



## **SocMap Strategy for 2022-2026**

SocMap will work towards the following four missions:

### **Social and territorial inequality**

To enhance territorial and social cohesion by discovering and understanding social-geographical variations in different local contexts. This includes identifying and mapping key-drivers and consequences in territorial inequality. More specifically, it regards different dimensions such as social, physical, cultural, and economic inequalities. Territorial variations are a combination of factors such as territorial capital, territorial structures and institutions and local community relations. The target groups are all societal groups and institutions affected by rising social and territorial inequality.

### **Mapping, advanced mixed-methods, machine learning and predictions**

One of the central elements of SocMap is the use and development of tools and algorithms that fall within the realm of social data science to solve both classification- and prediction problems. To achieve methodological innovations by crossing and generating synergy between data science and social science. One of the central elements of SocMap is the use and development of tools and algorithms that fall within the realm of social data science to solve both classification and prediction problems by combining, where elements of mapping methods (GIS), big data analytics, mining of massive datasets, data procurement, machine learning and high powered computing (HPC) combined with qualitative field work, ethnographic studies, register analysis, and surveys. These approaches are to be integrated by mixed methods and multi-level analysis and statistical analysis to explain, explore, and tackle issues of territorial inequalities, issues of inequality in health and the achievement of sustainable local communities.

### **Place-based health - inequality, health, and well-being**

To improve population health and well-being in different spatial settings and social dimensions from micro to macro level. Such improvements are dependent on changes in demographic patterns and urgent to understand their impact on overall public health. By combining knowledge on meaningful, classifications of localities with health-related themes, we aim to improve the understanding of geographical variations and causal mechanisms for health and well-being. Furthermore, we aim to explore how epigenetic and neurobiological factors in different localities impact health and well-being. The target groups are all social and societal units with a stake in health, mental health, and wellbeing – in urban, suburban, and rural locations.

### **Sustainable local communities**



To generate place sensitive local sustainable communities in a society challenged by urbanization and the need for climate adaption and CO2 reductions. To engage, mobilize and build capacities of local communities in innovative solutions for green transition, the social integrations of vulnerable citizens and in tackling issues of public health. To achieve this aim, we need cross-disciplinary and cross-sectorial collaborations and the appliance of mixed-methods.

### **Across the different missions of SocMap runs the following aims:**

- To generate knowledge on place-based variations and differences between various places in need for development.
- To be in close dialogue with central actors to impact policies and place-based change and improvements.
- To address relevant UN-Goals, especially,



### **Relevant examples from on-going projects and focus in SocMap:**

**Exit - Exploring sustainable strategies to counteract territorial inequalities form an intersectional approach. 2022-2025.**

EXIT will provide an in-depth analysis of 'left-behind' as a concept used for characterising territorial inequalities faced by certain areas and, grounded on this, identify strategies to address it. This means not only building knowledge on the drivers of inequality in areas that are characterised as 'left-behind', but also on what drives political, media and academic characterisations of these areas as 'left-behind' and experiences and perceptions of being 'left-behind' among inhabitants of areas experiencing socioeconomic stagnation or decline.

To answer these questions, EXIT proposes a bottom-up, interdisciplinary and mixed-methods research with a community-based and intersectional approach from the analysis to the transferability of practices. Addressing how different axes of inequality intersect in



perceptions and experiences of 'left-behindness' is crucial to understand the gap between the development of policies to redress territorial inequalities and their impact on the ground.

Co-Principle Investigator. HorizonEurope, ID 101061122. Total EUR 349,454. <https://www.exit-project.eu/>

**Analysis of village clusters and prediction of "tipping points" (Analyse af landsbyklynger og forudsigelse af "tipping points").** 2021-2025.

The research project has three purposes. The first purpose is to analyse the development in a number of the village clusters that Realdania, Lokale- og Anlægsfonden and DGI have supported since 2015. The second purpose is - on the basis of the analysis of the village clusters - to develop a method that can assess the development and growth potential of villages and local communities in general in Denmark's rural areas. The third purpose is to develop so-called predictive models that can explain why a concrete development will take place in specific local area or village. These analyses will be based on the automated re-districting mapping tool, E-Bard, that divide Denmark into 8043 micro-areas which allows for much more detailed analyses than using the traditional divisions into municipalities or parishes.

Principle Investigator, member of research team and PhD fellow. Realdania. Total DKK 2,800,000. <https://realdania.dk/nyheder/2022/06/fem-spoergsmaal-til-forskeren---anja-joergensen-om-potentialer-i-landsbyer-og-lokalsamfund>

**Sociological Aspects Concerning Proximity in Paediatric Cancer Treatment.** 2021-2024.

The primary goal to examine the possible psychosocial and socioeconomic consequences of distance between residence and place of treatment regarding children with cancer and their families. Focus is on determining whether the distance between place of treatment and place of residence can have different negative consequences for different families and thereby posing as increasing social inequality. The project is a mixed methods study based on a combination of register data and qualitative interviews with parents of children with cancer.

Principle Investigator and PhD fellow. In collaboration with Department of Health Science and Technology and partly funded by Aalborg University Hospital, The North Denmark Region. Total DKK 2,058,000.

**NordInt.net - The Network Dynamics of Ethnic Integration. Developing network-scientific capabilities for the study of inter-ethnic family, work and residential integration in Sweden, Denmark, and Finland.** 2021-2024.

Guided by existing sociological research questions and existing collaboration structures between partners, three core topics in ethnic relations research will be approached from a network-scientific perspective: Inter-ethnic family ties, labour market discrimination, and residential segregation. The



aim is to build capacity and expertise in network-scientific register-based research on ethnic relations and integration.

Covering a broad range of topically relevant variables, Nordic register data constitute a unique and strategic resource for research and evidence-based policy making on ethnic relations and integration, but while previous register-based research in the field primarily have been conducted by using conventional statistical frameworks that assume independence of observations, the present project aims to examine the detailed and complex network data available in the registers in order to decipher social relations and interactions through which social systems are defined.

Work package leader, researcher, and PhD fellow. The project is led by Carl Nordlund from The Institute for Analytical Sociology at Linköping University. Other parties: Aalto University and Finnish Population Research Institute, Väestöliitto. NordForsk's Nordic Programme for Interdisciplinary Research, Project number 105147. Total NKR 14,400,000.

<http://nordint.net/>

**GHET-IN -Are “ghettos” a problem for integration of migrants in Denmark? Flows, consequences, and the impact of policies. 2020-2025.**

The aim of the project is to provide empirical knowledge concerning the consequences of ethnic segregation and evaluations of policies and the GHET-IN project do so by critically investigating the positive and negative effects of living in a so-called “ghetto”, while answering research questions concerning the effect of flows of migrant groups on “ghetto formation”, the significance of network quality and collective efficacy as mechanisms influencing the interplay between living in a “ghetto” and human capital accumulation of migrants (e.g. Danish language skills), and the impact of policies on “ghetto flows” (in and out flows). The knowledge provided by the GHET-IN project regarding ghetto flows, impact of policies and consequences for migrants’ human capital (language skills, educational outcomes) is central to stakeholders who manage the integration challenges. The place-based approach to policy adopted by the GHET-IN project and involvement of stakeholders provides the differentiated knowledge needed for overcoming the effects of living in ethnically segregated areas.

Principle Investigator and members of research team. The Independent Research Fund Denmark | People and Society, No. 9130-00041A. Total DKK 5,800,000.

[www.ghetin.aau.dk](http://www.ghetin.aau.dk)

**Register-based machine learning, Linköping University. 2020-2023.**

An interdisciplinary research group consisting of demographers, sociologists, statisticians, data scientists, and computational social scientists. The group utilizes a combination of machine learning methods and causal analysis with population register data and satellite imagery to gain deeper insights into social scientific questions, with a special focus on social inequality and neighbourhoods.



Examples of sub-projects include using satellite images, register data and neural networks to construct new definitions of neighbourhoods; examining how individuals' life chances are affected by the neighbourhood in which they grew up; and using causal graphs and machine learning to understand social processes that create inequality.

Co-Principle Investigator. Funded by the Swedish Research Council. Total SEK 11,200,000.

<http://swe-reg.se/nodes/>

**COHSMO – Inequality, urbanization and territorial cohesion: Developing the European social model of economic growth and democratic capacity. 2017-2021.**

COHSMO investigates the relation between socioeconomic structures of inequality, urbanization and territorial cohesion, and how territorial cohesion at different European scales affect economic growth, spatial justice, and democratic capacities. The project is focused on providing:

- Insights into the interactions of social policies, urbanization, increasingly social inequalities, and territorial cohesion of different regions in Europe.
- Analyses of regional, spatial, and economic policies in terms of their socio-economic impact on territorial cohesion.
- The identification of successful measures to promote socio-economic equity and socio-economic well-being at local and regional level.

Seven partner teams: Denmark (lead), Austria, United Kingdom, Greece, Poland, Italy, and Lithuania. Horizon 2020, European Commission 2016, Research-program "EUROPE IN A CHANGING WORLD/REV-INEQUAL-07-2016, Spatial justice, social cohesion and territorial inequalities". No. No 727058, Total DKK 29,000,000.

[www.cohsmo.aau.dk](http://www.cohsmo.aau.dk)



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## **Collaboration and networking for enhancing knowledge**

SocMap is currently involved in several projects that involve cooperation with partners in both national and international research groups. SocMap will in 2022-2026 consolidate and expand collaboration with our partners to strengthen our competitive position in applications for funding, and to enhance the development of knowledge disseminated by joint publications.

The field of cooperation includes:

### **Social and territorial inequality, socio-geographic variations, and local communities:**

- Center for Quantitative Social Science, University College London
- COHSMO partners:
  - Wien University, Austria
  - Bristol University of West England, United Kingdom
  - Harokopio University, Greece
  - University of Warsaw, Poland
  - Polytechnic of Milan, Italy
  - Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania
- MOSPUS, Roskilde University
- VIVE
- Centre for Rural Research (SDU)
- Luxembourg Institute of Socio-Economic Research (LISER),
- Economic Department at York University

### **Health promotion, interventions, and health surveys**

- Clinical Research Department (KU) and (AU)
- National Institute of Public Health (SDU)
- Health Promotion (SDU)

### **Sustainability and environment**

- Department of Sociology (KU)
- VIA university College (Horsens)

### **AI and computational science, big data, and demographic research:**

- The Institute for Analytical Sociology (Linköping University)
- University of Aalto
- Population Research Institute, Väestöliitto, Aana Rotkirch (Finland)



- Department of Sociology and SODAS, Copenhagen University
- Data Justice Lab, Cardiff University, (UK)
- Politecnico Di Torino (Italy)
- Jugoiztochen Digitalen Inovacionen Hub, DIGIHUB, (Bulgaria)

#### **Educational inequality**

- Aarhus University, DPU

#### **Health inequality**

- KU. Institut for Geovidenskab og Naturforvaltning
- Center for Health and Services Research: University of Aveiro, Portugal.

#### **Some projects involve cooperation internally at AAU**

- Department of Clinical Medicine
- BUILD
- Centre for Regional Disparity
- SCOPAS
- REDY
- MIX
- Department of Architecture and Design
- CCWS

#### **Finally, SOCMAP contributes to several networks**

- C-MUS
- RC21
- Cosmobilities
- ISA
- NSF
- ENHR

## **Funding and recruitment**

SocMap has a large portfolio of externally funded research comprised of small national research grants, public funding, private grants, and big consortium research applications.

In the coming years, SocMap will utilize this experience in achieving the following goals:





- Applying to the Innovation Fund Denmark to fund projects concerning the engagement of local communities in green transition and CO2 reduction. A consortium consisting of numerous partners, both scientific, public and private, have been established.
- Applying for Horizon Europe grants on AI and its democratic consequences; in part within the consequences of territorial inequality for democracy for youth characterized as vulnerable and 'left behind'. A consortium consisting of numerous partners, both scientific (Department and AAU internal and International), public and private partners will participate in achieving this goal.
- Applying for a European Research Grand, based on the scientific enhancement from the above-mentioned work.
- In collaboration both with researchers at the Department of Sociology and Social Work and with national partners at DPU, AU apply for National Research Council grants (DFF and Velux) with regards to educational inequality.
- Develop a research proposal focusing on local patterns of aging in Denmark and their social consequences.
- Explore opportunities in applying for PhD stipends in Fond National de la Recherche Luxembourg in collaboration with LISER, Luxembourg

Draft research proposals will be developed in ad hoc groups and are discussed and qualified in collective workshops.

The recent influx of PhD scholarships in SocMap and current and future work point to a need to recruit competences in the coming years. Needs concern:

- Competences within the fields of educational inequality, environmental sociology, and geography.
- Maintaining competences within fields of immigration research and policy analysis (associate professorship).
- In continuation of existing research grants there will be a need to further consolidate competencies within AI and computational data science (level of assistant professor, tenure track)
- The field of public health and well-being as well as research and teaching in the field of demography (one to two assistant professors).
- Competences in combining macro- and micro-level studies based on quantitative and qualitative methods (post.doc. position).

Focusing on post.doc. positions are a natural part of SocMaps funding strategy.

Student assistants are employed on multiple research projects within the group and this praxis will continue in the years to come. SocMap have, based on the close attachment to the educational activities at the department, a well-developed basis for recruiting internal candidates for Ph.D.



positions. In the coming period, the group wishes to employ research assistants and preferably in connection to multiple research projects simultaneously. If these employments are combined with employment as teaching assistant (see below), this will give younger researchers a possibility to gain experience in more of the daily tasks of the more senior researchers and thus smooth the transition to other employments.

## **Publication strategy and dissemination**

SocMap will continue to aim at publishing in high-ranking international scientific journals. Our ambition is to strike a balance between publishing in core sociological journals such as *American Sociological Review*, *American Journal of Sociology*, *Social Forces*, *European Sociological Review*, and *Acta Sociologica* and in influential journals in our fields such as *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, *Journal of European Social Policy*, *Health & Place*, *Social Science & Medicine*, *International Migration Review*, *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, *Urban Studies*, and *Mobilities*.

SocMap currently has a high success rate in terms of getting our research published in high-ranked field journals and our research has scientific impact. In the 2022-2026 period, we will strive to maintain a high success rate in field journals, but we will simultaneously aim to publish articles suitable for publication in high-ranked core sociological journals. We regularly present and give feedback on preliminary papers, just as we collaborate on projects and articles to benefit from synergy effects and higher efficiency. This is a strategy we will continue in the coming years.

SocMap aim to increase the collaboration with and dissemination of research to policy makers, among others ministries, municipalities, public institutions, NGOs as well as contributing to the public debate to ensure societal impact. SocMap will in future research applications place an emphasis in funding for such activities. Further, we recommend a stronger strategic focus on external communication to the general public (e.g. news papers, social media) and to the relevant public and political institutions in the Department strategy.

It is our ambition to make our research freely available to researchers, businesses, and the general public and thus aim to make peer-reviewed research outputs freely available with a maximum of 12 months delay in line with the recommendations in the Danish National Open Access Strategy. If funding available, we will follow a golden open access strategy (articles for payment are published in open access journals or articles for payment are published as open access in traditional journals). However, as recommended in the Danish National Open Access Strategy we will mostly follow a so-



called green open access strategy in which articles are published in traditional peer-reviewed journals while accepted author manuscripts are made freely available in our institutional repository (VBN) possibly after an embargo period depending on specific journal guidelines.

## **Contributions to research-based teaching**

All permanent members of SocMap are teaching in the sociology study programme, the MSc programme in Social Work, at the programme City, Housing and Settlement Patterns, as well as in the criminology study programme, in addition to teaching in other departments such as Public Health, Political Science and Learning. SocMap members are the primary teachers in the sociology programme's area of specialisation Sundhed, Rum og Sted (health, space, and place), and coordinating and teach in numerous courses in the sociology study programme.

In the period SocMap want to secure a coherence between the teaching tasks and the teaching obligations when taking into account research time. This will be done by concentrating the teaching efforts in a fewer number of different courses in a manner which makes it possible to continuously adjust the teaching tasks for each member. A strategic focus on employing research assistants in combination with employment as teaching assistants will also result in a strategic possibility to reduce overtime in teaching by the senior researchers.

## **Competence development**

- Internal activities especially for new Ph.D. scholars with special focus on the methodological approaches of the research group.
- Joint pedagogical and didactic activities, e.g., peer-to-peer supervision
- Input to refine the task of knowledge dissemination

## **Talent development / management, including special focus on PhD fellows and younger employees**

It is central to the research group to facilitate the professional careers for young researchers.

Firstly, this involves being on the lookout for talented students with potentials and interest for a career in research to engage as student assistants, interns or scientific assistants connected to



research projects. These students are also invited to participate in the weekly lunch meetings and occasionally also as co-authors on scientific articles. Secondly, to maintain an environment with regular lunch meetings to ensure the feeling of affinity with the research group and confidence in presenting and receiving constructive feedback from other group members. A *third* key element is to assist the young researchers with their career planning. At SocMap, we consider it important for the senior researchers to frequently discuss young researchers' future careers and actively take part in planning them. This happens in several different ways, e.g., by including young researchers in applications for external grants to ensure their continued employment. This is done through collective projects or by applying for funding specifically linked to the individual young researchers' areas of academic interest.

Currently, SocMap awaits the appointment of three PhD students. SocMap will strive to create a social and professional environment among the younger researchers with planned meetings and day-to-day dialogue. This will ensure that younger employees and PhD fellows can help each other in terms of both academic and career challenges as well as opportunities.

## **Working methods and procedures – *Sociology as a team sport***

Researchers at SocMap both works individually and collectively. Regarding the collective working procedures, we often work team-based with project applications, data collection and analysis as well as for writing articles. Within research projects, there is a practice of inclusive co-authorship where articles are proposed, and all project members are free to participate as co-author if interested. It is our ambition to increase the cooperation between group members on articles.

SocMap holds weekly Thursday meetings where ongoing issues and information are shared. Once a month, it is our ambition to hold a lengthier meeting with an academic agenda such as project and paper presentations. Every six months, an academic all-day seminar is organized. At these forums, guest lecturers and external collaborators are occasionally invited to speak on specific research themes and/or methodologies.