).

⁴⁹ A comprehensive social housing plan aims to initiate social and preventive initiatives that can contribute to a positive development in vulnerable housing areas (fsb, n.d.). In the context of Tingbjerg, the areas of focus are security and well-being, crime prevention efforts, education and employment, and prevention and parental responsibility. At the same time, the comprehensive social housing plan aims to support the vision that the area is opened up and made attractive for both new residents and investors (Landsbyggefondens, 2016).

⁵⁰ In collaboration with the private real estate developer NREP, an additional 1500 private housing units are going to be built in Tingbjerg until 2030 (Trafik-, Bygge- og Boligstyrelsen, 2019).

APPENDIX B – PRIORITY AREAS OF THE 'GHETTO' INITIATIVES

Priority areas and proposed initiatives within the framework of the respective 'ghetto strategies'

'The government's strategy against ghettoisation' (2004)

The strategy must therefore be based on the following three steps:

- Immediate aid for the most affected ghetto areas to address the present problems.
- Over the next two to three years, this will help create a more balanced mix of residents and promote integration in ghetto areas.
- Long-term initiatives to prevent the formation of new ghetto areas. (Regeringen, 2004)

'Return of the ghetto to society. Taking action against parallel societies in Denmark' (2010)

1. More attractive residential areas that break isolation
 - Strategic cooperation with municipalities that have ghetto areas
 - Strategic demolitions of apartment blocks, etc.
 - From a ghetto to an attractive district (financed by 'Landsbyggefonden' (National Building Fund), to make areas more attractive)
 - Renovations
 - Area-based social actions that address the challenges of vulnerable public housing areas (social comprehensive plans for the area)
2. Better balance in the composition of residents
 - Stop of allocating refugees to ghettos and vulnerable housing areas
 - Stop of allocating people from non-EEA countries to ghetto areas
 - Requirement for adequate housing for family reunification tightened
 - Easier access to housing in ghetto areas for wealthy residents
 - Strengthened opportunities to reject unemployed housing applicants

- Efforts to ensure that former prison inmates are not assigned housing in the ghetto areas
 - All housing organisations should contribute to a balanced composition of residents in the municipality
 - Mixed form of ownership and mixed composition of residents
 - Eviction of tenants who severely violate house rules
 - Right of challenge for municipalities and housing organisations (the government will propose an amendment to the general housing act to give municipalities and housing organisations the right to challenge existing regulations that may hinder measures to combat or prevent ghettoisation)
 - Relocation grants for residents moving from a ghetto area
3. Strengthened action for children and young people
- Mandatory day care for bilingual children outside day care
 - Strengthened parental responsibility - more parental duties
 - Possibility of creating school districts that are not geographically contiguous
 - Full-day schools in or near deprived residential areas
 - Strengthened supervision of independent primary schools and increased focus in primary school on students with language support needs
 - Reservation of "integration spots" in schools
 - Targeting of traineeship grants to vocational schools with high numbers of pupils from, for instance, ghetto areas
4. Away from passive subsistence on public benefits
- Job centres in ghetto areas
 - Tightening of the 450-hour rule for spouses on cash benefits
 - Reduction of housing benefit as a sanction for lack of parental responsibility and failure to meet the affordability obligation
5. Tackling social fraud and crime
- National plan for police intervention in ghetto areas

- Rapid processing of legal actions against juvenile troublemakers
- Increased coordinated action against abuse of e.g. unemployment benefits, cash benefits and pensions
- Extended access to TV surveillance
- Conditional notation on young people's criminal records
- Targeted crime prevention advice. (Regeringen, 2010)

'A Denmark without parallel societies – No ghettos by 2030' (2018)

Physical demolition and conversion of deprived housing areas

1. Physically transformed residential areas
2. New possibilities for full settlement of the most deprived ghetto areas
3. Access to terminate tenancies in case of sale of housing in deprived areas

More robust control over who can live in deprived housing areas

4. Stop municipal allocation of social welfare recipients to deprived housing areas
5. Mandatory flexible renting in vulnerable housing areas
6. Lower grants for new residents in ghetto areas
7. Stop relocation of integration benefit recipients
8. Cash reward for municipalities that succeed in integration efforts

More police intervention and higher penalties to fight crime and create more security

9. More police intervention in particularly deprived residential areas
10. Higher penalties in certain areas (increased penalty zone)
11. Criminals out of the ghettos

A good start in life for all children and young people

12. Mandatory day care to ensure better knowledge of the language before starting school
13. Better distribution in day-care centres
14. Targeted language tests in 0. grade
15. Sanctions for low-performing primary schools
16. Strengthened parental responsibility for the forfeiture of the child benefit and the parents' responsibility
17. Better distribution of pupils in 'gymnasiums'

18. Criminalisation of re-education trips
19. Tougher approach to domestic violence
20. Early detection of vulnerable children
21. Stricter sanctions for violation of the special extended reporting obligation

Government follows up on action against parallel societies

22. Three special ghetto representatives with the necessary competences. (Regeringen, 2018)

APPENDIX C – 'GHETTOLIST' CRITERIA

In the following, the criteria of the respective ghetto lists are listed (English translation of the original Danish documents).

2004

[The 'ghetto list' was not officially used yet, nonetheless the following criteria were already established]

However, the following typical characteristics of ghettos in Denmark can already be identified:

1. High proportion of working-age adults on social benefits: ghetto areas are characterised by a clear predominance of people on social benefits, while people with a permanent link to the labour market are under-represented.
2. Low level of education: people with either no education or a low level of education are clearly over-represented in ghetto areas
3. Social housing: the majority of deprived areas are to be found in the social housing sector. These are often large general areas with more than 1,500 - 2,000 residents.
4. Distorted migration patterns: a typical feature of ghettos is that the wealthier people move away from these areas, while the poorer people often stay there or, if they move, settle in other ghettos
5. Lack of private business and private investment: Finally, ghetto areas are characterised by a lack of private business and private capital. This can be explained both by the fact that ghetto areas are typically public housing areas where it is not possible to establish businesses and by the fact that the areas are generally not attractive for private investment. (Regeringen, 2004)

2010

The ghetto list includes general housing areas (with at least 1,000 residents) that meet two of the following criteria:

- The share of immigrants and descendants from non-Western countries exceeds 50%
- The share of 18–64-year-olds not in employment or education exceeds 40% (average of the last 4 years)
- Number of convictions for criminal, weapons or narcotics offences per 10,000 residents aged 18 and over exceeds 270 (average for the last 4 years). (Ministeriet for By, Bolig og Landdistrikter, 2010)

2014

[The changes to the criteria noted in the policy paper were only adopted in 2014]

The list includes general housing areas with at least 1,000 residents that meet 3 out of 5 criteria. The 5 criteria are:

1. The share of 18–64-year-olds not in employment or education exceeds 40% (average of the last 2 years)
2. The share of immigrants and descendants from non-Western countries exceeds 50%
3. Number of convictions for criminal, weapons or narcotics offences exceeds 2.70% of residents aged 18 and over (average for last 2 years)
4. The share of residents aged 30-59 with only basic education (including undeclared education) exceeds 50% of all residents in the same age group
5. The average gross income of taxpayers aged 15-64 in the area, excluding education seekers, is less than 55% of the average gross income of the same group in the region. (Ministeriet for By, Bolig og Landdistrikter, 2014)

2018

A ghetto area is a general residential area with at least 1,000 inhabitants, where the share of immigrants and descendants from non-Western countries exceeds 50% and where at least two of the following four criteria are met:

1. The share of residents aged 18-64 who are not in employment or education exceeds 40%, averaged over the last 2 years
2. The proportion of residents convicted of criminal, weapons or narcotics offences is at least 3 times the national average averaged over the last 2 years
3. The share of residents aged 30-59 who have only basic education exceeds 60% of all residents in the same age group
4. The average gross income of taxpayers aged 15-64 in the area (excluding education seekers) is less than 55% of the average gross income of the same group in the region. (Transport-, Bygnings- og Boligministeriet, 2018)

Residential areas that are listed for 4 consecutive years on the ghetto list are classified as 'severe ghettos'

APPENDIX D – OVERVIEW INTERVIEWEES

Interviews conducted with local professionals

	Role	Language	Length of recording	Setting
Interviewee A (m)	social worker in Tingbjerg	English	00:52:20	zoom, interviewed together with Interviewee B
Interviewee B (f)	professional working in Tingbjerg concerned with its external presentation	English	00:52:20	zoom, interviewed together with Interviewee A
Interviewee C (f)	professional at one of the housing associations in Tingbjerg	English	00:55:00	zoom, interviewed together with Interviewee D and Interviewee E
Interviewee D (m)	professional at the City of Copenhagen, concerned with vulnerable housing areas	English	00:55:00	zoom, interviewed together with Interviewee C and Interviewee E
Interviewee E (m)	researcher working on and in Tingbjerg	English	00:55:00	zoom, interviewed together with Interviewee C and Interviewee D
Interviewee F (f)	professional at one of the housing associations in Tingbjerg	English	00:42:22	zoom
Interviewee G (f)	professional at an NGO working with people from Tingbjerg	English	00:31:10	zoom
Interviewee H (f)	professional at an NGO working with people from Tingbjerg	English	00:15:21	zoom

Interviews conducted with residents

	Role	Language	Length of recording	Setting
Interviewee J (f)	resident; volunteer at a youth organisation in Tingbjerg	English	00:56:27	phone
Her mother moved to Tingbjerg with her when she was two years old. She is now in her early twenties and calls Tingbjerg her home. She has been active in a youth organisation in Tingbjerg since 2017, which actively fights for the abolition of the ghetto list.				
Interviewee K (f)	resident; vice-chairperson of a youth organisation in Tingbjerg	English	00:42:14	phone
Moved to Tingbjerg with her family 11 years ago from another Danish town. She is now in her early twenties and is involved in a youth organisation in Tingbjerg and runs her own branch there.				
Interviewee L (f)	founder of a youth organisation in Tingbjerg	Danish	00:33:34	in person
She is in her early 20s and the founder of a youth organisation in Tingbjerg but lives herself in a neighbouring district of Tingbjerg. She moved there with her family a few years ago. As she had already been involved in voluntary work before, she also wanted to get involved in her new place of residence.				
Interviewee M (f)	resident; volunteer at café in Tingbjerg	Danish	00:37:25	in person
She is the head of the volunteer café in Tingbjerg and moved to the neighbourhood 2 years ago with her teenage son and younger daughter. She already knew Tingbjerg from previous volunteering in the area, but initially refused to move to Tingbjerg. Due to the tight housing market, she eventually moved there.				
Interviewee N (f)	resident; volunteer in Tingbjerg	English	00:49:47	in person
Moved to tingbjerg in the early 2000s when she just had a child. She is now volunteering at the café. Apart from that, she also tries to get involved in the community in Tingbjerg and strengthen it, for example by organising a flea market or keeping the area clean.				
Interviewee O (m)	resident; former member of residents' committee	Danish	1:31:20	in person, interviewed together with Interviewee P
In 1976, he moved to Tingbjerg with his parents and two siblings as a 5-year-old. He has moved several times within Tingbjerg. He takes advantage of various offers for exchange between residents within the neighbourhood and was once a member of the reseidents' committee.				

	Role	Language	Length of recording	Setting
Interviewee P (f)	resident; member of residents' committee	Danish	1:31:20	in person, interviewed together with Interviewee O
<p>She moved to Tingbjerg in 1969, her children grew up there. She has moved within Tingbjerg and is a member of the residents' committee.</p>				
Interviewee R (f)	resident; former social worker in Tingbjerg; founder of a women organisation in Tingbjerg	Danish	00:36:42	phone
<p>She moved to Tingbjerg in 1996 and her children grew up there. As a result of her voluntary work in Tingbjerg, she was offered a job as a social worker, which she now does in another neighbourhood. In Tingbjerg she has founded an association for women and is active in 'Almen Modstand'.</p>				
Interviewee S (f)	resident; volunteer at a café in Tingbjerg	Danish / English	00:48:15	phone
<p>She is in her late 20s and moved to Tingbjerg three years ago. She previously lived in the neighbouring district, which meant she knew Tingbjerg before she moved. Besides her work, she is also involved in the café.</p>				