THE ENVIRONMENTAL AMBASSADORS

- A CASE STUDY OF AN EMPOWERMENT PROCESS IN LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVES

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Study no. 20144296

MSc in Engineering in Sustainable Cities

Master Thesis

Aalborg University Copenhagen

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Summary in Danish

Dette speciale undersøger empowerment-processen for det lokale miljøprojekt; *Miljøambassadørerne*, koordineret og faciliteret af det lokale miljøcenter; Miljøpunkt Amager. Det lokale miljøprojekt fokuserer på at inddrage lokale borgere til at deltage i kurset, og på den måde opbygge egne kompetencer i forhold til at agere mere miljøvenligt i deres egen hverdag samt hvordan de kan videreformidle den tilegnede viden om miljø til resten af lokalsamfundet. Empowerment-processen analyseres ud fra to dimensioner; *mægtiggørelse* og *myndiggørelse*, som yderligere specificeres til at analysere processen ud fra et facilitering- og deltagelsesperspektiv. Specialet fokuserer da på selve processen i Miljøpunkt Amagers facilitering af projektet, samt inddragelsen og uddannelsen af lokale borgere til Miljøambassadører, og hvordan de inddragede borgere kan udnytte muligheden for deltagelse og indflydelse i projektet.

Processen er analyseret ud fra teorier om kommunikativ planlægning og empowerment, for at analysere på selve processen og skabelsen af muligheder for deltagelse. Her bidrager den kommunikative planlægningsteori med en forståelse af vigtigheden i borgernes deltagelse, mens empowerment teorien skaber mulighed for at undersøge magtforholdet mellem aktørerne og udfordrer idealet om projektets konsensus-orienterede tilgang.

Specialet er undersøgt på baggrund af et kvalitativt studie af den valgte case. Her søger jeg at afdække Miljøpunkt Amagers og Miljøambassadørernes oplevede verden og forståelse gennem en række metoder, navnlig; semi-strukturerede interviews med Miljøpunkt Amager og både forhenværende og nuværende Miljøambassadører, spørgeskema til kursusdeltagerne og deltagerobservation af kurset. Dertil har jeg valgt at sætte mig selv aktiv i feltet, ved at deltage i kurset og selv blive uddannet som Miljøambassadør. På denne måde får jeg indsigt i viden og relationer, som ellers kan være svært at analysere sig frem til.

I rapporten konkluderes det at empowerment-processen til en vis grad understøttes af Miljøpunkt Amagers facilitering af projektet, som leder til at understøtte de lokale borgereres mulighed for deltagelse og indflydelse. Dog er der en række potentialer og udfordringer i processen som er vigtige at adressere, hvis processen skal styrkes og formålet med projektet skal opnås til fulde. Her påpeges den manglende definering af selve projektets formål samt rollen som Miljøambassadør som værende centrale udfordringer. De identificererede potentialer og udfordringer skaber et grundlag for at diskutere processen ud fra de to empowerment dimensioner, samt et ideal om en konsensus-orienteret proces. Processen indeholder derved en balancering mellem en top-down facilitering og en bottom-up mobilisering, som synes svær for Miljøpunkt Amager at opnå til fulde. Denne balancering er især essentielt for Miljøpunkt Amager, hvis de fortsat ønsker at opnå en lokalforankring af projektet.

Preface

This master thesis is written at the study programme *Sustainable Cities* at Aalborg University in Copenhagen. The thesis is completed from the 1st of September 2019 to the 6th of January 2020, and the underlying empirical data has been collected throughout this period.

This thesis is the result of an in-depth research on the topic of empowering citizens in local environmental projects. The aim is to examine how the process of empowerment can contribute in maintaining the citizens' participation and engagement. The thesis considers the case of the local environmental project; educating local citizens into 'Environmental Ambassadors' coordinated by 'Miljøpunkt Amager'.

First, I would like to thank my supervisor Helle Nedergaard Nielsen for supervision throughout the semester. Your support, ideas and advice have been of great importance to me.
I would also like to thank Miljøpunkt Amager, who have contributed with relevant knowledge, inputs and data when needed and the Environmental Ambassadors, who have contributed with insights in their own personal engagement and experiences.

The choice of referencing is Harvard, and references are outlined as follows; (Author/Publisher, year). A list of references can be found on page 71.
An overview of appendices can be found beneath the table of content, while the appendices itself can be found in a separate appendix-document. Please note, that all interviews, transcribes and questionnaires are in Danish, and are translated into English indicated by the mark.

Enjoy reading!
Nathali Yonai Larsson

Appendix: 5
Frontpage: Diploma. See appendix 5

Table of Content

Overview of Appendices

All appendices can be found in the separate appendix-document. The appendices are a representation of all the collected empirical data and knowledge and form the basis for analysing and discussing the analysed field. Below, is a table of content for the aforementioned appendix-document, indicating page-numbers and how references will be made to each appendix throughout the report.

Table of Content for Appendix-Document

Appendix References

<u>Appendix 1:</u> The interview with Miljøpunkt Amager will be referred to as; (Interview: Miljøpunkt Amager) throughout the report.

<u>Appendix 2:</u> The interview with the Environmental Ambassadors will be referred to as; (Interview: EA1), (Interview: EA7) or (Interview: EA8) throughout the report.

<u>Appendix 3:</u> Will be referred to as; (Observation) throughout the report.

<u>Appendix 4:</u> Replies from the questionnaire will be referred to as; (Questionnaire) throughout the report.

<u>Appendix 5:</u> Will be referred to as; (Diploma) throughout the report.

1 Introduction

Climate changes are together with the necessary green transition, one of our society's greatest challenges in this century, and the challenge is closely linked to the massive consumption and norms of our society (Rydén, 2008). The consequences of this challenge will affect the lives of future generations, and it is thus required that action must be taken on both an international, national and local scale (Betsill & Bulkeley, 2006). Many different top-down based initiatives already exist, enhancing a sustainable development and ensuring action, such as legislation, taxes etc. However, the challenges cannot be solved solely based on top-down based initiatives. The green transition must focus on being holistic, as it also requires that citizens are willing to change their practices and act more sustainably in their daily-life (Rydén, 2008). The green transition must then also contain a bottom-up approach for creating a holistic sustainable development, and the participation of citizens becomes a crucial parameter in creating the transition (Elling, 2016).

The challenges of climate change and the green transition can appear abstract and complex, making it difficult for the individual citizen to relate and act upon these challenges (Betsill & Bulkeley, 2006). Hence, local environmental projects can be emphasised, as they can contribute in making the challenges more concerning and the possible solutions more tangible. The local scale must therefore be considered in the strategic sustainable development and can contribute with guiding and facilitating citizen's practices and help them to act more sustainably in their daily-life (Københavns Kommune, 2016). An example can be the local environmental centres, which operates on a local scale for enhancing local environmental considerations. The local environmental centres can enhance the involvement of citizens, by providing them with the opportunity to participate and engage in the sustainable development and provide them with relevant knowledge, competences and skills for changing their daily-practices (Københavns Kommune, 2016).

To examine and analyse on citizens actions and engagement in participating, a local environmental project has been selected as a case. This report is then based on the case of a local environmental project; educating 'Environmental Ambassadors', which is facilitated by the local environmental centre on Amager. This report has a focal point on the process of empowering local citizens in the project, for maintaining their participation and engagement in a long-term perspective. Thus, the investigated field is how 'Miljøpunkt Amager' facilitates the opportunity to participate and engage in the local sustainable development, together with the involved citizens ability to utilise the created opportunity for influence.

2 Field of Problem

This chapter will provide an insight into the field of problem, in regards of planning for local environmental initiatives. The chapter starts with elaborating on local environmental projects with a focus on the role of citizens and how they contribute to a green and sustainable transition of cities through local environmental projects. Then follows a description of local environmental centres and their role in facilitating these local environmental projects. This chapter then frames the field of research and lead to presenting the case; the local environmental project; 'Environmental Ambassadors'.

2.1 Planning for Local Environmental Projects

Cities are expanding as people tends to move towards larger cities; bringing more and more people closer together. Half of the world's population already lives in big cities, and the United Nations (UN) predicts that it will increase to 68 percent by 2050 (United Nations, 2018). Cities are then facing major challenges and changes in how to structure the city and minimise consumption (United Nations, 2015), and are responsible for finding alternative developments, which can solve these challenges. Hence, a sustainable development must become an alternative for solving these challenges. The city of Copenhagen is no exception (Københavns Kommune, 2017). At the UN conference in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, the Agenda 21 plan of action was formed. The plan of action framed the concept for a worldwide sustainable development - mainly focusing on environmental sustainability and requiring a sensible resource management, an increased efficiency in the use of resources and a change in daily practices that do not support increased consumption (Miljøstyrelsen, n/a [a]). The local Agenda 21 plan underlines the importance of involving actors in the local community (Miljøstyrelsen, n/a [a]). In 2015 the UN enacted 17 new Sustainable Development Goals promoting a global sustainable transition which also focuses on economic and social sustainability (Miljøstyrelsen, n/a [b]). Both Agenda 21 and the Sustainable Development Goals focus on creating a good and meaningful life for everyone (Rydén, 2008), and the starting point becomes the life that is lived and the imprints it creates on the city (Københavns Kommune, 2016).

The municipality of Copenhagen has conducted different strategies, for implementing a Local Agenda 21 strategy and a plan of action for anchoring the Sustainable Development Goals in the sustainable transition (Københavns Kommune, 2016; Københavns Kommune, 2017). The Local Agenda 21 strategy states that Copenhagen is facing major challenges and changes in the future and that action must be taken (Københavns Kommune, 2016). But the question is; who should enhance this development. No one can do it alone, and a sustainable development requires that various actors collaborate in enhancing the development. (Rydén, 2008) The environmental impact must be limited, and action is needed at all

community levels. Authorities, private institutions and citizens must actively and jointly contribute to a green and sustainable transition, as well as engaging and taking responsibility for developing the city. A frame for the sustainable transition is proposed by the plan of action for the Sustainable Development Goals, based on creating a dialogue with citizens, businesses and civil society organisations (Københavns Kommune, 2017). In this frame, local actors play an important role in terms of facilitating the process locally and guiding the development (Københavns Kommune, 2016). It is often the local authority who initiates the changes, as they are in contact with citizens and other local actors. Hence, the local authority becomes an important contributor in integrating a sustainable transition into the development, affecting the lives of citizens and daily practices. (Rydén, 2008) Agenda 21 and the Sustainable Development Goals both focus on creating the change jointly and states, that it is the engagement which creates the condition for solving the challenges (Københavns Kommune, 2016; Københavns Kommune, 2017), by enhancing local ownership and anchor the sustainable development (Københavns Kommune, 2016). Thus, there is a strong focus on involving citizens and allowing them to actively participate in the development (Københavns Kommune, 2017). Citizens' contribution provides an opportunity for creating a holistic solution and anchor them on a daily basis. The framing of the citizens' participation is then essential, and the local authority must create an opportunity and arena for engagement and co-responsibility. An example of a local authority can be the local environmental centres (in Danish; Miljøpunkt), which has an important function in facilitating projects that support and enhance local engagement, participation and ownership (Københavns Kommune, 2016). However, creating the opportunity to act sustainably is not always enough. Social contexts often control choices and practices made on a daily basis, and the socially accepted practices are shaped in the communities (Freire, 2006). It can then be questioned; How a local authority can engage and motivate citizens in contributing to a sustainable development in their local area? And more specifically how the local authority can enhance local ownership and anchoring by supporting participating and engaged citizens. These questions set the frame for this project.

2.2 'Miljøpunkt Amager': A Local Environmental Center

This section account for the local environmental centres - including how they are supported, organised and their role in developing the local environment and facilitating local environmental projects.

In the municipality of Copenhagen, the local committees (in Danish; Lokaludvalg) are responsible for facilitating local environmental projects and receive financial means from the municipal Financial Administration (in Danish; Økonomiforvaltningen). The local committees must develop and support the local environmental projects by inspiring and engage citizens, local organisations and local businesses in actively participating in the environmental projects. These projects must integrate environment with the

following aspects; social, culture, integration, economics and urban planning. (Københavns Kommune, n/a [b]) The environmental activities facilitated by the local committees must support the municipality's visions and objectives in planning for the environment. Moreover, the local committees must also create a local interest and dialogue in relation to important environmental aspects, by improving the local environment and making it easier to act environmentally conscious on a daily basis. (Københavns Kommune, n/a [b]) The local committees have two options for how they want to handle the task of the local environmental projects. They can either perform the task themselves or they can make an operating-aid agreement with the local environmental centre. In the second option, the local committees provide financial support. The following local environmental centres are found in Copenhagen; 'Miljøpunkt Indre By - Christianshavn', 'Miljøpunkt Nørrebro', 'Miljøpunkt Østerbro' and 'Miljøpunkt Amager'. The remaining local committees solve the task themselves and have an environmental employee in the secretariat. (Københavns Kommune, n/a [b])

This report is concerned with how the local environmental centre of Amager (Miljøpunkt Amager) develops and support local environmental projects. Both the 'Local Committee Amager Øst' and the 'Local Committee Amager Vest' have made an operating-aid agreement with 'Miljøpunkt Amager' to enhance local sustainability on Amager (Amager Øst Lokaludvalg, 2014). On map 1 the areas of the two local committees are shown, together with the boundaries of environmental initiatives facilitated by 'Miljøpunkt Amager'.
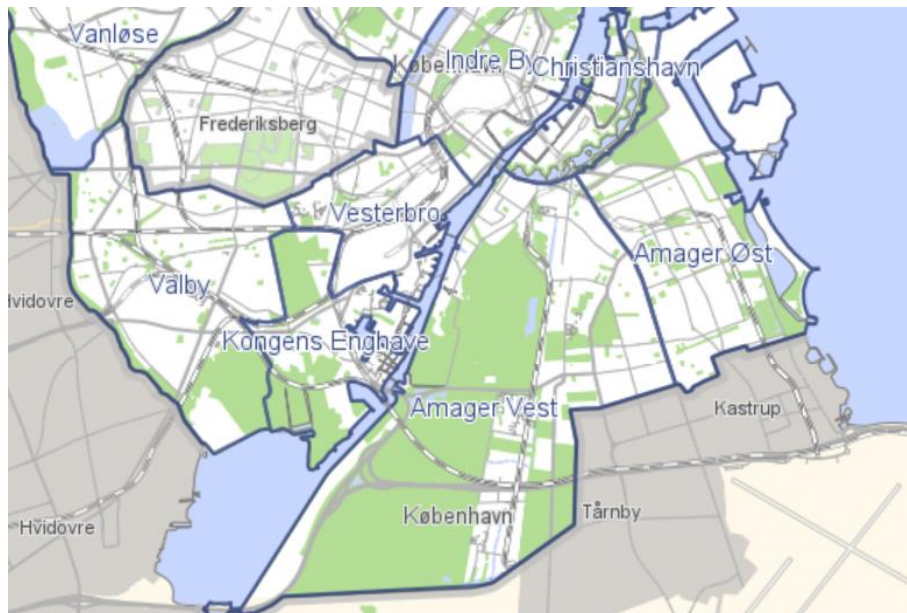
Map 1 shows the area covered by the 'Local Committee Amager Øst' and the 'Local Committee Amager Vest', and thereby the area covered by 'Miljøpunkt Amager' (Københavns Kommune, n/a [a]).

'Miljøpunkt Amager' is financed by the 'Local Committees of Amager Øst and Vest' but is an independent fund with its own board of directors (Københavns Kommune, n/a [b]). 'Miljøpunkt Amager' was founded in

2003 by Amager Business Council (in Danish; Amager Erhvervsråd) and Sundby Neighbourhood Council (in Danish; Sundby Lokalråd), as a Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO), originally named 'Agenda 21 Center Sundbyøster' (Miljøpunkt Amager, n/a). The board of directors is the supreme authority, and they decide how to use the funds in accordance with the overall vision of 'Miljøpunkt Amager' (Miljøpunkt Amager, n/a). The board consists of five to seven members including representatives from; Amager Erhvervsråd, Sundby Lokalråd, Agendaforeningen Sundby and the municipality of Copenhagen. The last two seats in the board can be provided and appointed by the 'Local Committees of Amager Øst and Vest'. (Miljøpunkt Amager, 2019 [b]; Miljøpunkt Amager, n/a).

The overall purpose of 'Miljøpunkt Amager' is to promote and enhance environmental considerations and practices on a local scale (Miljøpunkt Amager, 2019 [b]), by integrating the Local Agenda 21 strategy and the Sustainable Development Goals in the local sustainable development (Københavns Kommune, 2016; Københavns Kommune, 2017). The focal point is to enhance a sustainable development and implement it in daily-practices on a local scale. The task of 'Miljøpunkt Amager' is to raise awareness of the environmental impacts of local citizens, institutions, businesses and housing- and landowners' associations, as well as to help them influence on these environmental impacts in a positive direction (Miljøpunkt Amager, 2019 [b]). This is done by creating an understanding of the relation between the environment and local impacts, as well as providing citizens and local actors with tools and skills for changing these impacts. Hence, 'Miljøpunkt Amager' advises local actors for enhancing a greener practice and environmental projects. 'Miljøpunkt Amager' cannot create a direct change but can create the change through other actors, by facilitating and motivating for active participation in the sustainable development. (Københavns Kommune, n/a [b]; Københavns Kommune, 2016). 'Miljøpunkt Amager' strives towards ensuring a dialogue between local actors on essential environmental issues and is then contributing in developing the local environmental democracy (Miljøpunkt Amager, n/a). 'Miljøpunkt Amager' promotes environmental awareness and sustainable development through various types of local environmental projects in collaboration with local actors, including citizens, local businesses and utilities. The case of educating 'Environmental Ambassadors' which is being examined in this report is one of many local environmental projects facilitated by 'Miljøpunkt Amager'.

3 Presenting the Case: Environmental Ambassadors

The following chapter describes the chosen case the 'Environmental Ambassadors' coordinated and facilitated by 'Miljøpunkt Amager'. First, a brief description of developing the project will be outlined, describing how the focus and context of the project have developed in the period from 2005 to 2018. Hence, an insight into the current project is provided and forms the basis for understanding the purpose of involving and educating local citizens into 'Environmental Ambassadors'. This chapter ends with specifying why this case is relevant to examine and leads to the overall research question (cf. chapter 4).

3.1 Framing the Local Environmental Project

The project 'Environmental Ambassadors' was originally established in 2005 by 'Miljøpunkt Amager', with an initial focus on mobilising ethnic resources in the local community (Agendacenter Sundbyøster, 2007). The vision was to create and implement energy- and environmental awareness and projects among ethnic minorities on Amager (Agendacenter Amager, 2008), by educating local women with another ethnic background than Danish in daily environmental conditions. The project started as a pilot-project from 2005 to 2007 but was extended in 2008. As a result of the extension, the educated 'Environmental Ambassadors' established an informal network where the ambassadors could strengthen their social network and together gain knowledge that extended beyond the course (Agendacenter Sundbyøster, 2007). It was mainly through this informal network that the ambassadors engaged after the course. When the network dissolved in 2011, it was 'Miljøpunkt Amager' who mainly had the contact to both current and formerly educated 'Environmental Ambassadors' - which is still the case today (Interview: Miljøpunkt Amager).

The extent of the course has been alternating between longer courses and individual theme-evenings. The focus has primarily been on consumption in private households, including consumption of; energy, water and waste. However, with an exception in 2015 and 2016, where the course focused on food-waste and involving local schools (Miljøpunkt Amager, 2015 [b]; Miljøpunkt Amager, 2016 [b]). The change of focus resulted in a shift in the target group, based on the premise that everyone, regardless of background and preconditions should be able to reduce their environmental impact and contribute in solving environmental challenges (Miljøpunkt Amager, 2016 [b]). The collaborators in the project have varied over time, including various housing associations and social outreaches, the municipality of Copenhagen, local institutions and voluntary networks and private utilities and organisations.

In 2016 the 'Local Committee Amager Øst' requested that the project must be locally anchored, which changes the process and the role of the 'Environmental Ambassadors' (Miljøpunkt Amager, 2016 [b]). Consequently, no new ambassadors were educated in 2017 and 2018 as no courses were facilitated. The

already educated 'Environmental Ambassadors' must still actively participate and engage in propagating and participate in various environmental activities (Miljøpunkt Amager, 2017 [a]; Miljøpunkt Amager, 2018). The objective of anchoring the project and the subsequent propagation beyond 'Miljøpunkt Amager' was unsuccessful and 'Miljøpunkt Amager' was still the driving force for coordinating all environmental activities related to the 'Environmental Ambassadors' (Miljøpunkt Amager, 2017 [b]). The ambassadors have several times been encouraged to be more independent for anchoring the project but without success (Miljøpunkt Amager, 2017 [b]; Miljøpunkt Amager, 2015 [a]; Miljøpunkt Amager, 2016 [a]). The challenge of anchoring the project has been the initiating approach for understanding the case. However, at an initial conversation with a representative from 'Miljøpunkt Amager', the focus on anchoring was rejected. It is still unclear whether or not 'Miljøpunkt Amager' are interested in anchoring the project. Nevertheless, the project has restarted in 2019 educating new 'Environmental Ambassadors'.

3.2 The Current Project; Environmental Ambassadors

An 'Environmental Ambassador' is a local citizen who voluntarily is educated in propagating and guiding environmental knowledge through social relations and the local community. The course in 2019 focus on the consumption of water and waste in private households. The target group for the course has been expanded, and for the first time all local citizens can participate in the course and become an 'Environmental Ambassador'. The course in 2019 is a collaboration between 'Miljøpunkt Amager' and the social outreach plan 'Urbanplanen/Partnerskabet'. Other relevant actors are the utility company HOFOR and the social outreach 'Amagerbro'. (Partnerskabet, 2019)

The Purpose of the Project

The project has a two-sided focus. The first is to involve and educate local citizens in environmental considerations and sustainable transition, while the other is about propagating environmental knowledge to social networks and the local community (Agendacenter Sundbyøster, 2007). The project is then not only a learning process but should be regarded as an actual process of actively involving citizens in enhancing and supporting a local sustainable development. The project aims at providing the participants with relevant knowledge of environmental considerations and the importance thereof and strives towards changing practice for both the participants and the local community. It is then about creating a collective understanding and dialogue with the local community and increasing the capacity of the 'Environmental Ambassadors'. (Agendacenter Sundbyøster, 2007) One approach for actively involving the 'Environmental Ambassadors', besides participating in the course, is through a number of additional environmental activities, in which the ambassadors actively participate as either volunteers or co-organisers. Examples of

such activities can be; information material, presentations for housing associations, excursions and theme evenings (Miljøpunkt Amager, 2016 [b]; Agendacenter Sundbyøster, 2007).

Practical Aspects of the Project

The course for 2019 mainly focuses on waste management and water as a resource in relation to daily consumption for private households (Observation; Partnerskabet, 2019). As mentioned above, all citizens in the area of 'Local Committee Amager Øst' and 'Local Committee Amager Vest' (cf. map 1 in section 2.2) can participate in the course, and there are no requirements for attending. However, the course is held in Danish (Partnerskabet, 2019). It is free to participate in the course, and the course often includes free dinner and free childcare. There are seven lessons and two excursions in total, starting the 5th of September 2019 and last until the 24th of October 2019. The lessons are every Thursday late afternoon, while the excursions are during weekends. (Partnerskabet, 2019) Information about the course and how to sign up has happened through various platforms, including; the local newspaper, posts in stairways, posts on various Facebook-pages and through an employee from 'Urbanplanen/Partnerskabet' (Questionnaire). Citizens must apply for a waiting list to attend the course and 'Miljøpunkt Amager' can choose whether or not each citizen gets a seat on the course, for ensuring an even distribution between the participants. However, there were enough seats on the course for 2019 and all applicants were assigned a seat. A total of 27 citizens signed up for the course in 2019, but only 14 of them completed the course and were awarded with the title 'Environmental Ambassador' (Interview: Miljøpunkt Amager; Questionnaire).

3.3 The Relevancy of the Case

The local environmental project 'Environmental Ambassadors' is focused on enhancing and supporting a local sustainable development, by creating awareness and visibility of environmental and resource considerations through involving local citizens within this focus. During the course-period, the 'Environmental Ambassadors' are actively involved in propagating this focus to their local community. As mentioned above, a lot of the participants on the course has dropped out, which indicates that it is difficult for 'Miljøpunkt Amager' to maintain the participants' motivation for becoming an 'Environmental Ambassador'. A total of 200 'Environmental Ambassadors' have through the period from 2005 to 2019 been educated, but only approximately 10 to 20 'Environmental Ambassadors' are still active in different activities (Interview: Miljøpunkt Amager). This indicates that it is difficult for 'Miljøpunkt Amager' to retain the ambassador's participation and engagement after the course ends and in a future perspective.

4 Research Question

The two previous chapters described the field of problem and outlined the relevancy of the chosen case for this project. This forms the basis for the following research question:

What are the potentials and challenges in the process of empowering the 'Environmental Ambassadors', and how does this contribute to maintain the participation and engagement after the course ends?

In order to answer and support the research question, three sub-questions is furtherly formed;

- *How is the process of empowerment facilitated, and what potentials and challenges does the facilitation entail?*
- *What drives the participation and engagement of the 'Environmental Ambassadors', and what are the potentials and challenges for the process?*
- *How can the participation and engagement be furtherly maintained through the facilitated process of empowerment?*

This report takes its departure in the process of empowering the 'Environmental Ambassadors'. To fully understand the *empowerment process*, various aspects and dimensions of the process are analysed and examined (cf. chapter 7). The first sub-question proposes an analysis of potentials and challenges in how 'Miljøpunkt Amager' facilitates the *empowerment process* and creates an arena of participation and frames the opportunity for citizens to engage. It is then the current process of empowerment which is examined (cf. chapter 8). The second sub-question focus on the 'Environmental Ambassadors' and what drives their participation and engagement in the project in relation to identify potentials and challenges within the process. It thus proposes an analysis of whether the 'Environmental Ambassadors' possess the ability to utilise the opportunity for influence and how it is expressed (cf. chapter 9). The third and final sub-question joins the two former analyses of the current process of empowerment and discuss how the identified potentials and challenges can maintain the participation and engagement in a future perspective. It will then be discussed how the facilitation by 'Miljøpunkt Amager' and the participation of the 'Environmental Ambassadors' jointly can contribute in enhancing the *empowerment process* and create local ownership of the project. The discussion will focus on what will happen when the course ends, and the engagement and participation are no longer framed; how can the engagement be maintained among the 'Environmental Ambassadors' for promoting a sustainable local development on Amager (cf. chapter 10).

5 Scientific Approach: Action-Research

This chapter outlines the scientific approach, which is used for justifying the theoretical and methodological considerations applied in the research. The scientific approach of *action-research* contributes with reflections on my own position as both an observer and a participant, and how this position affects the knowledge creation, leading to the conclusion and answering the research question.

What is Action-Research?

Action-research is an action-oriented approach which strives towards exploring social challenges (Clausen et al, 2018). The approach has by definition an ambition to create change and is based on an active collaboration between researcher and practitioner, in order to solve challenges through experiments and analysis (Nielsen & Nielsen, 2015). Examples of a practicican can be someone representing the authority or affected citizens. The purpose of *action-research* is to generate knowledge by obtaining an overall understanding and achieving a change in the analysed field. Hence, the purpose is to contribute with a solution to practical real-life challenges. It is then a practical approach on how to change and improve a societal practice and is not just a reflection of reality (Nielsen & Nielsen, 2015; Clausen et al, 2018). *Action-research* explores the conditions of social actions and breaks with the common perception of the subject/object relation between the researcher and the analysed field. Moreover, it breaks with the common perception of how to produce scientific knowledge and contributes to a different type of qualitative knowledge than more traditional research (Nielsen & Nielsen, 2015). Hence, the approach breaks with the traditional positivist conception of the researcher only being an observer (Clausen et al, 2018), as the researcher is actively involved and not distanced from the analysed field. For creating a change, the analysed field becomes the object of *action-research* and the frame for interpretations (Nielsen & Nielsen, 2015). Thus, the observer needs to create sense and understandings of the challenges, in order to solve them and actually changing the field (Clausen et al, 2018). By being actively involved in the analysed field, an opportunity is created for both the observer and the participant in gaining a common experience and understanding (Nielsen & Nielsen, 2015). The collaboration between the *action-researcher* and the involved parties is crucial since both parts need to obtain a common understanding of the analysed field. A*ction-research* is thus seen as a collaborative learning process, where the production of knowledge becomes a joint recognition between observers and participants (Nielsen & Nielsen, 2015). Here the local community is actively involved together with authorities and experts (Clausen et al, 2018).

Action-Research as a Scientific Approach

In this project, *action-research* becomes the overall scientific approach for understanding my own approach for conducting this study and producing scientific knowledge. Hence, it is not a theoretical way of

approaching the analysis but is used on a meta-level for understanding both my own position in the analysed field and the challenges I, as an *action-researcher*, are confronted with, in the tension between process, knowledge production and change. The analysed field is the local environmental project; 'Environmental Ambassadors', and how the *empowerment process* can lead to maintain the participation and engagement in a future perspective. Hence, both 'Miljøpunkt Amager' and the 'Environmental Ambassadors' becomes the practicians. I have also become a practitioner in the analysed field, as I have participated in the course and received the title as an 'Environmental Ambassador', see appendix 5 (Diploma). The double-sided role contributes with a general understanding of the analysed field and provides insight in different types of knowledge (Clausen et al, 2018). However, there is a risk that the practical aspect dominates the process of producing knowledge since the relation between practice and theory is narrow. Through my role as a practitioner, I can collect empirical data which contributes to the process of producing knowledge as a researcher. However, the collected empirical data is often emphasised on experiences and is often not very quantifiable (Andersen, & Gamdrup, 2011 [a]). Reflections upon applied methodology and transparency of the research is therefore an important aspect to consider throughout the process (Nielsen & Nielsen, 2015; Clausen et al, 2018). It is difficult not to be biased to a certain extent when having a double-sided role, and the reflections upon the process will be considered important throughout the report and elaborated in chapter 6.

I have only participated in three lessons but is still considered as an active participant in the course. The short time aspect of my own participation limits and influence the process of producing knowledge. There is then a risk for losing important aspects and conditions, which are not present during the short time period, but can be considered crucial for the process of empowering the 'Environmental Ambassadors'. It can therefore be discussed when the work of an *action-researcher* is complete. (Clausen et al, 2018)

Being an Action-Researcher and How it Affects the Knowledge Creating Process
As already elaborated, the double-sided role influences the process of creating scientific knowledge, as the researcher becomes an active participant in the analysed field (Clausen et al, 2018). *Action-research* thus becomes the overall approach for understanding the field and influence on how the field is interpreted and assessed. By actively participating in the course, there is a risk for me to affect the analysed field. For creating transparency of the research and the produced knowledge, it is essential to reflect on my own experienced reality and how it affects the way I examine and interpret the analysed field (Nielsen & Nielsen, 2015). Before starting this project and actively participating in the course, I was influenced by my own experienced reality from both previous semester-projects and work experience. I have through previous semester-projects addressed different types of involvement processes - often from a facilitation

perspective. I have furthermore previously worked with the municipal initiative; *Climate Ambassadors* (in Danish; Klimaambassadørerne) in the municipality of Hvidovre, see the fact box. The process of involving and mobilising the ambassadors was difficult and contributed with a general experience of the ambassadors not wanting to participate and engage in a long-term perspective. These previous experiences influence my prior interpretation of the *empowerment process* for the local environmental project; 'Environmental Ambassadors', as a process where it is

> **KLIMAAMBASSADØR:**
>
> The municipal initiative focus on involving and mobilizing municipal employees in becoming a 'Klimaambassadør', where they must commit themselves in enhancing environmental considerations on their workplace. For action competence edification they were offered different types of courses and materials.
>
> (Hvidovre Kommune, n/a)

difficult to enhance and maintain the participation and engagement. The process of creating knowledge is then influenced and frames the focus of the report. During my active participation in the course, I quickly became a part of the analysed field. It can thus be discussed whether I have been able to put myself beyond this overall approach, or if my research has been biased.

6 Methodology

This chapter outlines the research design and the methodological considerations associated. The purpose of this chapter is to legitimise the applied methods in accordance with the theoretical and scientific approach (cf. chapter 7 and 5) and in relation to validity. The chapter contributes to creating transparency of the scientific process by which the conclusions are drawn. First, the research design will be described and the structure of the project will be visualised. Then follows an overview of all the applied methods, followed by an elaboration of how empirical data is collected and processed. All applied methods will be presented separately and their relevance for the analysis will be argued. The chapter concludes with framing the analysis and providing a basis for outlining the theoretical approach.

6.1 Research Design and Structure Diagram

The following section elaborates on the research design for conducting this project and visualise how the project is structured.

The theory of science clarifies how knowledge is recognised, created and developed in this project. Hence, knowledge must be understood as both theories (cf. chapter 7) and the collected empirical data. How theory of science approach reality and how knowledge emerges in the chosen theories, forms the basis for how empirical data is processed.

Ontological and Epistemological Considerations

Ontological considerations address how reality can be categorised with reality as a central element (Sonne-Ragans, 2013 [b]). The theoretical framing of this project is tied into the communicative planning approach and the perspective of empowerment. Both approaches acknowledge the individual's subjective knowledge, experience and comprehension (cf. chapter 7). The examined field of research in this project is *the creation of empowerment among citizens in local environmental projects*, while the ontological basis is *how empowerment is created through action competence edification*. The focus is to examine the relation between the two perspectives of empowerment; *objective external empowerment* and *subjective internal empowerment* (cf. chapter 7). Hence, the relation between 'Miljøpunkt Amagers' facilitation and the 'Environmental Ambassadors' participation in the *empowerment process*. This project does not aim towards generalising on the individual's subjective knowledge and comprehension, as reality often differentiates between individuals.

Epistemological considerations are centred around realisation and understanding of knowledge. The individual's understanding of reality only constitutes a part of the objective reality, since the individual's understanding of reality is limited to what the individual can perceive (Sonne-Ragans, 2013 [a]). It is therefore important to be aware of the individual's perceived reality when collecting empirical data. Hence, empirical data cannot be understood objectively, and the collected knowledge is processed through the researcher's perception of reality, preconceived opinions and understandings (Sonne-Ragans, 2013 [a]). The collected empirical data consist of semi-structured interviews, participatory observations and questionnaires (cf. section 6.2). The methods have been chosen to understand the *empowerment process*, as well as the expectations of both 'Miljøpunkt Amager' and the 'Environmental Ambassadors'. Through the chosen methods and theories the individual can produce their own rational and subjective perception of reality.

A Qualitative Approach

As this project aims to examine the process of empowering the 'Environmental Ambassadors' and their participation and engagement, a qualitative approach is applied. The research-object is considered as a subject, and the approach is focused on how the respondents perceive and interpret reality, in accordance with the epistemological considerations. The process is regarded as communicative, and the communication between the researcher and the research-object is mutual. As the research-object is people it is essential to be aware of the relation between the researcher and the research-object and to gain an insight into how the researcher may influence the research (cf. chapter 5). The influence between actors and the social framework is dynamic and mutual, given that the social reality is anthropogenic and is

changed by people. (Andersen & Gamdrup, 2011 [b]) The basis of empirical data is often not very extensive in qualitative studies. Emphasis is primarily placed on analysing and interpreting opinions and thoughts expressed by the respondents (Larsen & Skov, 2018). The collection of empirical data and results is dependent on the individual, and the subjectivity within is often criticised. The subject and purpose of the study influence the choice of applied methods, and emphasis is placed on how empirical knowledge is processed, interpreted and presented. (Andersen & Gamdrup, 2011 [b]) The qualitative approach does not provide the possibility for making a general conclusion but can contribute in understanding the specific case. There are various types of qualitative studies - including interviews and observations, which provide insights into the opinions and actions of the respondents. (Larsen & Skov, 2018)

Structuring the Project

The focal point in this project is the process of empowering the 'Environmental Ambassadors', possibly leading to maintain the participation and engagement locally on Amager. Figure 1 illustrates the structure of the project and aims towards clarifying the process of conducting this project.
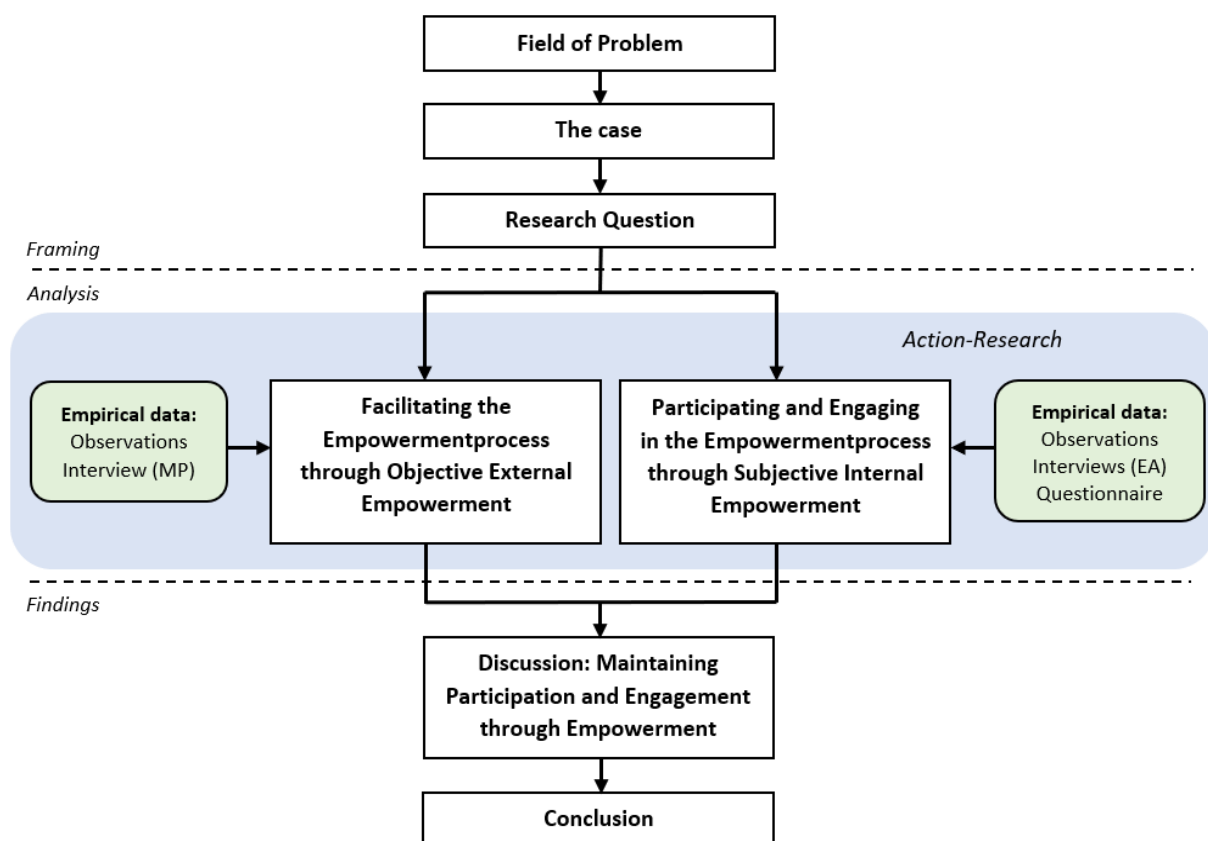

Figure 1 illustrates the structure of the project. The white boxes indicate the different steps in the research, the green boxes indicate the empirical basis, while the blue box indicates how the approach of action-research influence my process of creating knowledge (own figure).

The field of problem (cf. chapter 2) aims towards defining the importance of involving and empowering the local community in local environmental projects, for zooming in on the chosen case; 'Miljøpunkt Amager' and their local environmental project; educating 'Environmental Ambassadors' (cf. chapter 2 and 3). Problematizing the role of local communities in local environmental projects and outlining the chosen case leads towards defining the overall research question (cf. chapter 4). The chosen case then frames the focus of the analysis, where the *empowerment process* between 'Miljøpunkt Amager' and the 'Environmental Ambassadors' is examined and analysed. The research question is supported by three sub-questions (cf. chapter 4), which frames the structure of the analysis and discussion. The applied methods are chosen based on the elaborated research design and the applied theories (cf. chapter 7). Figure 1 illustrates how and when the empirical data is applied. The methodology of these will be further elaborated in the following section (cf. section 6.2). The three sup-questions is divided into two analyses and a discussion (cf. chapter 4). The first two sub-questions is divided into two main analysis which is equated equally, see figure 1. The first analysis aims at understanding how the *empowerment process* is being facilitated, and thereby how an arena for participation and influence is created (cf. chapter 8). The second analysis aims towards examining what drives the participation and engagement, and thereby the ability to utilise the arena for participation and influence (cf. chapter 9). Both analyses focus on identifying potentials and challenges in the *empowerment process*. The third sub-question leads to a discussion of the *empowerment process*, and how the participation and engagement can be maintained in a future perspective (cf. chapter 10). The findings will then be discussed within the theoretical frame, presented in chapter 7.

6.2 Applied Methods

The following section outlines the applied methods, followed by an elaboration of how empirical data is collected and processed.

This project is based on a case study (cf. chapter 3) and on qualitative methods such as semi-structured interviews, participatory observations and questionnaires. Table 1 provides an overview of the applied methods and collected empirical data. Each method is described separately beneath table 1.

Respondent/event	Method	Appendix
Hodan Osman and Lise N. Arre	Semi-structured interview	Appendix 1
'Environmental Ambassadors'	Semi-structured interview	Appendix 2
The Environmental Ambassador Course	Participatory observations	Appendix 3
Current 'Environmental Ambassadors'	Questionnaire	Appendix 4

Table 1 provides an overview of the collected empirical data, the applied methods and an overview of appendices (own figure).

Case-Study

Case-study as a method contributes in producing context-depending knowledge. It is thus a relevant method for studying phenomena in a contemporary and real context (Flyvbjerg, 2015). The context is created by the subjective reality of the individuals. The chosen case; the course 'Environmental Ambassadors' aims towards clarifying the practical aspects of an *empowerment process* in a local environmental project. As it will be elaborated in chapter 7, an *empowerment process* requires creating opportunities for influence, as well as engagement and competences for exploiting these opportunities. In this sense, the case-study is chosen as a method as it provides an opportunity to investigate the context-dependent knowledge this process contains (Flyvbjerg, 2015). However, it can be discussed how to derive general knowledge from a context-dependent analysis, where it can be argued that the context-dependent analysis can serve as an example (Flyvbjerg, 2015). The method provides an opportunity to explore empowerment as a phenomenon, where the rationales of the facilitators and the participants' involvement create the actual phenomenon. The case is mainly based on the current course 'Environmental Ambassadors', but previous years courses are also included in the study of the *empowerment process*. In order to achieve a holistic approach to the case, both the perspective of the facilitators and participants are examined - these will be addressed in separate analyses according to the applied theory presented in chapter 7.

Semi-Structured Interviews

A semi-structured interview is a qualitative approach. By conducting a semi-structured interview, I am able to gain knowledge through the experienced world. Hence, the experienced world does not seek explanations but is perceived and understood through experiences (Tanggaard & Brinkmann, 2015). This type of qualitative studies provides an insight into the interviewee opinions, actions and experiences. By conducting a semi-structured interview, I as the interviewer and researcher, are open for new inputs, knowledge and directions for the interview. For maintaining some control, the interview contains a set of questions in the form of an interview guide. The interviewee can then elaborate on their own interpretations of the experienced world (Tanggaard & Brinkmann, 2015).

With a focal point in this project on empowering the 'Environmental Ambassadors' and the related *empowerment process*, I have chosen to interview a central practitioner in the field, the *empowerment-planner*; 'Miljøpunkt Amager'. Hodan Osman and Lise N. Arre (the interviewees) are representing 'Miljøpunkt Amager' as the facilitators of the course. The purpose of the interview is to gain an insight into the overall context of the project and process. The interview contributed with an understanding of the *empowerment process* from the view of the facilitators. As the interview aimed at obtaining a nuanced

picture of the interviewee's different opinions and actions, the questions were of descriptive and inquiring character (Andersen & Gamdrup, 2011 [b]). For not influencing the direction of the interview, it was chosen not to send the interview guide (see appendix 1A) and questions in advance. This gave Hodan Osman and Lise N. Arre the opportunity to provide new inputs, knowledge and insights. By doing a joint interview, the two interviewees can support an interesting dialogue, which could be different if they were interviewed separately. However, given the fact that this is the first time Lise N. Arre is facilitating the course and Hodan Osman is more experienced, affects the answers and dialogue. When conducting this interview, I focused on not influencing the answers in any way, by maintaining my role as the researcher and being objective.

I have also chosen to interview the 'Environmental Ambassadors' as they hold a central role as a practitioner in the analysed field. The purpose of the interview is to obtain an insight into their experiences with participating in the *empowerment process*. Three 'Environmental Ambassadors' have been interviewed; two ambassadors currently participating in the course 2019 (see appendix 2C and 2D) and one formerly educated ambassador (see appendix 2B). Different types of experiences have thus been illustrated through these interviews. When conducting the interviews it is essential to support the interviewees' own experiences, and thereby be aware of the interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee, as the interviewer can risk influencing on the interviewee's experiences (Tanggaard & Brinkmann, 2015). The interview guide (see appendix 2A) was formed in advance based on the replies from the questionnaires (see appendix 4) and the participatory observations (see appendix 3). The questions were of open character followed by questions or gestures which followed up, for supporting the interviewees own narratives and experiences. I tried to be as neutral as possible during the interview. However, it is important to be aware that an open request cannot be considered as neutral, as it still indicates a direction for the interview and the desired knowledge (Tanggaard & Brinkmann, 2015).

All interviews have been transcribed, which becomes a representation of the collected empirical data. The transcriptions are not neutral but are a way to present and interpret the empirical data (Tanggaard & Brinkmann, 2015). The transcriptions can be found in appendix 1 and 2.

Participatory Observations

Participatory observation is applied as a qualitative approach to understand, follow and experience the 'Environmental Ambassadors' actions and practices during the course. There are different types of observation methods with various purposes and shapes, depending on the concrete context of the study and empirical data. When conducting a participatory observation, the researcher is actively participating in the observed activity. The method is then ambiguous since the researcher must participate and observe at the same time. (Szulevics, 2015)

The participatory observations of the 'Environmental Ambassadors' took place over a relatively short time period; more exactly three lessons. The purpose was to obtain an insight into the 'Environmental Ambassadors' experienced world, actions and understandings. My participation in the course has been on equal terms with the 'Environmental Ambassadors', and I have also received a diploma and become an 'Environmental Ambassador' (see appendix 5). While observing the lessons and practical exercises, I have also been an active participant in the activities. The participatory role provided me with an opportunity to informally talk with the other participants and gain an insight into their different notions and practices. It can thus be argued, that an advantage of the method is that I as a researcher gain access to knowledge, which can be difficult to achieve through other types of qualitative methods. The type of knowledge this method contribute with is situated, unspoken, un-reflected, physical and interactions among actors (Szulevics, 2015). Additionally, the method supports a relation with the observed actors, which also contributes to the semi-structured interviews with the current 'Environmental Ambassadors'. As the participants are observed on first-hand the collected empirical data is considered valid. However, notes from each observation were written into a summary, creating a risk for interpreting the empirical data rather than just describing it. The analysis of the collected empirical data is subjective, and there is a risk for the researcher to affect the results, as it is based on the interpreter's own experiences and reality. Conducting participatory observations is a time-consuming method and it can be difficult to know when enough is enough. (Szulevics, 2015) Notes from the participatory observations can be found in appendix 3.

Questionnaire

The questionnaire is formed on the basis of *subjective internal empowerment* and to obtain an insight into the 'Environmental Ambassadors' *engagement* and *actions* (cf. section 7.4). The questionnaire is an approach to understand *who* the 'Environmental Ambassadors' are and *how* they participate (cf. section 7.4). The target group of the questionnaire is all 'Environmental Ambassadors' participating in the course 2019. The questionnaire consists of nine questions in total, which are of an open character. When choosing a questionnaire with open questions, the responses can be anything and the data-outcome is qualitative. It is time-consuming to process data from open questions, but the respondents have a possibility for contributing with new inputs (Andersen & Gamdrup, 2011 [b]). Question 1 provides information on how they are recruited, while question 2 to 7 provides an insight into the 'Environmental Ambassadors' motivation, competences and reflections. Question 8 and 9 provides an insight into the 'Environmental Ambassadors' expectations to themselves and the role. The questionnaire was handed out at one of the lessons, and it is only replies from the 'Environmental Ambassadors' who attended this lesson which is considered. A total of eight questionnaires was answered (27 are actively participating in the course). When using this type of method for collecting empirical data the quality and reliability of the questions can be

difficult to control (Andersen & Gamdrup, 2011 [b]). The questionnaire forms the basis for the semi-structured interviews with the current 'Environmental Ambassadors, in relation to content, further contact and for creating a reflection of their own role, which benefits the interviews. The questionnaire and quotation-points can be found in appendix 4.

Processing Empirical Data

All the collected empirical data has been gathered and combined for processing and applying it in the analysis, see picture 1. The yellow notes are empirical data collected through the questionnaires (see appendix 4), the pink notes are empirical data collected through participatory observations and is notes on own reflections (see appendix 3), the orange notes are empirical knowledge collected through interviews with the 'Environmental Ambassadors' (see appendix 2), the green notes are empirical data collected through the interview with 'Miljøpunkt Amager' (see appendix 1) and the white notes are both theoretical considerations and reflections, as well as knowledge collected through various documents conducted by 'Miljøpunkt Amager'. Picture 1 shows all the collected empirical data gathered and combined.

Picture 1 shows all the collected empirical data gathered and combined (own picture).

By visualising the collected empirical data it is possible to categorise and combine each note. The empirical data has been further processed within the theoretical frame, which will be elaborated in chapter 7. Each note has been categorised and placed according to the two perspectives of empowerment; *objective external empowerment* and *subjective internal empowerment*. For simplification, the two categories are further referred to as *'Facilitating'* and *'Participating'* (see picture 2) in accordance with visualising the two aspects of the *empowerment process*.
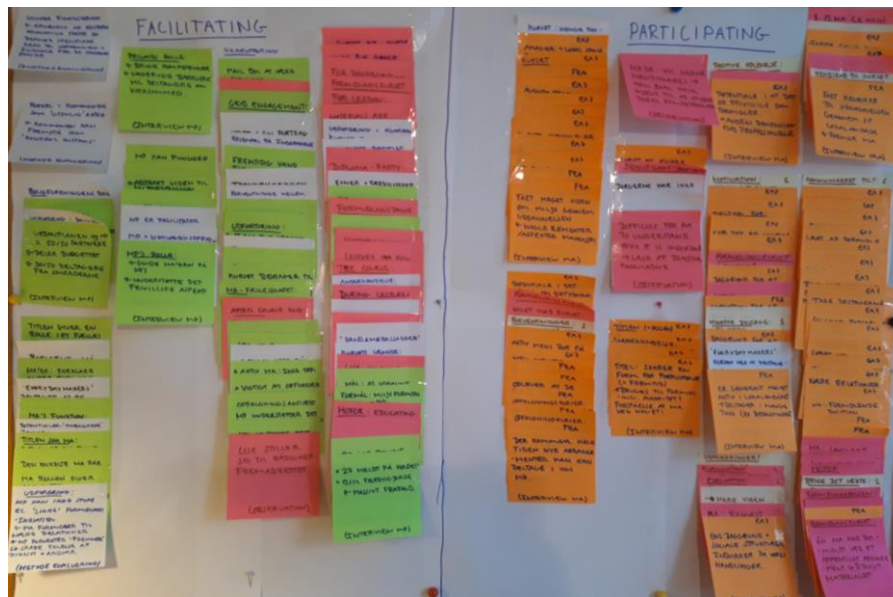
Picture 2 shows all the collected empirical data placed according to categories (own picture).

By categorising and combining all the empirical data, it is possible to identify tendencies in regards of potentials and challenges in the *empowerment process* (cf. chapter 10). However, by categorising and combining all the data there is a risk of excluding crucial elements which influence both perspectives of empowerment. The processing of data will be used as a basis for conducting the analyses (cf. chapter 8 and 9).

Limitations

There have been limitations in the collection of empirical data as the attendance of the 'Environmental Ambassadors' in the course has been limited. 27 citizens have signed up for the course, but only six to thirteen participants attended the lessons. Hence, it is often the same participants who attend. This has an impact on collecting empirical data and the results thereof, since only understandings and experiences of the committed 'Environmental Ambassadors', i.e. those who participate often, is gained. A general understanding of the basis for not participating is lacking, together with an understanding of why so many participants have dropped out of the course. It has furthermore, been difficult to gain an insight into the former educated 'Environmental Ambassadors' who are no longer active, as well as the group of citizens who do not want to participate. It is important to understand the underlying reasons for choosing not to be active, for understanding how engagement and participation can be created and maintained.

6.3 Framing the Analysis

This section summarises and combines the scientific and methodological approaches and illustrates how scientific knowledge has been created and conducted in this project, forming the basis for outlining the theoretical approach.

The scientific approach of *action-research* focus on creating a change within social challenges and is based on an active collaboration between researcher and practitioner. *Action-research* becomes a practical approach for changing and improving societal practices (cf. chapter 5). As elaborated in chapter 5, the approach forms the basis for understanding my own position in the analysed field and how my interpretation affects the collection of empirical data and findings of the project, see figure 2. The approach of interpreting and presenting the collected empirical data is thus influenced by my experienced reality in accordance with my role as an *action-researcher*. This is illustrated in figure 2, where the yellow box indicates how my position in the analysed field interprets on framing and presenting the analysis, leading to the findings of the project.
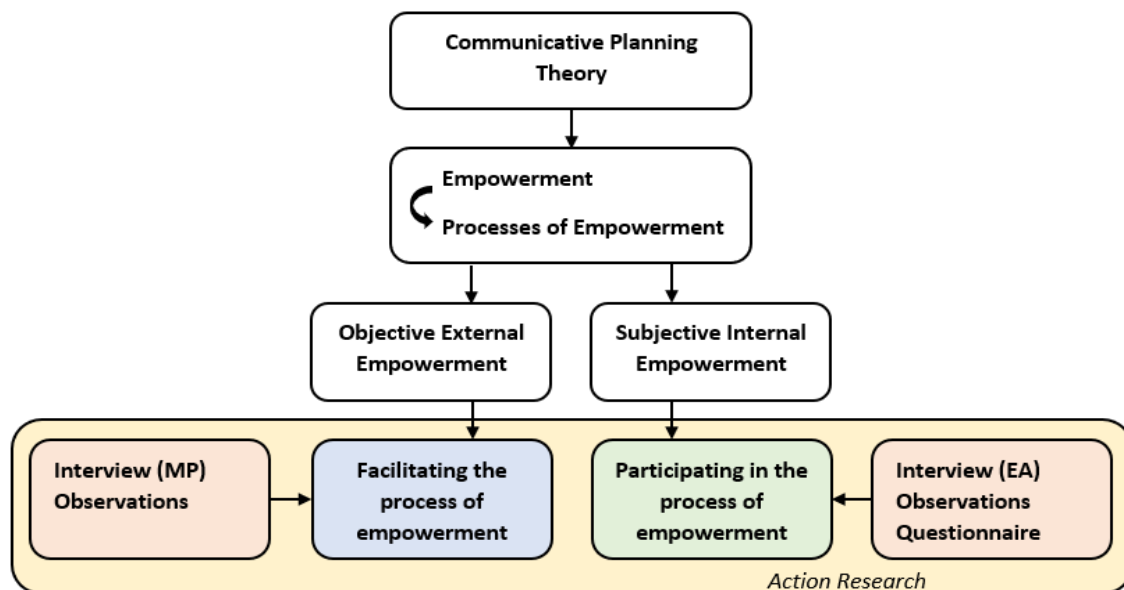
Figure 2 illustrates how the analysis is framed through the scientific approach, methodological framework and theoretical approach (own figure).

The scientific and methodological approaches form the basis for analysing and presenting the collected knowledge and empirical data, as illustrated in figure 2. The theoretical approach of communicative planning and empowerment is applied and frames the analysis in regard to the two perspectives of empowerment, which will be further elaborated in chapter 7. For clarification, the two perspectives will henceforth be referred to as facilitating and participating in the *empowerment process*. For being as objective as possible, I have tried not to let my own active participation and experienced reality affect my

overall theoretical understanding, as illustrated in figure 2. However, the theoretical framing has to some extent been influenced by my experienced reality and pre-understanding of the analysed field (cf. chapter 5). According to my interpretation, the project aims towards changing practices and not environmental behaviour. Hence, it is important to differentiate between these two aspects as the underlying conditions for achieving a change is different. The term 'behaviour' refers to how people behave and act, while the term 'practice' is about repeating an action or activity for improving skills (Hargreaves, 2011). As already elaborated, the case is concerned with educating local citizens and through them promote a change in environmental practices. A practice is defined by the interdependent relation between competences, materials and meanings (Shove et al, 2012), and can be interpreted as knowing how to act, having the right skills and reasons for carrying it out. These three elements must be connected and linked for enhancing a change in practice (Shove et al, 2012). It is argued that the course focuses on linking these three elements by involving and educating local citizens into 'Environmental Ambassadors'.

According to the theoretical frame, it is not the actual change of practice which is being examined and analysed, but the opportunity created and framed through involving local citizens. It is mainly the opportunity to change daily practices related to environmental considerations which are being examined, where a democratic process can be formed and the involved local citizens can perceive themselves as empowered subjects (Andersen, & Gamdrup, 2011 [a]). Together with the scientific, methodological and theoretical approaches, this perception of practice forms the basis for analysing the *empowerment process* from a top-down facilitation and bottom-up mobilisation perspective.

The report is very context-dependent and the produced scientific knowledge cannot be directly transferred to other processes of empowering local citizens in environmental projects. Nevertheless, general elements can be extracted and used as inspiration for other facilitators and *empowerment-planners*.

7 Theory

The following chapter will outline the theoretical approach used to understand and analyse the process of empowering the 'Environmental Ambassadors'. The applied theories have been chosen due to the focus of the research question and in accordance with the overall scientific approach (cf. chapter 4 and 5). The chapter is based on a communicative planning approach for creating a general understanding of citizens' importance and role in planning processes. Then, the theory of empowerment and the related different dimensions are unfolded, creating a basis for analysing on the collected empirical data. In continuation hereof, both the role of the *empowerment-planner* and the involvement of local citizens will be outlined, and provide a theoretical framing of the analysis, discussion and conclusion on the research question (cf.

chapter 4). Figure 3 illustrates how the applied theories are connected and substantiate each other, creating a theoretical frame for analysing on the case (illustrated in the blue and green boxes).
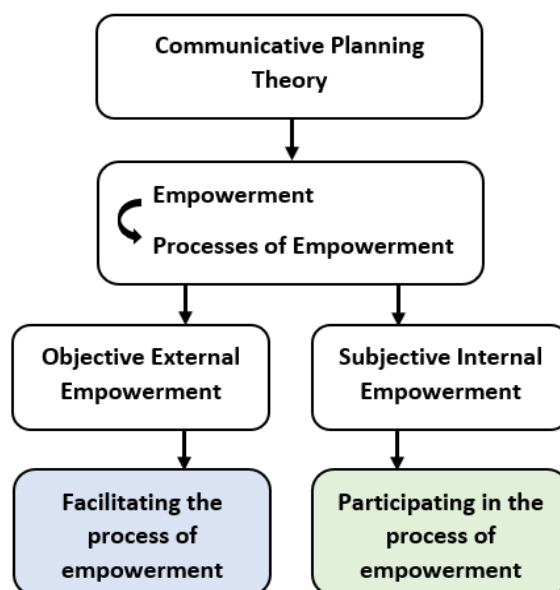
Figure 3 illustrates how all the described and applied theories are connected (own figure).

7.1 Communicative Planning Theory

This section outlines the communicative planning approach along with the role, importance and ideals of involving citizens in planning processes.

Over time, urban planning has strived towards ensuring collective values and needs. However, during the past decades, there has been a shift in the focus on alternative conceptions of planning practices. Hence, common values and needs are questioned, challenged, identified and debated in planning theories (Healey, 2002). The shift entails that common people's needs and values are equated with those of experts. Hence, communicative planning becomes an alternative position in relation to power and reinforces the consideration of a long-term sustainable development (Elling, 2016). Argumentation and citizen involvement is thus a central element in the planning process (Elling, 2016; Healey, 2002).

The Communicative Planning Approach

There are many different perspectives on communicative planning. However, they all argue that the governance aspect has become more network-oriented (Healey, 2002; Agger, 2007). Hence, several types of actors must be involved in the planning process, so that communication is democratised between networks (Agger, 2007).

The communicative approach is based on a comprehension that rational and top-down planning is an outdated approach and that the premise of societal development has changed. Communicative planning

outlines demands on how planning can be democratised by establishing a fair and inclusive process. The approach is thus reflected in *consensus-oriented* planning processes, where different actors gather in solving common challenges. The process is based on a premise, that all involved actors have equal opportunities for being heard and informed. (Agger, 2007) Knowledge is not predefined in the communicative approach but is re-created through exchanges of perceptions, understandings and communication (Healey, 2002). Language and narratives thus become more important, as it shapes our perceptions and understandings, as well as influence on our actions (Healey, 2002; Agger, 2007). Understandings and experiences are thus socially shaped, where language and narratives activate our forms of understanding, values and our perception of different phenomena in social relations (Elling, 2016). Planning is then considered as a linguistic practice and a qualitative study, where narratives contribute with an interpretation of how power and rationality are practised (Agger, 2007). Elling (2016) criticises the sole focus on the dialogue and argues that citizen participation is of greater importance. Here, power is constituted in the actual process and citizens have the possibility to directly influence the process (Elling, 2016).

Citizens Involvement in Communicative Planning

Citizens have an active role in communicative planning. They possess resources in form of local knowledge, which through mobilisation and involvement can lead to local ownership and anchoring in the local community (Agger, 2007), and prevent the interests of individual actors from dominating (Elling, 2016). The active participation is not only about providing new inputs into a given process but to build action competences towards creating a change. Thus, the active participation of citizens is focused on educating them into *democratic members* of the community. (Agger, 2007) Healey (2002) argues that it is within social contexts that we create new understandings and formations of public opinions (Healey, 2002).

Agger (2007) states that more citizens are interested in having a contributory influence on their local community and daily lives, and thereby act as reflexive individuals (Agger, 2007). Hence, the citizens' interest is created through diverse societal and personal experiences (Healey, 2002). The potential of involving and mobilising citizens in the process is considered as being essential. Consequently, a focus on local communities' importance in solving social and environmental challenges have increased (Agger, 2007), together with collectively debating matters of common concern. It is then about finding agreements on how to address our collective concerns and how to act together (Healey, 2002).

Each citizen is part of many different social networks, where practises and structures can be constantly changed, and local communities action competences can be built (Agger, 2007). The role of citizens is not predetermined, and they can freely relate to the process (Elling, 2016). Hence, the active participation is

expected to contribute with; creating new understandings and fewer prejudices for other actors, promote *consensus-oriented* decision making, build local action competence and produce new knowledge and potentials for changing practices and structures (Agger, 2007).

Ideals of Involving Citizens

To promote a democratic process, a public dialogue that contributes with different types of knowledge and forms of recognition is required (Agger, 2007). Agger (2007) establishes an ideal form of communicative planning through different criteria. The criteria's all focus on creating an open dialogue and process but is often difficult to put into practice. These criteria depend on being *consensus-oriented*, where the interests of different actors must be considered. (Agger, 2007) However, the ideals describe the intentions of involving citizens in the process but do not describe how to actually implement it (Elling, 2016). It can furthermore be discussed whether a *consensus-oriented* approach is an ideal process, or if the process must acknowledge the fact that citizens are different and agreement is not necessarily the ideal (Elling, 2016). The ideal presents a conception that processes must be *consensus-oriented* for being perceived as beneficial. This does not necessarily correspond to reality, where a process can be considered beneficial without creating *consensus* among involved actors. It can then be summarised into the following question; Can the ideal of a *consensus-oriented* approach be put into practice? This will be further discussed in chapter 10, where the approach is compared to the collected empirical data.

The communicative planning approach strives towards promoting a democratic dialogue, where disagreements must be resolved through communication between participants (Agger, 2007). However, it is only the frame of planning which is illustrated in this approach while the concept of power is missing (Elling, 2016). Elling (2016) appoints that the assigned role of citizens becomes more explicit in relation to the process of constituting power and implement a sustainable and long-term planning approach (Elling, 2016). Hence, a critique is raised towards the mere focus on the dialogue within the communicative planning approach, as well as the view on citizen participation as something that is 'outside' the process. This critique makes the perspective of empowerment relevant to include, together with a focus on who is included and excluded in the process. The following section aims to illustrate the concept of power within the terms of the communicative planning approach.

7.2 Empowerment

This section will outline the theory of empowerment together with the different dimensions in the process. The section forms the basis of a theoretical framing of the analysis.

The theoretical approach of empowerment has a number of common features with the communicative planning approach, as empowerment also puts collective awareness and collective actions in the centre (cf. section 7.1). Communication and exchanges of interpretations and understandings are central aspects in the communicative planning approach (cf. section 7.1), while a more fundamental change in asymmetric power relations becomes a central focal point in empowerment (Bang et al, 2000). Hence, the approach of empowerment differs from communicative planning, by assuming in advance that power is unequally distributed (Andersen, 2007).

Empowerment as a Theoretical Term

The term empowerment was until the 1990's reserved for developmental research and linked to oppressed groups self-organisation and social movements fight against oppression in the third world, including political, economic and ethnic oppression (Andersen, 2007). Paulo Freire, a Brazilian educator, propagated the term worldwide with the book *"Pedagogy of the Oppressed"* (Freire, 2006). Here empowerment is defined as the ability to understand political, economic and social contradictions and the ability to act against elements of reality which are oppressive. According to Freire (2006), empowerment is about empowering individuals, by controlling their own learning-processes and develop an understanding of their position in the community through active engagement and participation (Freire, 2006). It is then about processes in which established groups are able to counter powerlessness, fail to appreciate, exclusion, underprivileged and lack of control over own living conditions in relation to field and resources (Andersen, 2007). An *empowerment process* is defined as a process in which communities and social groups improve their ability to perceive, create, control and manage both material, social, symbolic and cultural resources. In planning, the empowerment approach is linked to collective action and mobilisation from the bottom and is based within the social mobilisation planning approach (Andersen, 2007). Nevertheless, the approach lacks a conceptualisation of the planning content and does not relate to social conditions. In continuation hereof, Elling (2016) questions; *"(...) empowerment in terms of who and what? And why?"* (Elling, 2016, pp. 40 [trans.]).

Empowerment as a term contains different perspectives and meanings, as it is used by different professional groups (Andersen, 2007). However, the term distinguishes between three perspectives: *'Neoconservative or liberal minimal stat-like variation', 'Social liberal 'Third Way'-like variant'* and *'Societal transformative variant'* (Andersen, 2007). In this project, the empowerment perspective *'societal transformative variant'* is considered relevant, as it focus on collective awareness-raising and competence edification in relation to improve socioeconomic and sociocultural rights and living conditions (Andersen, 2007). 'Miljøpunkt Amager' focus on creating a collective awareness in relation to environmental

considerations and edify local citizens action competence through the course (cf. chapter 3). The perspective then provides an understanding of how changes can be created in the subjective consciousness, self-perception and collective action competence (Andersen, 2007).

Dimensions of Empowerment

There are different dimensions of empowerment. A successful *empowerment process* is mutually reinforcing over time and is being developed in dialectics between *vertical* and *horizontal* empowerment (Andersen, 2007). This is the first distinction between the various dimensions;

- *Vertical empowerment:* Deals with power of local communities in relation to higher levels of society and is thereby a strengthening of power positions outwardly and upwards.

- *Horizontal empowerment:* Strengthening actionable networks internally and downwards between actors on the same level.

(Andersen, 2007)

A successful *empowerment process* is furthermore context-dependent in terms of groups and what they portray as central challenges (Andersen, 2007). Hence, four dimensions of empowerment can then be summarised:

1. *Identity empowerment:* Changing a negative identity into a positive through mobilisation of networks which break the individualisation of social problems and stigmatization.

2. *Status or symbolic empowerment:* Close related to identity empowerment. Challenging the surrounding conceptions, categorisations and stigmatization in dominant discourses.

3. *Political empowerment:* Representation, presence and building action competence. Strengthening the position of groups through mobilisation and awareness-raising, as well as fostering the ability to build alliances and gain recognition and legitimacy.

4. *Institutional empowerment:* Ensuring organisational bases, so that the representation of interests is not solely dependent on voluntary mobilisation.

(Andersen, 2007)

The four dimensions of empowerment may be convergent but may not necessarily be. Facilitating an *empowerment process* is about supporting groups in becoming better at managing and influencing their living conditions (Bang et al, 2000). Hence, an interaction between developing a better ability for collective action (subjective dimension) and achieving a higher degree of control of societal created conditions (objective dimension) (Andersen, 2007). These four dimensions can be used to examine the conditions in the process of empowering the 'Environmental Ambassadors' and create an understanding of the underlying reasoning for facilitating the process and participation. However, the allocation of these four

dimensions is not sufficient for assessing the process. The actual possibility to utilise them must also be included in the understanding (Bang et al, 2000).

Objective External and Subjective Internal Empowerment

As described above, empowerment can be considered as a bilateral term that has an objective and a subjective dimension. The empowerment-concept has a relation to the efficacy-tradition, which relates to the individual's experience of opportunities and abilities. Efficacy is divided into being external (the experience of responsiveness) or internal (the ability to commit). This concept is primarily aimed at formal institutions, while the concept of empowerment takes it a step further towards processes extended beyond formal institutions. (Bang et al, 2000) Nevertheless, the concept of efficacy provides an understanding of an external and internal dimension, and the division of the empowerment term thus becomes; *objective external empowerment* (in Danish; *Mægtiggørelse*) and *subjective internal empowerment* (in Danish; *Myndiggørelse*). *The objective external empowerment* is in the form of real opportunity for influence and deals with the frames set for the possibility of influence. However, it can be argued that setting up formal requirements or ideals for inclusion (cf. section 7.1) is not enough and the actual process of involvement must also be considered for understanding the *empowerment process* (Elling, 2016). *The subjective internal empowerment* is in the form of citizens' experienced ability, willingness and competence to transform opportunities and resources into action, as well as exploiting the opportunity for influence (Andersen, 2007). Here the *empowerment-planner* has an interest in empowering citizens, so they can contribute to the process and equate it with responsibility (Elling, 2016). This will be elaborated in section 7.3 and 7.4.

In an *empowerment process*, the use of power must take place in a normative framing with a common understanding of democracy and solidarity and must never be at the expense of other groups. Hence, empowerment presupposes that power is a 'plus-sum game' where all actors gain from changing the options. The element of power deals with the possibilities of influencing own life and external conditions, i.e. local development. Actors then have the ability to build alliances and the process must promote this. (Andersen, 2007) However, the mutual influence between actors may be blurred (Bang et al, 2000). Here social conflicts and mobilisation from below are productive and necessary for society as an entirety. By combining building alliances and social mobilisation from below, a sustainable result can be achieved. (Andersen, 2007) Hence, a synergy between bottom-up mobilisation and top-down facilitation is created.

7.3 Objective External Empowerment and the Empowerment-Planner

This section will explain the objective external empowerment and how it frames the role of the empowerment-planner. The section ends with creating a theoretical frame for analysing on how the empowerment process is facilitated by the empowerment-planner.

Objective external empowerment can also be defined as 'roles' and 'positions'. 'Roles' and 'positions' are perceived as institutional locations and conditions, and the actors are assigned the 'roles' and 'positions' 'from the outside'. With its authoritative interpretation, the institutions influence the individual's understanding of the institution itself and their surroundings. The intentions and desires of the individuals are thereby influenced by the way in which they interact with the situation and relate to their surroundings (Bang et al, 2000). In principle, action is the result of societal structures, where systematic relations and power relations force the individual into certain actions (Elling, 2016). The role of the *empowerment-planner* is to be a facilitator for mobilisation and vision-development from a bottom-up perspective (Andersen, 2007). Hence, the *empowerment-planner* often act as a 'knowledge mediator and broker', in order to reframe problems and promote possible solutions (Healey, 2002). The role of the *empowerment-planner* is then to mediate between different actors when disagreements about goals and priorities arise, or if something else prevents the process (Andersen, 2007). Power should be distributed amongst actors and create a foundation to equate actors in the process. By doing so, the efforts of consensus-building can be promoted. Here transparency and trust are crucial elements in the consensus-building process (Healey, 2002). A crucial part of facilitating vision- and mobilisation-driven planning, is that there from the beginning of the process and continuously is developed an understanding of the context for the project. This is also called a *situation analysis* in planning theories (Andersen, 2007), and the *situation analysis* will form the basis for understanding the context of the local environmental project 'Environmental Ambassadors'. Andersen (2007) identifies three important aspects of the context to consider when conducting a *situation analysis*;

- Identifying relevant actors.
- The balance of power between relevant actors.
- What rules of the game are at stake?

However, when analysing on the specific context for a given process it is crucial to consider the *empowerment-planners* own actions, lived experiences, words and style of communication and how it affects the process that the planner facilitates (Healey, 2002).

The three aspects of the *situation analysis* will together with the four dimensions of empowerment be analysed through the applied methods and collected empirical data. It then frames an analysis of how the *empowerment process* is facilitated by the *empowerment-planner* 'Miljøpunkt Amager'.

7.4 Subjective Internal Empowerment and Involving Citizens

This section will explain the subjective internal empowerment and how it frames the citizens' participation in the empowerment process. The section concludes with creating a theoretical frame for analysing the 'Environmental Ambassadors' and their involvement and participation.

Subjective internal empowerment focus on the ability to utilise the provided frame for participation. There is a focus on actors' ability to participate in various processes and either exploit or not exploit the opportunity created through the dimension of *objective external empowerment*. It thus affects knowledge about oneself, previous experiences, knowledge etc. (Bang et al, 2000) In a planning context, the focus on involving citizens in processes has increased and thereby created more possibilities for citizens to participate in matters they care about. Here, governments recognise the need for mobilising and use of resources, knowledge and energies of empowered citizens. By actively involving citizens in the process, their role transforms into being co-producers and the participation influence on the degree of trust, social cohesion, ownership and empowerment. However, those citizens who often participate have the political know-how, time and professional knowledge and they often share similar characteristics. It can therefore be questioned, whether or not there is an issue of representation and if the participating citizens represent the broader public. (Agger, 2012) This can result in biased participation, where the most resourceful citizens are empowered and the less resourceful citizens are disempowered in the process (Andersen, 2007). Thus, the notion of empowerment does not provide an insight into the aspect of democracy, since it is possible to act undemocratically even if one is empowered in the process. Here the choice of not participating is also an empowered choice. (Bang et al, 2000) It is then important to consider who is included and excluded in the participatory process. (Agger, 2012) To clarify the democratic aspect, the concepts of *engagement* and *action* is used. *Engagement* deals with actors' interests in matters of common concern, while *action* deals with the way in which processes actually takes place - including the basic choice of participating (Bang et al, 2000). Here it is important not to perceive citizens as a homogenous group, but distinct between different types of citizens. A way to address this challenge is by identifying *who* the participant is, *how* they participate and *who* do not participate. This also enhances the understanding of the *empowerment process* (Andersen, 2007). When considering the different types of citizens and their different capabilities and needs in the participating process, the chance of mobilising the citizens and maintain their engagement and attendance in the process are increased (Agger, 2012).

The identification of *who* the participants are and *how* they participate will form a theoretical framing for analysing on the process of empowering the 'Environmental Ambassadors' and understand their participation and engagement in the process. This will be analysed through the applied methods and collected empirical data.

7.5 Summary

The communicative planning approach provides a general understanding of the importance of involving and engaging citizens in planning processes. The aim of the communicative planning approach is reached through dialogue, and the normative ideals of planning are; inclusive, dialogic and democratic. Here communicative planning theory strives towards mobilising and involving citizens in the process - a central planning ideal for the chosen case in this project (cf. chapter 3). The communicative planning approach only illustrates the frame of planning and are missing the concept of power. The theory of empowerment is thus applied, illustrating the concept of power within the already established theoretical approach. Empowerment is about creating social mobilisation among actors, and the possibility of affecting own life conditions and social rights. Empowerment can be divided into two main perspectives; *objective external empowerment* and *subjective internal empowerment*. The first perspective is in regards of creating the possibility for participation, while the second perspective is in regards of being able to utilise the possibility for participating. These two perspectives create a theoretical foundation for analysing on how the *empowerment process* is facilitated by 'Miljøpunkt Amager' and how the 'Environmental Ambassadors' utilise the possibility for participating and becoming active local citizens. The process of empowerment is thus analysed through facilitation and participation. The *situation analysis* and the four dimensions of empowerment will frame the analysis of facilitating the *empowerment process* (cf. chapter 8), while the 'Environmental Ambassadors' engagement and participation will be analysed through the identification of *who* participates and *how* they participate (cf. chapter 9).

8 Facilitating the Empowerment Process

The following chapter will answer the first sub-question; *How is the process of empowerment facilitated, and what potentials and challenges does the facilitation entail?* This chapter will analyse the potentials and challenges in how 'Miljøpunkt Amager' facilitates and frames the *empowerment process* by creating an opportunity for participation through the dimension of *objective external empowerment* (cf. chapter 7). First, the current context of the project will be examined through the *situation analysis*. Then the creation of an arena for participation and frame for influence will be analysed in regards of identifying potentials and challenges for facilitating the *empowerment process*. The analysis is based on empirical data conducted from; participatory observations (see appendix 3) and the interview with 'Miljøpunkt Amager' (see appendix 1), supported by empirical data conducted by 'Miljøpunkt Amager' (Agendacenter Sundbyøster, 2007; Miljøpunkt Amager, 2012; Miljøpunkt Amager, 2013; Miljøpunkt Amager, 2014; Miljøpunkt Amager, 2015 [b]; Miljøpunkt Amager, 2016 [b]; Miljøpunkt Amager, 2019 [c]). The chapter concludes by listing the identified potentials and challenges.

8.1 The Situation Analysis

The current context of the project will be analysed through the situation analysis (cf. section 7.3), considering; identifying relevant actors, the balance of power and what rules of the game are at stake.

The project 'Environmental Ambassadors' focus on creating a collective understanding and common way of acting for local environmental considerations on Amager, through processes of actively involving and engaging the local community as well as empowering local citizens (cf. chapter 3 and section 7.1). According to Agger (2007), the premise of societal development has changed and there must be established a fair and inclusive process, where different types of actors on different community levels are actively involved in jointly solving shared challenges (Agger, 2007). Here the power-relation and communication between actors and networks must be democratised, and the process depends on being *consensus-oriented* (cf. section 7.1; Healey, 2002). This is also the case for the project 'Environmental Ambassadors' where 'Miljøpunkt Amager' creates an arena in which all involved actors agree that we must address our collective concern. Hence, 'Miljøpunkt Amager' provides them with an understanding of how to act together and support the creation of a collective experienced reality. There is then created a frame for a *consensus-oriented* process where it is essential to consider the interest of actors influencing on the *empowerment process* (Agger, 2007). 'Miljøpunkt Amager' strives towards involving different types of local actors for anchoring the participation and engagement locally. The finance is furthermore uncertain, as both the collaborators and the size of the finance change every year. 'Miljøpunkt Amager' is then

dependent on financial support from actors, such as the 'Housing Associations' and 'Private Utilities and Institutions' (Agendacenter Sundbyøster, 2007). Various actors from different community levels influence on the project and the *empowerment process* with all their own interests to consider and prioritise. It is then important to establish the *empowerment process* in terms of *who, what* and *why*, to understand the overall context of the project (Elling, 2016). According to section 7.3, the context can be examined through the *situation analysis* where relevant actors, the *balance of power* and the *rules of the game* is identified (cf. section 7.3). All relevant actors have already been identified to some extent in chapter 3. However, they have only been defined within their overall function for the project of educating 'Environmental Ambassadors'. There is then a need for defining and elaborate each actor in accordance with the *situation analysis* (cf. section 7.3). The identified relevant actors are the following; 'Miljøpunkt Amager', 'Environmental Ambassadors', 'Housing Associations', 'Copenhagen Municipality', the 'Local Committees Amager Vest and Øst', 'Private Utilities and Companies' and the 'Local Community'. On figure 4 all the mentioned actors and their internal *balance of power* are presented. The black and green arrows indicate the internal *balance of power* and influence, while the green arrows also illustrate a financial influence.
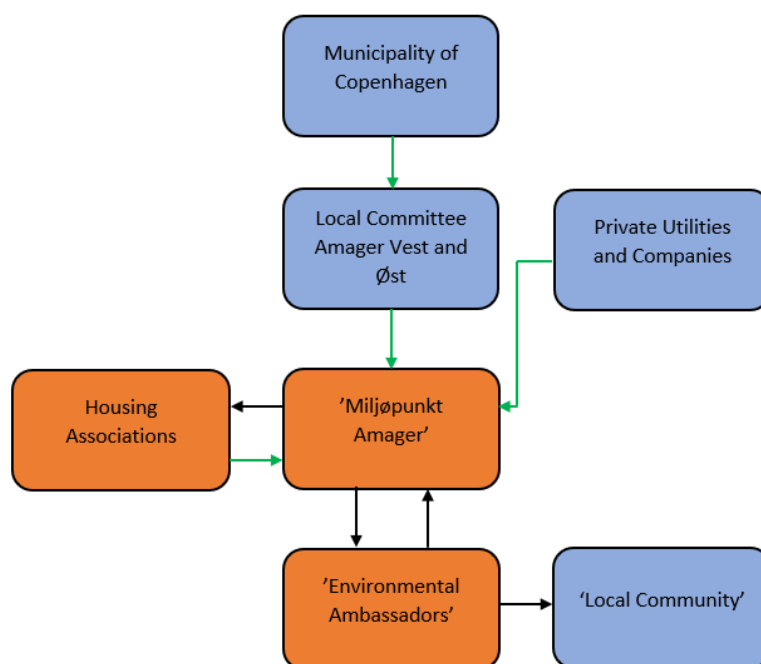
Figure 4 shows all relevant actors. The orange boxes represent the main-actors in the process, while the blue boxes represent other relevant actors influencing the process. The arrows indicate the actors influence on other actors, while the green arrows also indicate financial influence (own figure).

The orange coloured boxes represent the main actors in the *empowerment process*, while the blue boxes represent other relevant actors, who also influence the process. 'Miljøpunkt Amager' facilitates the project and is therefore considered a main actor, as they have the role as the *empowerment-planner* (cf. section 7.3). The 'Environmental Ambassadors' and the 'Housing Associations' is also considered as being main

actors, as they have a direct influence on the process. As illustrated in figure 4, all relevant actors either influence or is influenced by the project and is thereby creating either a potential or a challenge for the process of facilitating the project.

When analysing on the specific context for the *empowerment process*, it is crucial to consider the actors own actions, experiences, roles, interest and power relations and how it affects the facilitated process (cf. chapter 7). This will be elaborated for each actor in the following. By doing so, it is possible to outline *what rules of the game are at stake* (cf. section 7.3) and provides an overall understanding of the context for the project.

'Miljøpunkt Amager'

'Miljøpunkt Amager' holds a crucial role in the process as the facilitator of the project and thereby as the *empowerment-planner*. According to Healey (2002), it is crucial to consider the experiences and actions of the *empowerment-planner*, for understanding how they affect the process which they facilitate (Healey, 2002). The main interest of 'Miljøpunkt Amager' as a local environmental centre, is to enhance environmental considerations and promote a local sustainable development through actively mobilising, involving and engaging the local community in different projects and initiatives (cf. chapter 3). This interest frames the local environmental project of involving and educating local citizens into 'Environmental Ambassadors', in regard to theme, content and facilitation (Interview: Miljøpunkt Amager). 'Miljøpunkt Amager' facilitates the process through mobilising and involving local citizens, who must propagate to other local citizens - creating a ripple effect in the local community (Miljøpunkt Amager, 2012). 'Miljøpunkt Amager' act as a knowledge mediator, where environmental considerations are reframed and possible solutions are promoted through the course (cf. section 7.3), by turning abstract knowledge into narratives that everyone can understand, relate and contribute to (Interview: Miljøpunkt Amager). The concrete role of 'Miljøpunkt Amager' is to initiate and facilitate the course, create a network of collaborators and involve local citizens in actively participating, as well as continuously maintain the participation and engagement of formerly educated 'Environmental Ambassadors'. 'Miljøpunkt Amager' thus creates an arena for a dimension of *objective external empowerment* (cf. section 7.3), by framing the opportunity for local citizens to participate and educate them into *democratic members* of the local community (Interview: Miljøpunkt Amager; Agger, 2007). Hence, 'Miljøpunkt Amager' must guide the participation and engagement of the 'Environmental Ambassadors' and thereby support the voluntary aspect of the project (Interview: Miljøpunkt Amager). 'Miljøpunkt Amager' can then be considered as the link between the 'Environmental Ambassadors' and other relevant actors, as they can provide guidance and support for major environmental projects that go beyond the objectives of 'Miljøpunkt Amager' (Interview: Miljøpunkt Amager; Agger & Hoffmann, 2008).

'Environmental Ambassadors'

The 'Environmental Ambassadors' holds an important and crucial role in the process, in regards of participating in the course and as educated 'Environmental Ambassadors'. Their role, action, experience, interest and power relation will be further elaborated in chapter 9, as they take an active share in the dimension of *subjective internal empowerment* in the process. However, the importance of involving and engaging the 'Environmental Ambassadors' must be outlined, to understand how the process is facilitated. The 'Environmental Ambassadors' possess resources in the form of local knowledge which can provide new inputs and accommodate the process for the local community. It can then lead to local ownership and anchoring the initiative in the local community, by focusing on the local development and desire (Agger, 2007). By mobilising and involving local citizens in the course, it is possible to build action competences towards creating a change by educating the 'Environmental Ambassadors' into *democratic members* of the local community (cf. section 7.1). The 'Environmental Ambassadors' becomes an important resource in promoting a local sustainable development. The 'Environmental Ambassadors' have the opportunity to choose whether they want to participate or not. The 'Environmental Ambassadors' becomes a crucial actor in the process, as they propagate environmental knowledge to other local citizens and creates a broader outreach and make the context relatable (Interview: Miljøpunkt Amager; Agendacenter Sundbyøster, 2007). The 'Environmental Ambassadors' then have a role as translators between the 'Local Community' and 'Miljøpunkt Amager' (Agger, 2012). Hence, the role of the participants is just as important as the role of the *empowerment-planner*.

'Housing Associations'

The main actor 'Housing Associations' also includes different social outreach plans located in the geographically bounded area (cf. map in section 2.2). The following social outreaches have been involved over time; 'Urbanplanen/Partnerskabet', 'Amagerbro Helhedsplan', 'Sundholmskvarteret' and 'Holmbladskvarteret' (Miljøpunkt Amager, 2012; Miljøpunkt Amager, 2013). 'Urbanplanen/Partnerskabet' is the main collaborator for the course 2019 and has contributed with 50% of the financing for the project. They are therefore actively involved in facilitating the course for 2019. The power-relation between 'Urbanplanen/ Partnerskabet' and 'Miljøpunkt Amager' is then equated, and the interests of both actors must be equally considered. 'Urbanplanen/Partnerskabet' has required that a certain number of seats on the course to be reserved for their residents (Interview: Miljøpunkt Amager). Besides providing financial support, the 'Housing Associations' also provides physical premises for conducting the course. The 'Housing Associations' is then an active collaborator, and their influence is framed by the size of the financial support. They can then influence the project, process and involvement of local citizens. However, 'Miljøpunkt Amager' states that they will always have the role as the *empowerment-planner*, as 'Miljøpunkt

Amager' have the required experiences and the necessary knowledge for facilitating the process (Interview: Miljøpunkt Amager). The 'Housing Associations' interest in being an active collaborator is to educate own residents into 'Environmental Ambassadors'. By having 'Environmental Ambassadors' among their own residents, it is easier for the associations to focus and even reduce the consumption in their property. The caretaker and the board can also use the experiences of the ambassadors and actively approach them. (Agendacenter Sundbyøster, 2007) 'Miljøpunkt Amager' states that there is great potential in collaborating with the 'Housing Associations' as they often have daily contact with residence (Miljøpunkt Amager, 2014; Interview: Miljøpunkt Amager). The 'Housing Associations' can thus involve and engage the 'Environmental Ambassadors' in local environmental projects and thereby create an opportunity for the 'Environmental Ambassadors' in remaining active (Interview: Miljøpunkt Amager). However, 'Miljøpunkt Amager' also argues that the collaboration with the 'Housing Association' holds a challenge. Exemplified in the residents feeling of distrust towards the associations' interest and the friction between the association and the residents (Agendacenter Sundbyøster, 2007).

'Copenhagen Municipality' and 'Local Committee Amager Vest and Øst'
Both 'Copenhagen Municipality' and 'Local Committee Amager Vest and Øst' are considered as relevant actors. However, they are described and elaborated together, as 'Copenhagen Municipality' has outsourced the local environmental work to the 'Local Committee Amager Vest and Øst', which later outsourced it to 'Miljøpunkt Amager'. This means that 'Miljøpunkt Amager', and partly the project 'Environmental Ambassadors', is financed by 'Copenhagen Municipality' through the 'Local Committee Amager Vest and Øst' (cf. section 2.2). In section 2.2 the role, interest and influence of the two 'Local Committees Amager Vest and Øst' have already been elaborated, where the power-relation between the two 'Local Committees' and 'Miljøpunkt Amager' has been established. Hence, the power relation is not equally distributed (cf. section 7.2) as 'Miljøpunkt Amager' needs to navigate within the settled frame provided by the 'Local Committee Amager Vest and Øst'. This furthermore frames the focus for the local environmental projects and the processes. The two actors are not visualised in the collaboration, which is considered being a strength for the process by former participants. The former participants express that both actors can appear to official and prevent some citizens from participating, as the project would be perceived as a municipal project where the practice of citizens should be changed and controlled (Agendacenter Sundbyøster, 2007). This point also indicates that 'Miljøpunkt Amager' is perceived as a less official actor by the local community.

'Private Utilities and Companies'

The 'Private Utilities and Companies' is considered as relevant actors, as they provide financial support and professional competences and skills, such as presentations and different remedies and materials (Interview: Miljøpunkt Amager). Examples of 'Private Utilities and Companies' involved in the project over time is; HOFOR, ARC, the educational association FORA, Vildt, and Amager Bio (Partnerskabet, 2019). The actors vary widely but are essential for contributing with professional inputs, which can create a great potential for the process. By providing financial support their interests must be considered, which can create a challenge in regards of focusing the course. 'Miljøpunkt Amager' states, that involving the 'Private Utilities and Companies' in the process, helps breaking down a barrier between the participants and actors (Interview: Miljøpunkt Amager).

'Local Community'

The 'Local Community' consist of 'Local Institutions and Organisations', 'Local Voluntary Networks' and 'Local Citizens', which all are considered as relevant actors. However, they are all described and elaborated together as they represent the same aspects in the case; the 'Local Community' on Amager. Examples of 'Local Institutions and Organisations' and 'Local Voluntary Networks' involved in the project is; local schools, Neighbourhood Mothers (in Danish; Bydelsmødre), the volunteer centre Amager and Danish Nature Conservation Association (in Danish; Danmarks Naturfredningsforening) (Miljøpunkt Amager, 2014; Miljøpunkt Amager, 2015 [b]; Miljøpunkt Amager, 2016 [b]). The actors have no actual influence on the project and are not providing any financial support or professional inputs. However, they all influence the process as they are the target group for the propagation of the 'Environmental Ambassadors' environmental knowledge. Thus, the 'Local Community' must be willing to listen to the environmental knowledge that the 'Environmental Ambassadors' propagate, and ultimately choose to act on the propagated knowledge. It is through the 'Local Community' that the 'Environmental Ambassadors' must fulfil their role, and the 'Local Community' must be willing to accept that role.

What Rules of the Game are at Stake?

All relevant actors have then been outlined and elaborated, providing an insight into the overall context of the project. To understand the underlying reason for facilitating the *empowerment process* it is important to comprehend the dimension of *empowerment* created. Hence, a successful *empowerment process* must be developed in dialectics between *vertical* and *horizontal* empowerment (Andersen, 2007), by reinforcing the power-relations among actors and strengthening the positions and networks (cf. section 7.2). It has been emphasised that there is a collective interest in jointly solving local environmental challenges, which is recognised as what the involved actors portray as a central challenge. By acknowledging that the process

is context-dependent, it is possible to facilitate an *empowerment process* which supports the involved actors in enhancing their ability for collective action (Bang et al, 2000; Andersen, 2007). The *situation analysis* established that many of the involved actors emphasise that building action competences and awareness-raising is a way to strengthen the position of the network and enhance environmental interest. Hence, it must be emphasised that the aspect of power-relations must be linked to how 'Miljøpunkt Amager' affects the process through their interpretations and actions (Bang et al, 2000). 'Miljøpunkt Amager' as the *empowerment-planner* holds an important position in the process, as they initiate and facilitate the project. They hold the main influence on the project and mainly decides who should be involved in the process and have the opportunity for participating. 'Miljøpunkt Amager' must create a network centred around the course which provides professional inputs as well as financial support. 'Miljøpunkt Amager' frames the participation and creates an opportunity for becoming an active citizen in the local community (cf. chapter 7). The frame for participation is created by involving and mobilising the relevant actors described above, providing a foundation for local citizens to become 'Environmental Ambassadors'. Thus, the 'Environmental Ambassadors' have an important role in the process, as they decide whether to utilise the created opportunity or not (cf. section 7.4).

The network of actors is thus complex with many different interest and influences to consider, together with power-relations that affects each other internally. By establishing each actor's role, interest and influence, an understanding of the overall context of the project have been established through the *situation analysis*. The next section will focus on how the *empowerment process* is facilitated and analyse on the created opportunity for participation facilitated by 'Miljøpunkt Amager'.

8.2 Facilitating the Empowerment Process

This section examines how 'Miljøpunkt Amager' facilitates the course for 2019 and thereby creates an arena for participation and influence. An understanding of the empowerment process is then framed.

Section 8.1 argues that it is required to mobilise actors on different community levels for creating a local sustainable development. The various actors must collaborate in enhancing the development, and actively participate in creating the transition (cf. chapter 2). The facilitation of an *empowerment process* starts with creating an arena for participating by mobilising and involving relevant actors, create a network and allocate financial support. 'Miljøpunkt Amager' must then create an arena for involvement and participation, in which the relevant actors can act within (cf. chapter 7). Facilitating the course consist of many different steps starting with initiating the course. Each step requires different approaches for involving and engaging both participants and other relevant actors. To clarify the analysis of the

empowerment process the following section is divided into steps. Each step examines the facilitation and creation of *objective external empowerment* and identifies potentials and challenges within the *empowerment process*.

Initiating the Course and Recruiting Participants

The collaboration with 'Urbanplanen/Partnerskabet' has affected the process of involving local citizens (cf. section 8.1). Hence, a proportion of the seats must be assigned to citizens living in the residential area Urbanplanen. The 'Local Committee Amager Øst and Vest' have furthermore required that the participants for the course 2019 must come from both the western and eastern part of Amager - within the boundaries of Copenhagen Municipality (Miljøpunkt Amager, 2019 [c]). These two requirements frame the objectives of the course of 2019. It is the first time the group of participants is mixed according to place of residence. In relation thereof, 'Miljøpunkt Amager' express a concern for the sense of community among the participants. 'Miljøpunkt Amager' states that because the place of residence is scattered, it can be difficult for the participants to support each other in a future perspective (Interview: Miljøpunkt Amager). However, 'Miljøpunkt Amager' does not express if they are interested in having a mixed group of participants or if they want to continue as usual.

For enhancing a local sustainable development, a synergy between top-down facilitation and bottom-up mobilisation must be created (Andersen, 2007). It is thus essential for 'Miljøpunkt Amager' to mobilise the 'Local Community' in the process, and actively involve local citizens into becoming 'Environmental Ambassadors' through recruitment. The recruiting of local citizens in participating is an essential part of the process (Agger, 2007). The approach for recruiting local citizens have varied over time but have mainly been through different types of outreach work conducted by either 'Miljøpunkt Amager' or social outreaches, such as 'Urbanplanen/Partnerskabet'. This approach for recruiting is very time and resource consuming and requires a personal approach and ongoing follow-ups (Agendacenter Sundbyøster, 2007). Recruitment becomes person-dependent and creates a challenge for the process of involving local citizens. The process of recruiting participants for the course 2019 have happened through outreach work, a note in the local newspaper (North Media Bureau, 2019) and on different Facebook-pages (Questionnaire). By spreading the awareness of the course, it is possible to mix the group of participants, which was a requirement for the course 2019. A total of 27 local citizens were recruited and assigned a seat on the course (Interview: Miljøpunkt Amager).

Facilitating the Course

As already described, the course consists of seven lessons, an excursion to Amager Resource Center and an excursion to Hørgårdens Recycling Center and the workshop community; TinkerTank (Partnerskabet, 2019). The seven lessons consist of both presentations and practical exercises presented by actors with a relevant professional background. The course 2019 focus on environmental considerations in regards of both waste and water. Nevertheless, only one of the lessons focuses on water as a resource, while most of the other lessons and excursions focus on waste (Partnerskabet, 2019). This can contribute to creating a lack in the process of acquiring the relevant knowledge for propagating to others.

The lessons are held in local surroundings, which the 'Environmental Ambassadors' are already familiar with (Observation), such as the common house in Hørgården; A-huset, see picture 3.

Picture 3 shows the common house A-huset located in the residential area Hørgården (own picture).

'Miljøpunkt Amager' argues that by using familiar locations, a safe arena for participation is framed, which creates a potential for maintaining the participation (Agendacenter Sundbyøster, 2007). By arranging the lessons during weeknights and excursions during weekends (Observation), 'Miljøpunkt Amager' creates an opportunity for enabling as many citizens to participate in the course as possible. During lessons, free dinner and childcare are provided (Observation), which is a way to "nurse" and acknowledge the participants. This is considered important by 'Miljøpunkt Amager', which states that by acknowledging the participants a foundation for maintaining their participation and engagement is created (Agendacenter Sundbyøster, 2007). Before each lesson, either 'Miljøpunkt Amager' or 'Urbanplanen/Partnerskabet' send a text to the participants, reminding them of the lesson and asked them to reply if they attend the lesson (Observation). This indicates a challenge of maintaining the participation and engagement during the course-period as it becomes very person-dependent. Hence, the facilitators must constantly follow-up on the participants' participation and engagement.

The overall focus of the course is to create a common understanding of environmental considerations and how to act together upon them (cf. chapter 3). By defining a collective experience of environmental considerations, there is created an incentive for action and change of practice (Healey, 2002). The course then provides a frame for creating such a collective experience, and there is thus a great potential in creating a sense of community centred around environmental considerations (Interview: Miljøpunkt Amager). 'Miljøpunkt Amager' furthermore elaborates, that the course also creates a sense of community between 'Environmental Ambassadors' and 'Miljøpunkt Amager', which can contribute in maintaining the participation and engagement on a long-term perspective (Agendacenter Sundbyøster, 2007).

During lessons materials and remedies are presented and distributed, see picture 4. Examples of materials and remedies are; quizzes, memory games, standardised information and water-saving aerators (Observation).

Picture 4 shows some of the many distributed materials presented during a lesson (own picture).

'Miljøpunkt Amager' mainly use already existing materials and often articulates where the participants can find additional materials (Interview: Miljøpunkt Amager). 'Miljøpunkt Amager' encourage the participants to use the material as an approach for propagating their environmental knowledge and thereby enhance the overall purpose of the course.

One of the lessons focuses on propagating environmental knowledge to others in a positive matter and practising how to propagate to others through rehearsing pitches and conducting role-plays (Observation). Many of the participants have requested this lesson during the course-period, but hardly any participants attended the lesson.

In the end of the course period, the participants have a break on two weeks for propagating their new acquired environmental knowledge to a minimum of four people, which could either be people in their social networks (family, friends, neighbours, colleagues etc.) or 'strangers' (other local citizens) (Observation). This minimum was required by 'Miljøpunkt Amager' but was only checked up on through the

evaluation lesson in the end of the course (Observation). 'Miljøpunkt Amager' suggest that their already planned environmental activities can be an arena for the participants to propagate environmental knowledge. 'Miljøpunkt Amager' then frames a possibility for propagating, but not many of the participants choose to utilise the suggested opportunity (Questionnaire). By continuously encouraging the participants to participate in these activities, an opportunity for being active during the course and afterwards has been framed by 'Miljøpunkt Amager' (Interview: Miljøpunkt Amager). Examples of such activities are; Environmental Events, presentations and other social activities (Observation; Agendacenter Sundbyøster, 2007).

The course 2019 ends with a diploma award celebration, where each participant receives a diploma. Only 14 out of 27 participants completed the course and received the diploma and the title as 'Environmental Ambassador' (Interview: Miljøpunkt Amager). Again, the challenge of maintaining the participants' engagement during the course is indicated. Each participant can invite whoever they want, such as; family, friends, neighbours, colleagues etc. The purpose of the diploma award celebration is to acknowledge the participants' effort and visualise their new position in the local community (Observation). After the course 2019, a total of 200 'Environmental Ambassadors' have been educated between 2005 to 2019. This has led to a lot of attention and publicity, resulting in Frank Jensen (Lord Mayor in Copenhagen Municipality) also participating in the celebration with a formal speech, see picture 5 and 6.

Picture 5 and 6 show the diploma award celebration and the formal speech by Frank Jensen (pictures taken by 'Miljøpunkt Amager').

The attendance of Frank Jensen was prioritised by 'Miljøpunkt Amager' and the date for the diploma award celebration were rescheduled so Frank Jensen could participate. By rescheduling the date, many of the 'Environmental Ambassadors' were unable to attend (Observation). The purpose of the diploma award is to celebrate the 'Environmental Ambassadors', but they are not prioritised in the facilitation of it. The publicity is a way for 'Miljøpunkt Amager' to create awareness of the course, but it can be questioned if the publicity should be prioritised over the acknowledgement of the 'Environmental Ambassadors' effort.

Expectations for Future Participation and Engagement

'Miljøpunkt Amager' states that there are certain expectations for the educated 'Environmental Ambassadors' in being active after the course ends, and thereby fulfil their new role and position as active citizens in the local community (Interview: Miljøpunkt Amager). However, there is not created an arena for following-up on the 'Environmental Ambassadors' after the course, and it is difficult for 'Miljøpunkt Amager' to estimate whether the ambassadors stay active or not. 'Miljøpunkt Amager' argues that they do not know in what extent the 'Environmental Ambassadors' propagate their environmental knowledge, and thereby enhancing the overall purpose of educating them (Agendacenter Sundbyøster, 2007). This challenge is furthermore reinforced by the lack of a clear definition of being an active 'Environmental Ambassador', and what is expected of them. According to 'Miljøpunkt Amager', between eight to ten educated 'Environmental Ambassadors' can be categorised as being active and often participates in different environmental activities, while twenty educated 'Environmental Ambassadors' participates in some extent (Interview: Miljøpunkt Amager). In this context, being active is framed as participating when 'Miljøpunkt Amager' approach the 'Environmental Ambassadors' and encourage them to participate.

The analysis of how the *empowerment process* is facilitated indicates that there is a challenge in regards of maintaining the participation and engagement. It challenges the *empowerment process*, as the participation and engagement can become fragile and dependent on 'Miljøpunkt Amagers' facilitation. A way to tackle this challenge can be through adjusting how to approach the 'Environmental Ambassadors'. Hence, 'Miljøpunkt Amager' argues that some 'Environmental Ambassadors' must be approached directly while others engage in activities on their own (Interview: Miljøpunkt Amager). Another way to tackle the challenge of engaging the 'Environmental Ambassadors' in a future perspective can be through follow-up courses (Interview: Miljøpunkt Amager; Agendacenter Sundbyøster, 2007). 'Miljøpunkt Amager' states that they previously had a positive experience with maintaining the engagement through such follow-up courses (Interview: Miljøpunkt Amager).

8.3 Summary

This chapter has analysed on how an arena for *objective external empowerment* is created and framed through facilitating the process (cf. section 7.3). Hence, the context of the project has first been outlined in regards of relevant actors, the *balance of power* and *what rules of the game are at stake* - establishing that the process consists of many different actors who influence each other, the process and the project. 'Miljøpunkt Amager' holds a crucial position as the *empowerment-planner*, who facilitates the process and frames the opportunity for participation. By examining and analysing on how the process is facilitated

through the creation of an *objective external* dimension of empowerment, a number of potentials and challenges have been identified. These are summarised in matrix 1.

POTENTIALS	CHALLENGES
➢ Support the voluntary aspect ➢ Easy to participate ➢ Acknowledge the participants ➢ The course frames a sense of community ➢ Create an arena for participation and frame the engagement ➢ Frame the process of propagation	➢ Depends on a complex network of actors ➢ Mixed group of participants ➢ Maintaining the participation and engagement ➢ The process is person-dependent ➢ Lack a clear definition for being an active 'Environmental Ambassador' ➢ Lack of knowledge in the course

Matrix 1 shows the identified potentials and challenges for facilitating the empowerment process (own figure).

There is a number of potentials for 'Miljøpunkt Amagers' facilitation of the *empowerment process*, and thereby a number of potentials for how the opportunity for influence is created and framed. The potentials are mainly concerned with creating an arena for participation and frame the engagement; by creating a dimension of *objective external empowerment*. This is framed by the course, the many different activities coordinated by 'Miljøpunkt Amager' and the distributed materials and remedies. The created arena for participation and framed engagement is furthermore supported by the potentials of making it easy to participate, to acknowledge the participants' effort and creating a sense of community among the participants and 'Miljøpunkt Amager'. Hence, the potentials can contribute in maintaining the participation and engagement, and to some extent create an arena for participation.

The identified challenges affect how 'Miljøpunkt Amager' facilitates the *empowerment process* and thereby affects how the opportunity for influence is created and framed. The challenges are mainly concerned with actually maintaining the participation and engagement during the course-period and afterwards. This challenge is reinforced by the other identified challenges in the creation of an *objective external empowerment* dimension, see matrix 1. Hence, the entire framing of the course complicates the *empowerment process* as the framing is unclear.

The potentials and challenges are identified in relation to facilitating the *empowerment process*. They will be combined and discussed in chapter 10, together with the identified potentials and challenges for participating (cf. chapter 9). The applied structure of the analysis thus emphasise the context of the project and the *empowerment process* through the creation of an *objective external empowerment dimension*.

9 Participating and Engaging in the Empowerment Process

The following chapter will answer the second sub-question; *What drives the participation and engagement of the 'Environmental Ambassadors', and what are the potentials and challenges for the process?* This chapter analyse the potentials and challenges for the 'Environmental Ambassadors' participation and engagement in the created and facilitated arena (cf. chapter 8) through the dimension of *subjective internal empowerment* (cf. section 7.4). First, the participants will be identified in terms of *who* the participants are, followed by an examination of *how* they participate (cf. chapter 7). The participation and engagement in the *empowerment process* will be analysed in regards of identifying potentials and challenges for the 'Environmental Ambassadors' ability to utilise the opportunity for influence. The analysis is based on empirical data conducted from; participatory observations (see appendix 3), interviews with 'Environmental Ambassadors' (see appendix 2) and replies from the questionnaires (see appendix 4). These empirical data all represent the involved 'Environmental Ambassadors' experienced world, as it is their ability to participate which are examined. The chapter concludes by listing the identified challenges and potentials.

9.1 Who Participates?

This section will examine who the participants are in terms of describing the participants, mapping their engagement and underlying conditions for participating (cf. chapter 7).

To understand the process of empowering the 'Environmental Ambassadors' it is essential to understand *who* the participants are. By using the defined dimension of *subjective internal empowerment* (cf. section 7.4), it is possible to establish *who* the participants are according to their motivation and engagement for participating (Andersen, 2007). Agger (2007) states that each citizen is part of many different social networks where structures and practices constantly change, affecting the citizens' experiences and actions (Agger, 2007). It is therefore essential to distinguish between different types of citizens, and not perceive them as one homogenous group (cf. section 7.4). A way to address this is by establishing *who* the participants are, *how* they participate and *who* do not participate. This section deals with examining *who* the participants are and *who* do not participate, while *how* they participate will be examined and elaborated in the following section (cf. section 9.2).

Characterising the 'Environmental Ambassadors'
As already elaborated, requirements have been set for who should be involved in the project (cf. section 8.2). As a result of having to counter these requirements, the group of participants are mixed in terms of gender, ethnicity, age, social status and place of residence (Observation). It can then be difficult to

characterise the 'Environmental Ambassadors' in terms of similarities, without characterising them too strictly. To counter this, the 'Environmental Ambassadors' is being characterised through the collected empirical data, representing both the similarities and differences for each participant (see appendix 2; Observation; Questionnaire).

However, an overall characterisation can be outlined. The participants are mainly women - only two men participated and completed the course. The age and occupation of the participants vary, including students, employed, unemployed and retirees (Observation). It was furthermore essential for 'Miljøpunkt Amager' to include both advantaged and disadvantaged local citizens in the project (Interview: Miljøpunkt Amager), as they can enhance each other internally. 'Miljøpunkt Amager' explains that it is the first course where the participants are mixed in relation to gender, social status and place of residence (Interview: Miljøpunkt Amager), which can lead to a challenge of approaching the various type of citizens with different experienced realities during the process. Hence, the conducted empirical data indicates that the fundamental experienced reality and understandings of the participants differentiated to a great extent. For example; one of the interviewed 'Environmental Ambassadors' already possessed an extensive environmental knowledge from previously relevant education and a strong personal interest (Interview: EA7). Another interviewed 'Environmental Ambassador' knows that environmental considerations are important but struggles with the overall understanding of why (Interview: EA8). The two examples indicate a great difference among the participants in relation to background knowledge and experienced reality. Nevertheless, all the consulted participants' points on possessing a general interest in environmental considerations and learning how to act upon this interest (Interview EA1; Interview EA7; Interview EA8; Questionnaire).

In the theoretical approach, it is argued that the citizens who often participate have the political know-how and the practical experience with actively participating in processes of involvement (Agger, 2012). However, none of the consulted 'Environmental Ambassadors' was active in their local community on beforehand, and this course is the first time they actively participate in any facilitated local activities (Interview: EA8). Chapter 8 furthermore states that by participating in the course, the participants can become an active local citizen. This is furthermore supported by a former educated 'Environmental Ambassador', who states that participating in the course have led to participating in other local activities, such as Neighbourhood Mothers (Interview: EA1).

The 'Environmental Ambassadors' is then characterised according to their similarities and differences, and it is indicated that the participants vary in characteristic due to the broad variety of participants. However, all the consulted 'Environmental Ambassadors' points at one similarity; their common interest for

environmental considerations (Interview EA1; Interview EA7; Interview EA8; Questionnaire; Observation). Agger (2012) states that motivation for participation is often related to enhancing personal capabilities and achievements (Agger, 2012). The following will therefore elaborate on the motivation for participating in the course, which provides a general understanding of *who* participates.

The 'Environmental Ambassadors' Motivation for Participating

It is important to understand why the 'Environmental Ambassadors' choose to participate for understanding their role and influence in the *empowerment process* (cf. section 7.4). It is thus their interest in a matter of common concern, which frames their motivation for participating (Bang et al, 2000). As mentioned above, the participants share a common interest in environmental considerations, which frames their motivation for participating in the course. When consulted about their motivation for participating in the course, the 'Environmental Ambassadors' replied; *to gain knowledge about the environment* and *learn how the individual can act on environmental considerations* (Questionnaire). The importance of gaining knowledge for propagating environmental awareness and initiate a change in daily practices was then emphasised as a central element (Interview: EA7). The theory of *subjective internal empowerment* argues that motivation is often related to enhancing personal abilities and results (cf. section 7.4). This is also the case for the 'Environmental Ambassadors', where motivation is closely linked to act upon gained knowledge. As an example, one of the interviewed 'Environmental Ambassadors' states that a reason for participating is to make people change practice in regard to environmental considerations (Interview: EA7). This reasoning for participating is also supported by the replies in the questionnaire. Here the following is pointed out as reasons for participation; *to pass environmental knowledge on to her children, make other people interested and engaged in environmental issues* and *make them understand the importance* (Questionnaire). The motivation for participating is not only about gaining environmental knowledge, but also learning how to act upon the acquired knowledge and initiate a change in practices. Many of the consulted 'Environmental Ambassadors' is motivated for acting upon their new knowledge and have an interest in changing their own daily practices (Questionnaire).

Another motivation is the sense of community which is created by participating in the course. Here, one of the interviewed 'Environmental Ambassadors' states that the sense of community is crucial for her participation, and it is important to feel like a part of a community (Interview: EA8). The communicative planning approach (cf. section 7.1) argues that the interest of citizens is created through diverse societal and personal experiences (Healey, 2002). By creating a sense of community centred around the course, the interest of the 'Environmental Ambassadors' can be enhanced. By elaborating on why the 'Environmental Ambassadors' participates in the course, it is possible to indicate what they portray as central elements and

thereby establish the perspective and dimension of the *empowerment process*, as well as understanding the underlying conditions for participating (cf. section 7.2).

Who is Included and Excluded in the Empowerment Process?

All 'Environmental Ambassadors' have actively chosen to participate and take part in the *empowerment process*. However, the choice of not participating is also an empowered choice (Bang et al, 2000). It is therefore essential to consider *who* is included and *who* is excluded in the process. As elaborated above, the 'Environmental Ambassadors' all share an important similarity; their common interest for environmental considerations. It can be questioned if the project excludes citizens who are not interested in environmental considerations, as they are not represented in the course. On the other hand, it can be argued that citizens without environmental interest, do not apply for participating in such activities. One of the interviewed 'Environmental Ambassadors' argues that citizens not participating, is simply not aware of the importance of environmental considerations (Interview: EA7).

Because the project mainly attracts citizens with a common interest, the issue of representation can be questioned. Do the participants represent the broader public? And is there a risk to disempower a group of citizens in the process (Andersen, 2007)? This report argues that there is no need for the process to include everyone. The purpose of the project is not to engage all citizens on Amager, but to involve a few citizens who can propagate the environmental knowledge to others.

9.2 Participating in the Empowerment Process?

This section will examine how the 'Environmental Ambassadors' participates in the created arena and provided frame for participation and thereby the empowerment process.

The 'Environmental Ambassadors' play a crucial role in the project, as they are the ones who are being involved and can choose whether they want to participate or not (cf. section 7.4). In that sense, the participants possess the decision-making power in regards of the project's future. It is therefore essential for 'Miljøpunkt Amager' to actively involve the participants in the *empowerment process* and create a frame for the participants to act within (cf. chapter 7 and 8). However, the participants must also be able to use the provided frame for participation and influence in the *empowerment process* (cf. chapter 7). Participating in the project's *empowerment process* is protracted and consist of many different steps - from signing up to the course to becoming an educated ambassador. At each step, the participants can actively decide whether or not to continue their participation and must constantly consider their participation. To clarify the analysis of the *empowerment process*, the following is divided into steps, elaborating the process and identifying potentials and challenges within the process.

Signing Up for the Course 2019

When signing up for the course the participants takes an empowered decision in choosing to participate and become a part of a new social network (Bang et al, 2000). By choosing to participate in the course, the citizens become an active citizen who participates in their local community and can be considered as a *democratic member* of the community (Agger, 2007).

As already elaborated, it is very different how the participants have been involved in the course for 2019 (cf. chapter 8). Hence, some saw a note in the local newspaper or in their stairway, while others were recruited through outreach work (Questionnaire). Nevertheless, all participants have become aware of the course through their local community one way or another. In the replies from the questionnaire, the following is argued: *the awareness of the course needs to be extended, and thereby create a potential for involving more citizens in the process* (Questionnaire). When signing up for the course, some of the participants received an email stating that they were on a waiting-list (Interview: EA7). This was to ensure that some of the seats were reserved for residents from Urbanplanen (Interview: Miljøpunkt Amager). The participants on the waiting-list never received any confirmation of whether they were admitted or not, and the first time they received any information is a few days before start (Interview: EA7; Observation). This is a challenge, as the participants are confused about whether or not they are admitted on the course.

Participating in the Course

As already established, 27 local citizens assigned for participating in the course, but only 14 citizens completed and received the title of being an 'Environmental Ambassador' (cf. section 3.2). During the course-period, the attendance varied to a great extent, and the attendance was low for many of the lessons (Observation). Hence, a challenge for maintaining the participants' participation and engagement is indicated.

The preconditions for participating in the course varied according to the participants' background knowledge, interest and experienced reality. As an example, one of the interviewed 'Environmental Ambassadors' states that it was mainly the communicative aspect of the course which were essential for participating since the ambassador already possessed the environmental knowledge (Interview: EA7). However, many of the consulted 'Environmental Ambassadors' express that they participated for both aspects, including gaining environmental knowledge and acquire skills in regards of propagating the environmental knowledge (Interview: EA8; Observation).

Even though the preconditions for participating varied, the outcome of participating is of very similar character. The consulted 'Environmental Ambassadors' agreed that the course was well-qualified, had many relevant inputs, that the excursions provided a practical insight and there was a clear link between the practical knowledge and subsequent propagation (Interview: EA8; Observation; Questionnaire). The

clear link between the practical knowledge and the subsequent propagation is a potential for the process (cf. chapter 7). Picture 7 shows a practical exercise during a lesson. The exercise focus on learning relevant knowledge and propagate it to others. At the evaluation lesson, it was stated that the length of the course was too short and did not provide the participants with enough environmental knowledge and skills for propagating to other local citizens. Hence, more concrete and practical knowledge was often requested, such as; *What is cardboard made of* or *what*

Picture 7 shows a practical exercise in relation to sorting waste (Miljøpunkt Amager, 2019 [a]).

is the different prices on water? (Observation). Furthermore, many of the consulted 'Environmental Ambassadors' expressed a concern in regard to propagating their acquired knowledge. The lack of knowledge can cause a challenge and influence the process of propagation - making it difficult for the 'Environmental Ambassadors' to propagate. This challenge is also supported by a formerly educated 'Environmental Ambassador', who states that the course provides many inputs and environmental knowledge but lack some central elements and aspects (Interview: EA1). Two of the interviewed 'Environmental Ambassadors' further express that knowing where to find more relevant knowledge is just as important for the process of propagating, and that the ambassadors do not need to know everything (Interview: EA7; Interview: EA8).

Picture 8 shows two 'Environmental Ambassadors' propagating their environmental knowledge to local citizens (Miljøpunkt Amager, 2012).

By participating in the course and propagating their environmental knowledge, the participants are educated into *democratic members* of the local community by actively participating in matters of common concern (Healey, 2002; Agger, 2007). Picture 8 shows two 'Environmental Ambassadors' propagating their environmental knowledge to other local citizens. One of the interviewed 'Environmental Ambassadors' stress that the course contributes in creating awareness of the importance of propagating environmental

considerations, and that the propagation-break frames and push the participants to propagate to others (Interview: EA7). However, many of the consulted 'Environmental Ambassadors' have mainly propagated

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their environmental knowledge to their social networks, including family, friends, neighbours, workplace and housing associations (Questionnaire). This indicates that the 'Environmental Ambassadors' struggles with propagating beyond their social networks which can result in being a challenge for the overall purpose of the project. One of the interviewed 'Environmental Ambassadors' express that it is the lecturing role for others beyond their social network which is difficult to approach (Interview: EA7). However, it must be mentioned that 'Miljøpunkt Amager' has not articulated to the ambassadors, that they must propagate beyond their social networks and thereby not clarified what they expect from the process of propagation (Observation). One of the interviewed 'Environmental Ambassadors' express that it is not about who you propagate to, but the fact that you propagate to someone after all (Interview: EA7).

The purpose of the project is to promote and enhance environmental considerations (cf. section 3.2), and it can be questioned if the 'Environmental Ambassadors' have required the ability to perform their new position. The consulted 'Environmental Ambassadors' argues that their social network is an easy place to start and that change must happen within the social network before propagating to others (Interview: EA7; Observation). This is also reflected in whom they primarily have propagated their knowledge to. The ambassadors experience that their social networks are willing to listen and act on the propagated knowledge, which creates a positive experience for the propagation (Observation). Only one of the consulted 'Environmental Ambassadors' has propagated their environmental knowledge at a public activity organised by 'Miljøpunkt Amager' and has used the distributed material (cf. section 8.2) as a way to guide the propagation (Observation; Interview: EA8).

The 'Environmental Ambassadors' express that they feel acknowledged by participating in the course (Observation). Hence, one of the interviewed 'Environmental Ambassadors' explains as follows; the many different resources made available during the course creates a feeling of being prioritised and taken seriously by other actors (Interview: EA8). The acknowledgement contributes with a sense of commitment for the participants, and the experience of other actors believing that the ambassadors can fulfil the task creates engagement among the participants.

Becoming an Educated 'Environmental Ambassador'

The course ends with a diploma award celebration, where the 'Environmental Ambassadors' are acknowledged and their new role as 'Environmental Ambassadors' is visualised. The participants receive a diploma, indicating that they have participated in the course and is awarded with the title; 'Environmental Ambassador'. Picture 9 shows the diploma, while picture 10 shows the group of newly educated 'Environmental Ambassadors' at the diploma award celebration 2019.

Picture 9 shows the 'Environmental Ambassador' diploma. This is the diploma I received, indicating that I only participated in the water-lesson, and have then become a 'Water Ambassador' (see appendix 5). Picture 10 shows a group-photo of the newly educated 'Environmental Ambassadors (picture taken by 'Miljøpunkt Amager').

The title itself provides a potential in regards of maintaining the active participation and future engagement, as the title creates a sense of commitment (Interview: EA7; Interview: EA8). The title can also be a way to approach other citizens when propagating as it contains a mediating position. One 'Environmental Ambassador' express that the title provides an authoritative role, which can be perceived as being both a positive and negative thing. Again the lecturing role is emphasised as a negative experience (Interview: EA7). Hence, the title and the accompanying position, visualise their environmental interest and knowledge for other citizens and makes it easier for the ambassador to approach other citizens (Interview: EA7; Interview: EA8). The title can then frame the opportunity to participate and engage the 'Environmental Ambassadors' to propagate their environmental knowledge (cf. chapter 7). The title also indicates that each participant has become part of something greater and creates a sense of community. By enhancing a sense of community, a foundation for collaboration among 'Environmental Ambassadors' is created (Interview: EA7; Interview: EA8). One of the interviewed 'Environmental Ambassadors' states that the sense of community is important for supporting each other and can ensure that the ambassadors are not alone with the task (Interview: EA8). Hence, the 'Environmental Ambassadors' becomes a part of a new social network where common concerns are addressed and acted upon together (cf. section 7.1).

It is thus not only by actively participating in the course that the participants are educated into *democratic* local citizens. This also happens in virtue of becoming an educated 'Environmental Ambassador', where they must convert their acquired environmental knowledge into a practice which they can propagate, and thereby contribute to a local sustainable development (cf. chapter 7). Hence, their role is to create awareness of environmental considerations among non-participating local citizens who lack this knowledge

for acting more environmentally (Interview: EA7). In the replies from the questionnaire, the consulted 'Environmental Ambassadors' points on the following aspects, in relation to how they can use the course to fulfil their new role; *propagate to social networks, save on own consumption, implement waste-sorting in housing association, become better at informing, help others, gained a better understanding* and *improve their environmental knowledge* (Questionnaire). Hence, it is indicated that the 'Environmental Ambassadors' have improved their environmental knowledge in regards of daily practices, which provides them with the skills of propagating and guiding other local citizens for changing practices. The 'Environmental Ambassadors' must convert their gained environmental knowledge into daily practices. An example is the statement of a formerly educated 'Environmental Ambassador', who states that by learning the more practical aspects of how to act, it is easier to propagate the acquired knowledge and help other citizens in changing their practice (Interview: EA1). It is thus through propagation that the 'Environmental Ambassadors' can create action.

However, many of the 'Environmental Ambassadors' finds it difficult to propagate their knowledge to citizens who lack the interest, especially if the overall reasoning is unclear for them (Observation). In the replies from the questionnaire, the 'Environmental Ambassadors' points on the following as being the main challenge for propagating environmental knowledge to others; *language, lack of knowledge, propagating to strangers, approach other citizens* and *get other citizens to listen and act* (Questionnaire).
Even though the 'Environmental Ambassadors' have some concerns in whether they are well enough prepared for propagating their environmental knowledge, they still had a positive experience with propagating during the propagation-break. In the replies from the questionnaire, the following were exemplified; *experienced immediate action, other citizens were willing to change their practice, the ambassadors knew where to find additional knowledge, they were able to explain and elaborate their knowledge* and *guide other citizens* (Questionnaire).

Expectations for Future Participation and Engagement
In the replies from the questionnaire, it is expressed that the 'Environmental Ambassadors' expectations for their own future role are very differentiated; some are concrete and practical while others are more diffuse (Questionnaire). They expressed expectations are as follows; *to implement waste sorting in own housing association, to learn everything about the environment, to expand knowledge and propagate, make it easier for others, contribute in Denmark becoming a nation for recycling and environment, hold a speech for an international women club (in which the participant is a member)* and *propagating to a housing association* (Questionnaire). However, the consulted 'Environmental Ambassadors' all acknowledge that not all citizens are interested in environmental consideration and do not want to act more environmentally

(Interview: EA7). When considering the 'Environmental Ambassadors' own expectations and this acknowledgement, the role of the 'Environmental Ambassadors' can be a bit blurred. This is furthermore enhanced by the fact, that 'Miljøpunkt Amager' has not made a clear definition of being an 'Environmental Ambassador' and what the role entails (cf. chapter 8).

When the participants are educated into 'Environmental Ambassadors' they are expected to fulfil their role as ambassadors who propagate their environmental knowledge and contribute to a local sustainable development. Many of the consulted 'Environmental Ambassadors' have an intention of being active in a future perspective in relation to participate and engage in different activities (Interview: EA1; Interview: EA7; Interview: EA8; Questionnaire). However, some of the consulted participants point at balancing their everyday life with the role of being an 'Environmental Ambassador' to be difficult (Interview: EA7; Interview: EA8). This is supported by a formerly educated 'Environmental Ambassador', who experience that many of the ambassadors want to stay active as 'Environmental Ambassadors' but struggles with finding time in their daily life (Interview: EA1). This is furthermore supported by the theoretical aspect, where it is stated that citizens do not always have the time for actively participating, even though the participation can have a positive influence on their every day (cf. chapter 7). One of the interviewed 'Environmental Ambassadors' argues that it is important to prioritise the role but articulates that it is difficult when the expectations for the role is not clearly defined (Interview: EA7).

A formerly educated 'Environmental Ambassador' states that another way to maintain the participation is to arrange follow-up courses. Hence, the follow-up courses can contribute in creating a sense of community among 'Environmental Ambassadors' across classes and enhance a collaboration among them (Interview: EA1). At the evaluation lesson, the participants also requested a follow-up course (Observation). Examples of follow-up courses can be; courses focusing on private consumption or arranging visits to the other ambassadors housing associations (Interview: EA1).

9.3 Summary

This chapter has analysed on how the 'Environmental Ambassadors' participates in the created and framed arena for participation. It is thus the *subjective internal* dimension of empowerment which has been examined (cf. section 7.4). Hence, the participation and engagement have been analysed in terms of *who* the participants are and *how* they participate in the *empowerment process*, together with identifying potentials and challenges for the 'Environmental Ambassadors' ability to utilise the provided frame for influence. Here it was stated that the participants share one similarity; their common interest for environmental considerations and motivation to act upon this interest. By examining and analysing on how

the 'Environmental Ambassadors' participates in the process and utilise the opportunity for participation through a dimension of *subjective internal empowerment*, a number of potentials and challenges have been identified. These are summarised in matrix 2.

POTENTIALS	CHALLENGES
- Strong interest for environmental considerations - The course and title creates a sense of community - Creating a sense of commitment - Easy to participate in a facilitated arena - Being acknowledged frames the participation and engagement	- Missing information creates confusion - Difficult to maintain the participation and engagement - The course lacks knowledge and skills - Struggles to propagate beyond social networks - Lack a clear definition for the role of 'Environmental Ambassadors' and the expectations for it - Difficult to balance between their everyday-life and the new role

Matrix 2 shows the identified potentials and challenges for the 'Environmental Ambassadors' participation and engagement in the empowerment process (own figure).

There is a number of potentials for the 'Environmental Ambassadors' participation and engagement in the *empowerment process*, and thereby a number of potentials for how they utilise the created arena and provided frame for participation. The potentials are mainly concerned with how the participation and engagement are supported and enhanced, by creating a dimension of *subjective internal empowerment*. This is framed by the participants' strong interest and motivation for environmental considerations, which contributes in creating a sense of community and enhance a sense of commitment. Also, the facilitated arena creates a potential for participation as it makes it easy to participate and create a willingness to engage in the process.

The identified challenges affect how the 'Environmental Ambassadors' participates and engage in the *empowerment process*, and thereby affects how the opportunity for participation is utilised. The challenges are mainly concerned with how the created arena and provided frame for participation affect the participation, making it difficult to maintain the engagement. Challenges in the created arena and provided frame influence on the 'Environmental Ambassadors' role and expectations. This is furthermore reinforced by the challenge of balancing the role as 'Environmental Ambassadors' with an everyday-life.

The potentials and challenges are identified in relation to participating in the *empowerment process*. They will be combined and discussed in chapter 10, together with the identified potentials and challenges for facilitating the process (cf. chapter 8).

10 Discussion

The following chapter will discuss the findings of the analyses based on the third sub-question; *How can the participation and engagement be furtherly maintained through the facilitated process of empowerment?* In order to discuss the findings, the identified potentials and challenges which are faced in the *empowerment process* will be combined and categorised into tendencies. The tendencies are then based on the findings in the two previous analyses (cf. chapter 8 and 9) and will frame the discussion of how 'Miljøpunkt Amager' creates an arena for participation and frames the opportunity to participate for the 'Environmental Ambassadors'. It is thus a discussion of facilitating the *empowerment process*, and how the process can contribute in maintaining the participation and engagement in a future perspective. Hence, a central question has been raised through the analyses; what will happen when the course ends and the participation and engagement are no longer framed and facilitated by 'Miljøpunkt Amager'? The discussion is based on the findings (cf. chapter 8 and 9) and empirical data conducted from; participatory observations (see appendix 3), replies from questionnaire (see appendix 4), interviews with 'Environmental Ambassadors' (see appendix 2) and interview with 'Miljøpunkt Amager' (see appendix 1). The findings will be compared with the theoretical approach of *communicative planning* and *empowerment* (cf. chapter 7).

10.1 Potentials and Challenges Within the Empowerment Process

In this section, the potentials and challenges identified in the analysis of facilitating and participating in the empowerment process (cf. section 8.3 and 9.3) are used to clarify and categorise tendencies within the process.

The process of empowering the 'Environmental Ambassadors' must happen through creating an arena and provide a frame for the ambassadors to actively participate within (cf. chapter 7). Chapter 8 established how 'Miljøpunkt Amager' creates the arena and provides a frame, by facilitating the course and activities and thereby creates an opportunity for local citizens to actively participate and engage within this settled frame. Chapter 9 established *who* the participant is and *how* they participate within the created arena and provided frame. It is thus the 'Environmental Ambassadors' ability to utilise the opportunity for participation which have been established. To summarise, the two analyses have provided an insight into an *empowerment process*, which to some extent support and enhance the participation and engagement. However, the process entails several potentials and challenges for maintaining the participation and engagement (cf. chapter 8 and 9). For enhancing the *empowerment process* and support the participation and engagement, these challenges must be coped with and the potentials must be utilised. Matrix 3 summarise the previously identified potentials and challenges for facilitating and participating (see matrix 1

and matrix 2) and compares them in a cross-cutting manner for clarifying tendencies within the *empowerment process*, see the white boxes in matrix 3. For example can the potential of making it easy to participate be used to counteract the challenge of maintaining the participation and engagement, see matrix 3.

FACILITATING / PARTICIPATING	POTENTIALS	CHALLENGES
	- Support the voluntary aspect - Easy to participate - Acknowledge the participants - The course frames a sense of community - Create an arena for participation and frame the engagement - Frame the process of propagation	- Depends on a complex network of actors - Mixed group of participants - Maintaining the participation and engagement - The process is person-dependent - Lack a clear definition for being an active 'Environmental Ambassador' - Lack of knowledge in the course
POTENTIALS - Strong interest for environmental considerations - The course and title creates a sense of community - Creating a sense of commitment - Easy to participate in a facilitated arena - Being acknowledged frames the participation and engagement	- Frame the participation and make it easy to participate - Enhance a sense of community within the created arena and provided frame - Support the interest for environmental considerations and enhance the engagement - Acknowledge the participants and create a sense of commitment	- Create a sense of community around an environmental interest among participants - Make a clear definition of being an active ambassador for enhancing a sense of commitment and frame the participation and engagement - Make it easy to participate for maintaining the participation and engagement
CHALLENGES - Missing information creates confusion - Difficult to maintain the participation and engagement - The course lacks knowledge and skills - Struggles to propagate beyond social networks - Lack a clear definition for the role of 'Environmental Ambassadors' and the expectations for it - Difficult to balance between their everyday-life and the new role	- The facilitation of the process must enhance the participation and support the engagement - Create a sense of community which support the process of propagation - Define the overall frame for being an 'Environmental Ambassador' and acknowledge their engagement	- The facilitation of the process does not support participation and makes it difficult for the participants to propagate - The lack of clearly defining the 'Environmental Ambassadors' creates uncertainties for participating - The participants struggle to balance their everyday-life and their new 'position', which makes it difficult to maintain the participation and engagement

Matrix 3 illustrates how the identified potentials and challenges (coloured boxes) are combined for defining the concrete tendencies within the empowerment process (white boxes). The grey boxes indicate the theoretical framing of the empowerment process from a facilitation and participation perspective (own figure).

Many of the identified potentials and challenges in matrix 3 focus on the same tendencies. The tendencies will provide a basis for discussing the findings of the analyses and illustrate how the *empowerment process* can be enhanced and contribute in maintaining the participation and engagement in a long-term perspective. The defined tendencies within the *empowerment process* focus on; *how the created arena and provided frame can support the participation and engagement*, *how the opportunity to participate is utilised* and *balancing the top-down facilitation and the bottom-up mobilisation for enhancing the process* (see matrix 3). These tendencies also align with the theoretical frame of empowerment, where the *empowerment process* is regarded from a facilitation and participation perspective (cf. section 7.2). In the following section, the potentials and challenges will be discussed according to the categorised tendencies and provided theoretical frame.

10.2 Using Potentials and Solving Challenges

This section examines how each potential and challenge have been defined based on the analyses (see matrix 3) and address how the potentials and challenges affect the empowerment process. The section will discuss the tendencies within the overall research question and the theoretical frame.

The Created Arena and Frame for Participation

As elaborated in chapter 8 the created arena and frame for participation is facilitated by the *empowerment-planner*; 'Miljøpunkt Amager'. The facilitation is crucial for the *empowerment process*, as it creates an arena and provides a frame for local citizens to participate within. However, as elaborated in the analyses (cf. chapter 8 and 9) and indicated in matrix 3 the facilitation entails a number of challenges affecting the created opportunity for local citizens to participate and thereby the process of *empowerment* (cf. section 7.2). These challenges must be encountered for enhancing the facilitation of participation and maintain the engagement. Hence, an arena for participation must be created and framed.

A central challenge for the facilitation is the course of educating 'Environmental Ambassadors'. The process of facilitating the course is very dependent on the employees from 'Miljøpunkt Amager' and on a complex network of actors, who must acknowledge the value of contributing to the project (cf. section 8.1). This creates a vague foundation for facilitating the course.

According to Agger (2012), knowledge and skills can be provided and enhanced through different courses, excursions, lessons etc. (Agger, 2012). It can be argued that facilitating the course is a central element for empowering the 'Environmental Ambassadors' and creates a foundation for maintaining the participation and engagement in a future perspective. According to 'Miljøpunkt Amager' the content of the course contributes with providing environmental knowledge and practical skills for propagating and changing daily

practices (Interview: Miljøpunkt Amager). However, the 'Environmental Ambassadors' express that the content of the course is very superficial, and only provide the participants with basic knowledge (Interview: EA7; Interview: EA8). Hence, a lack of practical knowledge and skills is articulated (Observation), and it can be questioned if the course is able to facilitate the participation and to what extent? The context of the course must then be relatable and easy to approach, see matrix 3. However, it is not enough to just involve and educate local citizens into 'Environmental Ambassadors', if 'Miljøpunkt Amager' are interested in supporting a continued participation and engagement after the course ends. The involvement and facilitation must be continual, for enhancing the overall purpose of the project and maintain the participation and engagement (cf. chapter 7). A way to approach this can be through the many environmental activities coordinated by 'Miljøpunkt Amager' and the suggested follow-up courses which can create an opportunity for further engagement. Hence an arena for propagating environmental knowledge beyond social networks is created.

For ensuring a future engagement, the facilitation must focus on making it easy for the 'Environmental Ambassadors' to participate. It is then not only about coordinating and involving local citizens in the course, but about providing the participants with relevant knowledge, skills and competences for being *democratic members* of their local community (Agger, 2007; Healey, 2002). The analysis of the *empowerment process* indicates that 'Miljøpunkt Amager' must clarify what the new role and position as 'Environmental Ambassadors' actually entails, see matrix 3. An aspect which seems to be forgotten in the facilitation, as 200 local citizens have been educated but only 10 is still active (Interview: Miljøpunkt Amager). The unclear definition and expectations lead to 'Miljøpunkt Amager' not knowing if the overall purpose of the project is reached or not, and results in making it difficult to adjust and improve the *empowerment process*. A way to counter this can be through defining visions and goals for the project - making the overall objective visible for the participants. However, it is essential to consider if 'Miljøpunkt Amager' or the 'Environmental Ambassadors' should define the role, or if the role should be defined jointly. It then becomes a matter of balancing a top-down with a bottom-up approach (Andersen, 2007).

It is then discussed if the facilitation actually provides a foundation for empowering the 'Environmental Ambassadors' and how it affects the possibility of maintaining their participation and engagement in a future perspective. It is then not only a question of improving a few elements in the process but to address central challenges for enhancing the *empowerment process*. To some extent, the facilitation creates an arena for participating and engaging in the process and shapes the form of participation. However, it has been argued that the facilitation entails a number of challenges, which affect the role and position of the 'Environmental Ambassadors' (cf. section 7.3). This will be elaborated in the following.

Utilising the Opportunity to Participate

It is through the created arena and provided frame that the 'Environmental Ambassadors' are able to participate within. However, it is not enough to create an opportunity for participation, the 'Environmental Ambassadors' must also be able to utilise the framed opportunity. Chapter 9 established that the 'Environmental Ambassadors' struggles with utilising the full potential of the created opportunity. It can then be argued that the participation and engagement are affected by the defined challenges in the facilitated frame which influence on the *empowerment process* (see matrix 3). Hence, the many different potentials and challenges in framing the participation have already been outlined and discussed. However, it has also been stated that it is not enough to facilitate the participation, the participants must also take an empowered decision whether they want to participate or not (Bang et al, 2000).

Many of the 'Environmental Ambassadors' express that it is difficult for them to balance their daily-life with their new role as ambassadors (Interview EA7; Interview EA8), see matrix 3. They have a clear idea of what they want to achieve and accomplish through their new role, but when asked about their expectations for the future prospect they replied; that they wish to prioritise being an 'Environmental Ambassador' but are not sure if they have the time for it (Interview: EA8). 'Miljøpunkt Amager' argues that the ambassadors are committed to the role, simply by participating in the course - to the extent they can participate and when needed (Interview: Miljøpunkt Amager). It can thus be discussed if the arena for participation can contribute in framing the new role and make it easier for the 'Environmental Ambassadors' to actively take part in their newly acquired position. Or if the ambassadors must find their position and role on their own by participating. Hence, the theory of empowerment (cf. section 7.2) states that active participation and engagement can develop an understanding of citizens own position in the local community (Andersen, 2007). There is then argued for creating a balance between facilitating the participation and providing the ambassadors with an opportunity to find their own position as 'Environmental Ambassadors'. A way to support this, can be through creating a sense of community centred around their mutual interest for environmental considerations, see matrix 3. Here, a common position is created in which the ambassadors can identify themselves, and through the community acquire and develop their new role. By creating a sense of community among the ambassadors, a basis is created for the ambassadors to commit to their new position in the local community - which can contribute in maintaining the participation and engagement in a future perspective (Agger, 2007; Freire, 2006). 'Miljøpunkt Amager' furthermore underlines the importance of visualising the sense of community centred around being an 'Environmental Ambassador' and enhance the sense of commitment (Interview: Miljøpunkt Amager). An example can be a badge or a t-shirt, indicating who are 'Environmental Ambassadors'.

As already elaborated, the lack of clearly defining the role and position of the 'Environmental Ambassadors' becomes a central challenge for maintaining the participation and engagement, see matrix 3. This challenge results in creating unclear expectations of being an 'Environmental Ambassador', both in terms of the role but also in terms of what 'Miljøpunkt Amager' expects from the ambassadors. An example is 'Miljøpunkt Amagers' expectation for the educated 'Environmental Ambassadors' to commit to the role as *democratic citizens* in their local community (Interview: Miljøpunkt Amager), while the ambassadors questions the role and what the role entails (Observation). It can then be questioned if the expectations can be fulfilled. This is exemplified by one of the interviewed ambassadors, who questions the following for the role; Does the title and role as 'Environmental Ambassadors' provide more responsibility for changing other citizens practices? (Interview: EA7). The same ambassador furtherly states that the role can contribute in creating awareness, as well as providing the structure for others to change practices - but it is difficult to individually accomplish an actual change (Interview: EA7). 'Miljøpunkt Amager' needs to support the participation and engagement when it appears and acknowledge that the participants are different with different aims for participating and different goals for what they want and have time to achieve as ambassadors.

Balancing Top-Down Facilitation and Bottom-Up Mobilisation

By discussing the findings for facilitating and participating in the process, it has been established that the process of empowering the 'Environmental Ambassadors' struggles in maintaining the participation and engagement. This challenge was identified in both dimensions of empowerment (see matrix 3) and indicates that the process has difficulties in providing citizens with the necessary knowledge and skills for them to be able to participate to the extent the project proposes. Hence, it is indicated that the 'Environmental Ambassadors' wants to be empowered but constantly needs to be guided and supported in the process (Observation; Interview: EA7). It has been indicated that the process is not reinforced over time, and do not counteract the central challenges appointed by the participants (Andersen, 2007). It can then be questioned if the conditions for a successful *empowerment process* is accomplished and to what extent?

According to the theory of empowerment, the *empowerment-planner* acts as a mediator between the different actors and steps in the process (Andersen, 2007; Healey, 2002). Hence, the *empowerment-planner* needs to constantly balance between facilitating and managing the process, and simultaneously mobilising local citizens and enhance their competences towards participating in the process and become *democratic members* of the local community (cf. chapter 7). In the analyses of the two dimensions of empowerment, it was established that 'Miljøpunkt Amager' struggles with the act of balance, which makes it difficult to maintain the participation and engagement (cf. chapter 8 and 9). Hence, the objective and purpose must be

concrete and achieve a visible result for creating the opportunity for a long-term engagement (Agger, 2012).

'Miljøpunkt Amagers' facilitation of the *empowerment process* emphasises involving citizens and focus on creating *consensus* among the involved citizens through the course. Hence, the focus is on creating *consensus* on how the local environmental project and the propagation must unfold after the course. The purpose of the course is thus on creating a *consensus* of how to act upon environmental considerations together (Healey, 2002; Agger, 2007). However, it seems as 'Miljøpunkt Amager' has forgotten a central element in the process; namely that the involved citizens have different perceptions and different basis and competencies for participating, making it difficult to reach the ideal of a *consensus-oriented* approach (Elling, 2016). This contributes in many of the newly educated 'Environmental Ambassadors' not feeling 'ready' to propagate to other citizens and do not feel ownership towards achieving the purpose of the project, see matrix 3. It can be assumed that this is not just the case for the course 2019, because of the low number of 'active' ambassadors. 'Miljøpunkt Amager' also articulates the lack of local ownership, though without mentioning how the lack of facilitation affects it. In the interview with 'Miljøpunkt Amager', it is appointed that they constantly have to follow-up on the 'Environmental Ambassadors' and mobilise them in order for them to participate (Interview: Miljøpunkt Amager). This is a fragile method of ensuring continued engagement and presupposes that 'Miljøpunkt Amager' allocates many resources for maintaining the participation and engagement of the ambassadors.

It can then be discussed if the facilitation supports the participation and how the process can enhance the participation in the best possible way. However, it must be argued that if the facilitation and aim of the process are unclear, it is difficult for citizens to participate and display engagement (cf. chapter 7). As mentioned, 'Miljøpunkt Amager' must make it easy for citizens to participate in the course and in the following new position as 'Environmental Ambassadors', see matrix 3. By making it easy for the citizens to step into the new role as an environmental propagator, a local ownership and sense of community can be created based on their mutual strong interest for environmental considerations (Agger, 2007). It is thus an act of balancing between supporting the participation and engagement through a clear and defined facilitation.

10.3 Discussing the Theoretical Frame

The discussed findings are all based on the approach of actively involving citizens and educate them into 'Environmental Ambassadors. Hence, the project focuses on building action competences towards creating a local environmental change, and the objective of the course then complies with the frame of a

communicative planning approach (Agger, 2007). Healey (2002) and Agger (2007) states that knowledge is not predefined in the process, but is re-created through exchanges of perceptions, understandings and communication, where it shapes our perceptions and influence on our actions (Healey, 2002; Agger, 2007). The project propounds at creating *consensus* among the involved actors and create a collective perception of local environmental challenges and how to jointly solve them. The *consensus-oriented* approach for the project has already been discussed in section 10.2, where it was deduced that the overall objective of creating *consensus* among the participants is not put into practice in the process. Elling (2016) criticise the communicative approach for only focusing on *consensus* and does not relate to either the impact of reality or how power is constituted in the process (Elling, 2016). Elling (2016) further elaborates that the process must relate to power relations and redistribution of power. Here, the power of citizens is constituted in the process it-self (Elling, 2016). The participants all have different experienced realities according to their different backgrounds, which is not approached by 'Miljøpunkt Amager'. This creates a fundamental challenge for the process of empowering the 'Environmental Ambassadors' and indicates that the *consensus-oriented* approach is difficult to put into practice.

The process of the project is thus examined and analysed through a communicative pre-understanding of citizens role in the process and the conceptualisation within the empowerment theory of creating an arena for influence and power (cf. chapter 7). Hence, the applied theoretical frame is difficult to put into practice (Elling, 2016), which is reflected in the main findings of the project. The main findings point towards insufficient facilitation for supporting and enhancing the participation, which affects the further engagement of the participants. It is essentially the unclear and undefined top-down facilitation which affects the bottom-up mobilisation in relation to finding its own position in the process without a clear framing. An example is the lack of clarity in what the project wants to achieve by educating 'Environmental Ambassadors', see matrix 3. This indicates that the theory of empowerment can be applied to understand and enhance the process, but only to a certain extent. Again Elling (2016) appoints a lack of relation to realities and a lack of orientation in the process (Elling, 2016). As a theoretical concept, empowerment explores how the opportunity for participation is created through a premise of strengthening the power of citizens for achieving a sustainable result (Andersen, 2007). However, the theoretical concept does not consider the social conditions affecting the facilitation and makes it difficult for citizens to participate.

It can therefore be discussed if the process needs another foundation, with a basic understanding of the participants' differences and that the process must adapt accordingly. However, one thing is certain; the purpose and facilitation of the course must be improved if 'Miljøpunkt Amager' are interested in maintaining the 'Environmental Ambassadors' participation and engagement in the future.

11 Conclusion

The following chapter will present the conclusion of this master thesis, where the research question will be concluded upon;

What are the potentials and challenges in the process of empowering the 'Environmental Ambassadors', and how does this contribute to maintain the participation and engagement after the course ends?

This project has analysed and examined the *empowerment process* for the local environmental initiative; involving and educating local citizens into 'Environmental Ambassadors'. The *empowerment process* has been examined on the basis of empirical data collected through various qualitative methods and through the theoretical framing of a communicative planning approach and the theory of empowerment. The analysis is based on a case study of 'Miljøpunkt Amagers' facilitation of the abovementioned environmental initiative and examines the *empowerment process* from a facilitation and participation perspective, in accordance with the presented theoretical framing of *objective external empowerment* and *subjective internal empowerment*.

The analyses of how 'Miljøpunkt Amager' facilitates the local environmental initiative and how local citizens participate and engage in the process have contributed to identifying a number of potentials and challenges in the process. These potentials and challenges impacts on the 'Environmental Ambassadors' further participation and engagement, after the course ends and their participation is no longer facilitated and framed. For maintaining the 'Environmental Ambassadors' participation and engagement, 'Miljøpunkt Amager' must constantly balance between facilitating the process and mobilise the participants. The current facilitation of the *empowerment process* is not optimal and entails many different challenges which must be faced for maintaining the participation and engagement. Thus, 'Miljøpunkt Amager' must consider these when framing the process of empowering the 'Environmental Ambassadors'.

In order to answer the research question and thereby reach the conclusion, the three sub-questions have been answered through the analyses and the discussion. The two analyses examined and identified potentials and challenges within the current process, where it was emphasised that the ambassadors' participation depends on the facilitation of the course, as well as the ambassador's ability to utilise the opportunity for participation and edify own competences for maintaining the engagement. By analysing on the *objective external empowerment*, it was established how 'Miljøpunkt Amager' as the *empowerment-planner* facilitated the *empowerment process* by initiating and facilitating the course and other different environmental activities. Hence, an arena and frame for participation is created through the facilitation and provides an opportunity for local citizens to participate and engage within. By analysing on the *subjective*

internal empowerment, it was established that many of the participants share a common interest for environmental considerations, which motivates them for participating and engaging in the process. However, it was also established that participation and engagement are mainly supported and facilitated during the course and that the ambassadors must be able to facilitate their own further participation. The discussion combined the findings of the two analyses and compared these, to examine how the participation and engagement can be maintained in a future perspective. Hence, it was essentially emphasised that the current facilitation to some extent enhances the participation and engagement through the course, but that the future participation is not greatly supported. It is essentially the act of balancing the top-down facilitation and bottom-up mobilisation which 'Miljøpunkt Amager' struggles with. 'Miljøpunkt Amager' must make it easy for the ambassadors to attend and acknowledge the participation and efforts of the ambassadors. Furthermore, both the project and ambassador-role must be clearly defined so there is no doubt as to what the participation entails. It is not only about improving a few elements in the process, but to address central potentials and challenges for enhancing the *empowerment process* and maintain a further participation and engagement.

The many identified challenges must be coped with if the overall purpose and objectives of the project must be reached. The presented conclusion is then relevant for 'Miljøpunkt Amager' to consider in their future facilitation of the local environmental initiative, as it points out central potentials and challenges within the *empowerment process*. As already elaborated; by utilising the identified potentials and solving the various challenges, the process can contribute in maintaining the ambassador's participation and engagement in a long-term perspective. This can furthermore support the interest of 'Miljøpunkt Amager' towards anchoring the local environmental initiative and provide a more strategic and determined basis for achieving this vision.

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