

School Architecture – Between Ideas of Space and Lived Space

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ABSTRACT: This article sheds a critical light on the making of Danish school architecture year 2015-2020. It points to barriers in architects' practices and a discrepancy between the ideas of future school architecture and the conditions of teaching and studying in the school spaces. Philosopher and sociologist Henri Lefebvres' theory and concepts of space are used to investigate this discrepancy with the perspective of how school architecture is produced socially. Lefebvre's social ontological stand and anthropological approach to space provide a framework to an analysis that spans from the ideas of future schools and their materialisation to the teaching practices and the lived life in the schools. This article refers to my PhD dissertation, *Øjeblikkets skolearkitektur. En analyse af de rumlige momenter praksis med fokus på inklusion* that provide a more nuanced analysis of the school political and societal drivers, cultural terms, and bodily perceptions of school architecture. In the following text I address the research question: *How does school architecture emerge between ideas of space and lived space in school?* My answer to this question draws on the analysis of pedagogical and architectural school briefs and architects' drawings of schools, as well as field observations in three of the schools, and interviews with consultants, architects, teachers and students. Also, a qualitative survey among all teachers in the schools has been carried out. The research points to that ideology of the future school suppresses the voices of teachers. The findings show that some tenders with an architectural competition prevent architects from communicating with the teachers at the most critical part of the design process. Post-occupancy studies in the built schools briefed 2015-2020 reveal that teachers find difficulties to teach inclusively due to the architecture. It appears that students seem challenged by the teaching practices which contrasts sharply with the visions embedded in the pedagogical and architectural school briefs 2015-2020. A further discussion is suggested on how social practices in the design of future welfare architecture can enhance and ensure social sustainability by promoting care, community, and belonging with the architecture.

KEYWORDS: School Architecture, Henri Lefebvre, Representations of Space, Inclusion, Social Sustainability

INTRODUCTION

The motivation for my research occurred at a newly built school, Frederiksbjerg Skole, in Aarhus 2016. I was conducting field observations of the school's hallway with a staircase combined with a characteristic climbing wall when a teacher of children with special needs approached me. After noticing that I was an architect the teacher said:

I've had a lot more on my plate since we moved into this new school building, and I'm sure it's because of the school's architecture. (Teacher of Special Education, Frederiksbjerg Skole 2017)

The number of students referred to the department of children with special needs had increased in the new school building. I found that devastating because it's been a political goal since the Salamanca Declaration to create a more inclusive public school in Denmark (Undervisnings- og forskningsministeriet, 1997). Also a School Inclusion Act was passed year 2012 to reduce the percentage of challenged students segregated from mainstream education from 5.5% to 4% (Weirsøe, 2021). In 2014, as well, a school reform was implemented to encourage movement in the Danish public schools, primarily for the sake of active boys who have difficulties sitting still (Réol, 2016). The stairway of Frederiksbjerg Skole was designed as part of an inner atrium that contains 20 physical activity stations. The school had won several architectural awards since opening and architects were visiting to study a future-oriented innovative school that is able to promote new teaching practices with more movement. In recent decades, school architecture, in general, has been used as a tool to radical change teaching practices to what is considered to be more student-centred and inclusive (Benade, 2019; Bertelsen & Rasmussen, 2018; Daniels, 2018; Imms & Mahat, 2020; OECD, 2015, 2017). I therefor found that the discrepancy between the ideas of an innovative school and the teachers experience highlighted a need to investigate the ideas for future school architecture in Denmark the transformation into briefs and school design, and the teaching practices taking shape in the school buildings. I therefor ask:

How does school architecture emerge between ideas of space and lived space in school?

1.0 METHODOLOGY AND THEORY

The historical period of the research is defined by nine pedagogical and architectural briefs for public schools from year 2015-2020 which form the basis of analysing the ideas of future schools. Interviews with three authors of the briefs and six architects of the winning school projects provide further insight into how the visions have been transformed into a school design. To learn about the dialectics between the school architecture and pedagogical practices within, post-occupancy studies has been carried out of teachers' didactical practices in grades 4 to 6 in

three of the schools briefed 2015-2020. The post-occupancy studies include observations, photographing and filming teachers' and students' movement patterns, gestures and social interactions during the teaching. For ethical reasons, the illustrations from the architectural competitions are pseudonymized. This ensures that critical analysis of the work remains focused on position and possibilities within the social practices rather than on identifying specific architectural offices or schools. The methods are carried out with a sensory ethnographic approach to engage both physically and mentally with space and social life when observing (Pink, 2015). In this approach, I draw on my dual educational background as both former architect and teacher in the Danish ground school. The interviews conducted with school leaders and teachers from middle-level in the schools are compared to answers from a qualitative survey sent to all teachers in the three schools. Films, photographs, observations and insights from the interviews have finally been used to unfold vignettes of challenged students' moments with the school architecture (Bloom-Christen & Grunow, 2022) which can be found in my PhD dissertation (Gjessing 2025).

The empirical material enables an analysis through Lefebvre's three concepts of spatial moments, introduced in the book *The Production of Space* (Lefebvre, 2016). Lefebvre presents three spatial moments that can be understood as different dimensions of architecture. The three moments are gateways to reveal an ongoing spatial triad through which architecture can be analysed. The moments are conceptualised: *The Representations of Space*, *Spatial Practice* and *The (Representational) Lived Space* (Simonsen, 2010). The model below illustrates the empirical material of the analysis through Lefebvre's three moments: the mental and visual conception of space, the daily practice with the architecture, and the individually sensed and experienced space. In the analysis Lefebvre's theory is combined with further theory that deepen the understanding of the spatial moments. Analysing *The Representations of Space*, critical discourse theory of Norman Fairclough is applied to share light on the discursive and social practices between decision-makers, consultants and architects in the briefing and design of a school buildings (Fairclough, 2010). Practice based theory of inclusion in school by Lotte Hedegaard-Sorensen supplements the analysis of *Spatial Practice* and *The Lived Space* (Hedegaard-Sørensen, 2021; Hedegaard-Sørensen & Grumløse, 2016). Hedegaard-Sorensen's theory supports understanding the didactical possibilities of inclusive teaching with the spaces.

The Representations of Space

- Pedagogical and architectural briefs
- Interviews with consultants/experts of 'the Future School'
- Interviews with architects
- Architects' drawings and renderings of learning space layouts



The Lived Space

- Field observations in the schools
- Conversations with students in the middle grades 4-6
- Creation of vignettes of students' moments based on photos, films, interviews, and conversations.



Spatial Practice

- Field observations in three built schools
- Interviews with head teachers
- Interviews with teachers
- A qualitative survey among all teachers

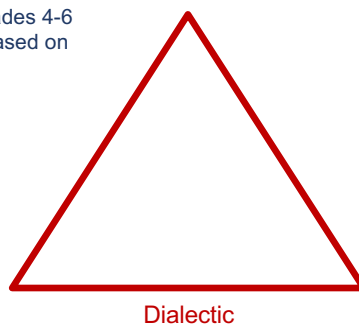
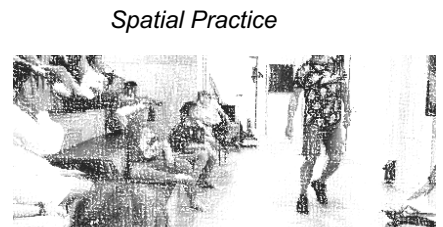


Figure 1: The model illustrates the strategy of how the school architecture has been analysed. The analysis builds on Henri Lefebvres' work *The Production of Space*. (Lefebvre 2016). Source: (Eva Gjessing 2025).

2.0 THE BRIEFS

The analysis of the texts from briefs 2015-2020 reveals a hegemonic discourse with the common perspective that a radical change in the layout of school space is needed. This I find calls for further investigation into international influence and drivers behind the strategy of future schools in Denmark. However, within the limits of this research, I rely on the words of the architects and Danish consultants interviewed. The consultants present themselves as experts in future schools and 'Bridge Builders' between pedagogy and space. The group of Danish pedagogical consultants in school architecture is a small group counting especially three strong voices that repeat across the

pedagogical and architectural briefs investigated. Sometimes two consultants are engaged in the same project as one consultant facilitate user involvement and stakeholder inputs transferred to information to another consultant who writes the pedagogical and architectural brief. Despite the money and time invested, the strategy of the school architecture appears to be somewhat fixed and defined beforehand the user involvement. A consultant describes:

Some decision-makers need to be led by the hand, and some want a lever into the new. I can see decision-makers who have a vision but can't push it through when facing the users and employees, who therefore need an intermediary, who speaks from the outside and qualifies the strategy of the future school.... (Pedagogical consultant 2023).

The authoring of the brief tends to be less restricted the smaller the municipality is. The largest councils have a department with architects to ensure the planning and economy of new schools. This is not the case in the smallest municipalities of Denmark, where consultants are hired project-wise. In those cases, the consultant mostly has huge freedom in writing the brief of what is called a new kind of school architecture with new teaching practices adapted to new learning technologies and an information-driven future. Spatial diagrams in these briefs suggest a revolution of the traditional school architecture structured with classrooms. Instead, these briefs promote 'learning landscapes' with open, varied, and flexible learning spaces that is said can accommodate well the variety of different types of students. The vision is to change school architecture from framing a teacher-centred school to a student-centred one that is inclusive due to new kinds of didactical practices and new ways of organising teachers and students.

2.1 The double illusion

The desire to dismantle the teacher-centred school is part of a discourse exemplified by the global strategy for future schools in OECD reports (OECD, 2015, 2017). OECD promotes a necessary 'de-schooling' of the existing school system to create a more cost-effective one better able adapting to ongoing technological developments and quickly changing economic demands (OECD, 2013). The potential to create a more cost-effective school system is attractive to the Danish municipal decision-makers who close small, outdated schools in exchange for mega schools hoping for a more efficient use of the square metres. An architect explains that economic efficiency in the design and future operation of the school is an important design parameter, along with the creation of a more inclusive school:

But you know, I find that the economy and the austerity measures of the municipalities end up leading the way... because they don't have the budget, and then one must start to be creative ... because there's a certain number of students, then you must gather the spaces and make them flexible. I'm sure we've spared a lot of square metres by planning it all together in a huge workshop-like environment offering a multi-flexible solution. (Project architect with 15 years' experience in school design 2021).

The analysis of the spatial moment The Representation of Space points to that inclusivity and economic efficiency are twin objectives that go hand in hand in the design of Danish future schools. The first objective, inclusivity, seems to be dressed in the ideology of liberating the school child. It is proclaimed in the briefs and to the users that students are better included when freed from a constricting classroom that is controlled by the teacher. The second, cost-effectiveness, is quietly hidden from the users but emerges in the architectural competition process. Lefebvre find that this kind of capitalist production of space operates as a *Double Illusion* with two sides which ' - refers back to the other, reinforces the other, and hides behind the other.' (Lefebvre, 2016, p. 27). One side represents the logic of calculation the other a sensual fascination of the deliberated body of the school child. Lefebvre's concept, I find, points to the illusionary gain of reassigning children with special needs to mainstream education while at the same time cutting down the budget of new square metres of the mainstream education school architecture. However, it seems that is what many decision-makers are misguided to believe when consulting some of the Pedagogical Experts in future school.

2.2 Discursive- and social practices within a school competition

When participating in an architectural competition architects meet barriers. These barriers can be revealed with theoretical concepts Discursive Practice and Social Practice of Norman Fairclough, concerning the discursive making and distribution of the briefs and concerning the cooperation, positions and procedures of a tender that contains an architectural competition (Fairclough, 2010, 2015). Architects complain that designing a school require more knowledge than what can be read from a piece of A4 paper in a brief. However, this is precisely what the architects find themselves left with, during the critical part of the design process when they participate in an architectural competition. In the design process, architects are restricted from contacting the users, a restriction that is maintained from prequalification to the nomination of a winning school project. An architect regrets that they can't even write a mail to the users of the school when designing the layout of the building:

The rules of the architectural competition ensure that those drawing the schools are disqualified if they make any contact with the users during the design process. They thus construct an iron fence between those designing and the users of the design, and this iron fence is maintained... through the project development until a winner is nominated, and when this happens the critical parts of the school building are fixed' (School project architect 2021).

More architects are frustrated by the experience of encountering disillusionment and criticism from teachers when presenting the renderings and floor plans of the winning school project to the future users after the nomination. Fairclough's theory shows that the brief's discourse is dialectically related to the discursive practices of the architectural competition based on a brief, which is dialectically related to and embedded in the social practices of how new ideas of future schools are promoted (Fairclough, 2010). How the ideas take shape constitutes how the architectural competition proceeds and how the consultant creates the text of the brief. In this sense, the consultant's work can be understood as representing the municipal decision-maker's expectations. The iron fence between the users and the architects can be seen to support that the strategy in the text of the briefs to stay strong and is carried out without critical questions from either architects or users.

3.0 FROM BRIEF TO ARCHITECT'S DRAWINGS

The architects' position in these Discursive - and Social - Practices leaves the one and only option to design the school according to the text and strategy of the brief. Following this, I find, that the architects' work can be seen as an additional representation of the idea in drawings and renderings. This transformation from one representation in text to another, more convincing and sensuous representation in joyful drawing is according to Lefebvre's theory a *Mediation*.

'The design serves as a mediator – itself of great fidelity – between mental activity (invention) and social activity (realisation)' (Lefebvre, 2016, p. 27).

In this light the architects work can be seen as creating symbols of future school architecture rather than showing real-life space. Symbols, that Lefebvre calls *Material Signifiers* (Lefebvre, 2016), which tend to be adopted and copied from one architect's office to another when designing school building when designing imagined representations of space instead of bodily sensed and experienced lived spaces

The winning architect's office will be the one that best expresses the visions of the brief. However, it is the architect's responsibility to combine the brief with a building budget that the author of the brief has not been obliged to consider. To win the competition, I therefore conclude, that the architect necessarily must visualise convincingly that the dream of an emancipated child is possible within the cost-effective construction budget submitted to the architect together with the brief. The budget obliges the architect to carefully count the choice of materials, construction and, later, the interior of the building but this rarely affects the atmosphere and glamour of the renderings in a school competition project. Lefebvre found images more likely to promote fallacy and illusion than to demonstrate the reality:

Where there is error or illusion, the image is more likely to secrete it and reinforce it than to reveal it. No matter how beautiful they may be, such images belong to an incriminated 'medium' (Lefebvre, 2016, p. 96).



Figure 2: A typical rendering from a pseudonymized school project in 2021. Source: (Anonymous 2021)

The analysis shows that the position and work of the architect in a school competition supports ideas of school that are far from practice and the daily lives of students and teachers. It reveals that the practice of architects in an architectural school competition aims to convince the municipal decision-makers of the reliability of the consultant's vision of the future school. Hereby the architects can be seen as mediators of the text in the briefs when they draw compelling images of an inclusive and more cost-effective school, decorated with material signifiers that symbolise the fulfilment of a double-sided illusion of what the student-centred school will be like.

3.1 Diagrams for learning spaces

The texts in the pedagogical and architectural briefs refer to the need of creating more and larger common spaces. Therefore, corridors and stairwells are transformed into wide and open learning spaces and amphitheatre-like staircases where a huge number of students can gather for a common introduction to a new learning content. Classrooms are transformed into flexible learning spaces and made smaller to leave more square metres for common area. The flexibility required of the enclosed learning spaces allows freedom in the schematic organisation of lessons and learning spaces ensuring that the square metres are used effectively leaving no space empty. Instead of having ownership to a classroom, groups of students shift between learning spaces that are assigned a certain subject or specific learning activity. In addition to the text of the briefs, diagrams illustrate how the learning spaces should be laid out to support new teacher practices and new ways of organising teachers and students.

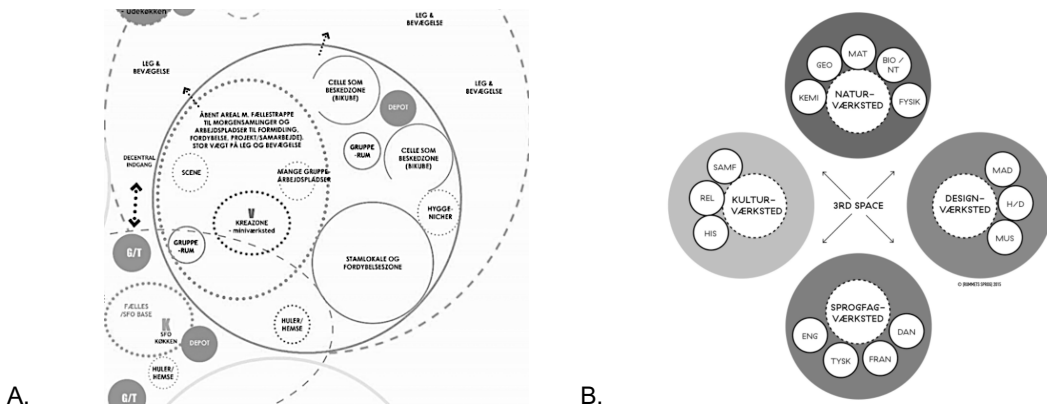


Figure 3A and 3B: Diagrams of the layout of learning space for students grades 4-6. **Figure 3A** (left) exemplifies the layout of an open-plan 'learning-scape'. Pseudonymized school brief: (Pseudonymous 2017) **Figure 3B** (right): exemplifies subject-related learning spaces clustered around a Third Space. Pseudonymized school brief: (Pseudonymous 2015).

3.2 From diagram to floorplan

By interviewing the architects and comparing the floor plans of winning school projects commissioned in 2015-2020, I have found two typical floor plan models emerged from the requirements of the briefs. One model, that I call 'The Capsule', is a larger open 'learning-scape' containing different learning zones, enclosed spaces that differ in size, seating arrangements for groups of 1-8 students and a large learning staircase for gatherings of all students. The Capsule contains all students in a year or, in smaller schools the whole mid-level students' department. The other model, 'The Flower', has a layout of more equal-sized enclosed learning spaces grouped around a shared central space. The shared common space is called *Third Space* by consultants and architects and takes when multi-storeyed the form of a two or three storey high atrium. The Third Space is designed to provide an additional learning space to the enclosed learning spaces that when multi-storeyed often provides a stair to gather more classes of students.



Figure 4A (left): Capsule. Source: (Eva Gjessing 2025); **Figure 4B** (right): Flower. Source: (Eva Gjessing 2025)

Both layouts, The Capsule and The Flower, meet the requirements of large, shared areas and flexible learning spaces. The architects fulfil the requirements differently thus when designing The Capsule floorplan than The Flower. In The Capsule the flexibility is created by the open 'learning-scape' not being subject-related. The students can spread out and take a seat as they wish, and interdisciplinary lessons with more subjects combined can take place within the area. The Flower creates schematical flexibility in subject-based learning spaces as classes of students move from one learning space to the other. The open shared space in the Capsule floor plan is a space that is owned by a year group of students or the whole mid-level department and the assigned mid-level teachers. The central space in The Flower floor plan is shared by different classes and their teachers in a year's grade or a department in addition to the more enclosed learning spaces. Bigger schools' Third Spaces may also be subject-related when the learning spaces are subject-related and clustered around them. Like in American high schools, the students have a locker in the Third Space often placed at the departments' entrance. The Capsule provides flexible use of space within a large, open, non-subject-based common area. The Flower provides schematical flexibility in distributing the more enclosed learning spaces linked to a central shared Third Space.

4.0 TEACHING PRACTICES

It's been analysed how the requirements of text and diagrams in the briefs transform into spatial layouts that can be divided into two models of floorplans. Beneath red arrows illustrate the general movement patterns of the didactical practices that take place in the two floorplan models. In the spatial organisation of The Capsule the teaching in general starts with an introduction on the smartboard in front of the learning stair whereafter the students spread out to pick a seat in the varied 'learning-scape' to do their task of the day alone or in a group. When finishing up the lesson, the teachers gather the students on the learning stair again for a sum-up. The movement

pattern of The Flower floorplan starts contrary with an introduction at the smartboard in the enclosed learning space whereafter the students choose between staying or moving out to do their task in the Third Space to end up gathering again in the enclosed learning for a sum-up (Please see Figure 5).



Figure 5A (left): Capsule. Source: pseudonymized floorplan (Eva Gjessing, 2025); **Figure 5B** (right): Flower. Source: pseudonymized floorplan (Eva Gjessing, 2025).

4.1 Teaching practices of the capsule

In terms of social space, and of each member of a given society's relation to that space, this cohesion implies a guaranteed level of 'competence' and a specific level of 'performance' (Lefebvre, 2016, p. 33).

Lefebvre explains that a certain social practice will take form in the space which demands of the user a certain performance. In school, architecture creates a culture of practice, movement patterns, rhythms and soundscapes that the students and teachers participate in and present by their use. In these patterns of movement where students divide between learning spaces what happens during the didactical practising in the spaces is according to the teachers a lack of overview. They experience a loss of ability to follow up on the challenged students because they either hide or lose concentration and drift away mentally and physically. Considering Lefebvre's theory, it hereby seems that teachers and some students do not fulfil the 'competencies' required by the school architecture. The performance required fails the student who is not mature and disciplined enough to be responsible for one's learning and to request and wait for the help needed. A teacher in a school with the Capsule floor plan explains:

The children who may be introverted and a bit reserved are more likely to be out of sight here. But also, the outgoing children who might have a concentration disorder need to know exactly where to sit, and the rooms are just so big and transparent that there is always something that catches your eye. (Teacher, 14 years' experience 2021).

I was told that the teachers discussed this issue as a general problem at the school's weekly staff meeting. When observing this floorplan model, I noticed teachers running from one group of students to the other to assure that all groups were continuously working. I saw students running after teachers who were out of sight and teachers running after students not knowing who had raised their hand first to ask for help. One of the teachers described that because of a lack of overview, the teachers risked passing the same student one after the other to find that they disturbed the student with too much help while missing out on others. Another teacher told me that when introducing new learning content at the staircase it was difficult to know whom of the students understood the tasks and who didn't because of not being able to have eye contact with all 75 students gathered on the stair at a time. It appeared that students are less willing to ask questions and share what they do not understand in larger groups. As a result, the teachers could find out late after leaving the learning stair, that most of the students did not understand the task. Unfortunately, the school architecture with a huge learning stair for the introduction makes a rapid shared repetition of the learning content difficult, as it takes a lot of time to get all students in the different learning zones back on the stair for repetition.

Lotte Hedegaard-Sørensen uses the concept of situated professionalism when writing about teachers' ability to engage and include all students in meaningful learning communities when teaching (Hedegaard-Sørensen & Grumløse, 2016). Situated professionalism requires a good overview of the children to see what is at stake in the different social situations of the students as they work in groups. A teacher explained that although the large group of students is divided between several teachers, it's difficult for the teacher to catch up with all the students that the teacher is responsible for. Things happen: the printer runs out of ink, a conflict between two students arises or the teacher meets a student who has waited too long for help and reaches out for them. Hedegaard-Sørensen describes how the teacher must pay attention to the different social patterns and use of the spatial and material environment

of all students, to orchestrate the best possible learning situation for each of them. Inclusionary teaching must create opportunities for challenged students to participate to be integrated in a learning community. School architecture can support inclusive teaching or hinder it by limiting teacher's ability to do so. In sharp contrast to the visions of the briefs, my interviews with teachers point to the fact that the Capsule floor plan, when examined with Lotte Hedegaard-Sorensen's concepts (Hedegaard-Sørensen, 2021) has a tendency to hinder teachers' practice to be inclusive due to a lack of overview.

4.2 Teaching practices of the flower

The central space of the Flower layout, the Third Space, has room for several classes of students to meet at the learning stair for a joint introduction or to combine learning in the enclosed spaces with physical activity in the Third Space. Thus, the stairwell space also functions as a learning space for many groups of students when working in groups. The Third Space at the same time though is often crossed by classes and students on their way to the school library, to the lockers when going out or to the canteen and back and alike. According to the teachers, this combination of traffic and learning space creates problems for teaching in the space and for the concentration and attention of the students working there. When interviewed, one of the teachers compared the large atrium of the school to the main railway station in Copenhagen. The teacher explained that students at the mid-level are still children and that even adults would find it difficult to absorb new learning content if it were to take place at Copenhagen's Central Station.

Because even though the learning content is exciting and the student is very interested, the amount of disruption is such that I think you must be very, very strong and clever to be able to learn anything at all in such an environment where all sorts of things are happening around you (Teacher, 11 years' experience 2021).

A teacher explained that it's great to have the opportunity to use the atrium to do a physical learning task with the students up and down the stairs, but that it depends on the mental state of the students and the time of the day whether to do this or not. It's generally difficult for the teachers to maintain an overview when using the Third Space. When some students go out into the Third Space to do their schoolwork, the teacher who teaches the remaining students in the enclosed learning space loses sight of them. Although a teacher moves back and forth between the two learning spaces, it is difficult for the teacher to keep track of the students. The learning spaces are designed for team teaching, but often one of the teachers will take the most challenged students to the quietest corner of the Third Space leaving the other teacher to look after the rest. Sometimes a pedagogue teams up with the teacher to look after students in the Third Space who have had difficulties staying in the enclosed learning space. These students then drift out into the Third Space to take a break. The briefs and the architects describe the students as being given the opportunity for *Legitimized Peripheral Participation* a concept derived from the Theory of Communities of Practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Based on my field observations and in the light of Hedegaard-Sorensen's theory, it is questionable if the disengagement from the rest of the classmates benefits the students' opportunities to participate. Observing the didactical practices in the schools I did not see any of the students who had drifted away from a lesson being helped back to participate in a student group work within that lesson. A pedagogue I interviewed argued that it would be better for the relationship between the teacher and the challenged students if the teacher could maintain the student within the learning community of the class. The analysis of the didactical practices in the learning spaces demonstrates that new models of floorplans guided by diagrams and text in briefs of future schools in Denmark 2015-2020 to some extent prevent teachers' overview of their students.

Man does not live by words alone; all subjects are situated in a space in which they must either recognize themselves or lose themselves, a space which they may both enjoy and modify. In order to accede to this space, individuals (children, adolescents) who are, paradoxically, already within it, must pass tests.' (Lefebvre, 2016, p. 35).

What Lefebvre stresses is the fact, that words in the briefs of school architecture will create abstract imaginations of space, in this case, school culture, that when built will put the users to the test of either recognition or of losing themselves. Students lose themselves if they cannot live up to the school child imagined when the school architecture makes it difficult for teachers to include them in learning communities and to support their focus on the learning content. When challenged students are challenged even more by massive disturbances in the large, shared Third Space they practice and affect the space with actions generated by the feeling of not fitting in. In that case the variation of learning spaces built to suit and include every child seems to have the opposite effect as described in the briefs because it undermines that the teacher provides all students the experience of belonging.

5.0 FURTHER PERSPECTIVES

Based on the conclusions of my analysis, I question the outcome of tenders that hold an architectural school project competition. The discursive and social practices around a school brief seem to produce less inclusion due to abstract ideas that aren't properly grounded in teachers' didactical practices and everyday conditions of the school. My limited research points to positioning and collaboration among stakeholders when planning a school that prevents the voices of the users and the questions raised by architects from being heard. This calls for a debate on the methods and the budget needed to create social sustainability with welfare architecture. My empirical material indicates a discrepancy between the vision and representations of the so-called student-centred school architecture and the practices and lived school space that take place with the spatial organisations of students and teachers in the schools. I therefore suggest further investigation into the impact of scale on the school community when building mega schools and favouring flexibility and students' free choice of seating in large, shared spaces. An important discussion needs to be taken on how to increase teacher's ability to create a sense of care and belonging among students with the school architecture and what part herein ownership to a room plays. With the present political aspirations of an inclusive public school with more practice-oriented learning content and all the subjects in school related to sustainability, a revision of benefits of the classroom and its form and functions are required. I suggest

that budget should be given to complement the classroom with different kinds of learning zones indoor and to create additional green private and semi-private workshop spaces outdoor.

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