

The Battle of the Commons

A case study of Amager Fælled



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Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to investigate the motivation behind the Municipality of Copenhagen's privatisation of public space and how an urban social movement responds to this. Through a case study of Amager Fælled, a preserved nature area in Copenhagen, Denmark, the conflict between the urban planning strategies of Copenhagen and the urban social movement Amager Fælleds Venner is examined. Amager Fælled is a public nature area that the Municipality of Copenhagen has planned to develop for housing. Amager Fælleds Venner are fighting against the planned privatisation of the nature area, as they see Amager Fælled as an important part of their urban life. The investigations were carried out by walking interviews with four members of Amager Fælleds Venner, netnography of their Facebook group and critical discourse analysis of several documents from the Municipality of Copenhagen. The result of the thesis indicates that urban politics in Copenhagen have gone through processes of neoliberalisation and that the urban social movement, Amager Fælleds Venner, is a product of these politics.

Public space, urban social movements, the right to the city, neoliberalisation, Copenhagen

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1. Introduction

Good public space is one of the most important features of a vivid, vibrant city. Great public space serves as an extension of the community and as a stage of our public lives. It is in the public space that unexpected encounters between people happen, cultures mix, and a sense of community thrives. If cities lack good public space, people may feel less connected to one another (Project for Public Spaces 2009). During the past decades, urban geographers have turned their attention to the importance of public space, as it is an essential feature in a democratic world. Public space can be traced back to the agoras of Ancient Greece, where people met to discuss politics without regulation or interference. However, today, more and more public space is privatised. The search for profit and economic growth aggravates the public spaces, which in turn displaces and alienates people from the urban life (Mitchell 1995, Garrett 2015).

In the search for investments and economic growth, more and more urban governments have engaged in public-private partnerships. In Western Europe and North America, this has been normal procedure for several years, especially in metropolises like London and New York. Scholars, such as Harvey (1989), Brenner, Theodore and Peck (2009), saw a shift in the urban politics in the aftermath of the oil crisis in the 1970s, which involved a neoliberalisation of urban politics. In Copenhagen, Denmark, public-private partnerships are relatively new. Copenhagen was headed towards a major crisis in the 1980s, similarly to New York, thus a re-imagining of the city was needed. After many years of Fordism, the Municipality of Copenhagen started to lead more pro-active urban politics. This indicated an increase in public-private partnership, mega-development projects and attempts to attract the “right” people through a discourse of economic growth. Today, the hegemonic discourse still involves economic growth, but new discourses concerning liveability, sustainability and a green city have emerged. To protest the neoliberal development of the public spaces and as a consequence of neoliberal politics, people from all walks of life are currently gathering in urban social movements. They seek to defend their right to the city and urban life (Mayer 2012, Novy and Colomb 2013).

This thesis seeks to examine the case of Amager Fælled. Amager Fælled is a preserved nature area on the island of Amager, close to the centre of Copenhagen (see figure 1). The area consists mostly of landfill, but a large area consists of 5,000-year-old primordial marsh. The primordial marsh is planned to be developed for housing by By & Havn (City & Port), a development cooperation owned by the Municipality of Copenhagen and the State. The area, Amager Fælled Kvarter (AFK), will become a part of the already existing neighbourhood Ørestad. Besides, the development of AFK, a camping area and an underground highway are planned to be built at Amager Fælled. The development is meeting resistance from an urban social movement called Amager Fælleds Venner (Amager Fælled’s Friends). Amager Fælleds Venner (AFV) are seeking to defend the right to nature and public space.

Amager Fælled can be translated to Amager Commons. If one were to look up “common” in a dictionary, the definition is something belonging equally to all or to an entire community, nation or culture. This is quite a contradiction to what the Municipality of Copenhagen has planned for the area. The battle of Amager Fælled began in April 2016 when By & Havn announced a competition to find the masterplan of the area. Many people had not heard of the development plans before, thus it came as a shock and people mobilised on Facebook. Through demonstrations and a signed petition AFV is trying to affect the politicians and prevent the privatisation of Amager Fælled.

It is important to emphasise that I had never been to Amager Fælled before my first interview with an informant from AFV. I do not have any emotions or memories attached to this place, thus I have examined the case without any preconceptions. My interest in the case began earlier in 2016 when I was writing an essay on privatisation of public space in another part of Copenhagen. I stumbled upon a newspaper article mentioning AFK and I immediately became interested in the case. The case is particularly interesting because of the conflict between the urban social movement, the Municipality of Copenhagen and By & Havn.

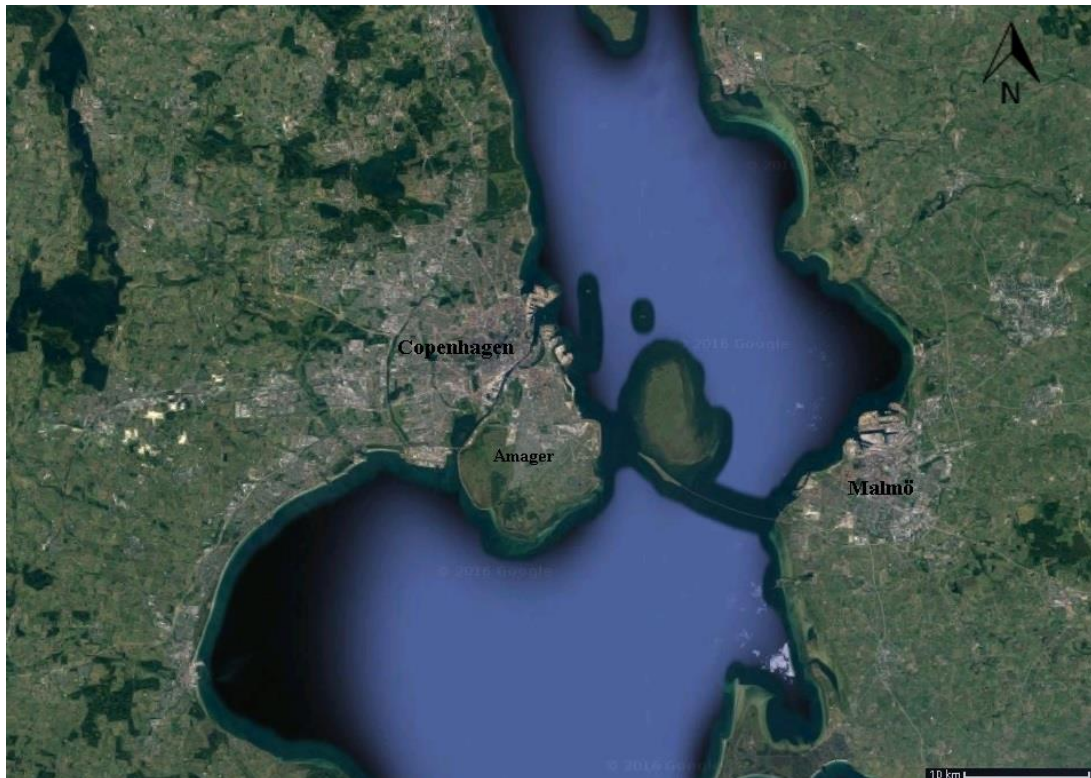


Figure 1 Map of Copenhagen. Scalebar: 10 km. (Source: Adapted from Google Earth by author)

2. Aim and research questions

The aim of this thesis is to gain a thorough understanding of why the Municipality of Copenhagen increasingly privatises public space, and to analyse how an urban social movement in Copenhagen responds to this. Through a case study of Amager Fælled, the common nature reserve in Copenhagen, it will be examined how the Municipality of Copenhagen makes use of neoliberal urban politics to privatise public space and how an urban social movement, Amager Fælleds Venner, fights to end the development of Amager Fælled Kvarter. Thus, my research question is:

- *What is the motivation behind the Municipality of Copenhagen's privatisation of the public space Amager Fælled?*

- *How does the urban social movement, Amager Fælleds Venner, respond to this?*

3. Delimitations

Privatisation of public space is an issue in all of Denmark. This thesis investigates privatisation of public space on a local level in Copenhagen with a focus on the urban politics of Copenhagen. However, I do mention other cities where privatisation of public space happens, such as Berlin and Hamburg, to put the problem into a global context and to provide some background information of corresponding phenomena in other places. Thus, I have limited the thesis to a case study, but with an outlook of what is happening in other parts of the world.

A key term of this thesis is “public space”. In my understanding, public space includes everything from parks and beaches to roads and squares. Public space is a social space open and accessible to all. This is quite a normative perspective of public space, as I do know that there are examples of people that are excluded from public space (e.g. homeless people, beggars etc.). In this thesis, there will not be any emphasis on people excluded from public space – apart from cases where everyone is excluded by privatisation. Another key term of this thesis is “urban social movements”. There is not any clear definition of urban social movements, but I interpret urban social movements as networks of individuals or groups sharing a collective identity, who engage in political or cultural urban conflict.

4. Theoretical framework

In this section the theoretical framework is presented. The first part consists of theories concerning entrepreneurial urbanism (Harvey 1989) and neoliberalisation (Brenner, Theodore and Peck 2009). The second part consists of theories connecting neoliberalisation and neoliberal urbanism (Baeten 2012) with urban social movements (Mayer 2016). The third part consists of theories concerning “the right to the city” (Lefebvre 1996) in urban social movements with an empirical example from Germany (Mayer 2016; Novy and Colomb 2013).

The aim of analysing the above-mentioned approaches is to recognise how neoliberal strategies are implemented in urban politics, thus what the motivation behind the increasing privatisation of public space in Copenhagen is, and to gain an understanding of on what basis urban social movements are established and what they are characterised by today.

4.1 Entrepreneurial urbanism and neoliberalisation

On the background of the economic crisis in 1973, Harvey (1989) saw a shift from managerialism to entrepreneurialism in the political approach towards the urban space. On basis of the crisis, urban governments sought to secure a better future for the residents through economic growth. This implied an increased focus on inter-urban competitiveness, capital accumulation and public-private partnerships (Harvey 1989: 3). Furthermore, the shift from managerialism to entrepreneurialism created a change from urban government to urban governance. This indicated that urban governments actively promoted, invested, and cooperated with the private sector to increase the competitiveness and economic growth instead of letting the market regulate itself (*ibid.*:11). Harvey argues that the urban entrepreneurialism inevitably affects and sustains the uneven geographical development caused by capitalism (*ibid.*:16).

Despite the political differences, many urban governments have followed the same path. Urban governments have implemented neoliberal urban strategies with the notion of public-private partnerships as a focal point. According to Harvey, the public-private partnerships are speculative and seek to attract direct investments, employment sources, and competitiveness. Additionally, the objective of public-private partnerships is to create an image of a creative, innovative and exciting city to live in. To Harvey, this is just an image without any substance (*ibid.*: 7ff). Harvey argues that urban entrepreneurialism has neglected the comprehensive urban planning. Instead there has been a focus on designing urban fragments and mega-projects, such as harbour places, shopping malls and sports stadia. Through a discourse of community, place and locality, governments have created an image to counteract the feeling of alienation and anomie, which a world of international trade and competitiveness generates (*ibid.*:13f).

Brenner, Theodore and Peck (2009) analyses the connection between neoliberalisation and urban transformations. Here, cities have become increasingly important sites. They suggest that the city has become a place of resistance as well as restructuring of the neoliberal project since the 1990s. Like Harvey, Brenner et al. recognised a shift in the urban politics in the late 1970s because of the economic crisis, but it was not until the mid-1980s that the neoliberal project gained prominence and became the dominant political and ideological agenda in the capitalist globalisation. This implementation of neoliberalism is called neoliberalisation by Brenner et al. Neoliberalisation refers to a pattern of uneven spatial development through market-oriented restructuring (Brenner et al. 2009: 49ff). Additionally, Brenner et al. saw that governments implementing neoliberalism in the urban politics often did it on the basis of already existing politics, suggesting that neoliberalism exists in a “parasitical relation” with all sorts of state and social formations. Neoliberalism is rather the norm than the exception in urban politics today. Neoliberalisation occurs through crisis and is an attempt to turn policy failures (ibid.: 52). Brenner et al. see neoliberalisation as path-dependent. Neoliberalisation is path-dependent because it was first deployed as a response to the crisis of the Fordist-Keynesian capitalism, which triggered the implementation of neoliberal policies to confront an increasing number of governance failures. They saw this happening in all governments in the Western world after the 1970s (ibid.: 54).

Brenner et al. sees the neoliberalisation today, as remarkably different to the pre-1990s neoliberalism (Brenner et al. 2009: 55f). Today, cities have become strategic focal points of neoliberalisation where creative destruction is unfolding. They see attempts to rejuvenate local economies through deregulation, liberalisation and privatisation. Creative destruction happens through: the destruction of urban public space to create privatised spaces for the elite, the destruction of working class neighbourhood to create new speculative development, and the discourses of “dangerous classes” to make way for rejuvenation of old neighbourhoods (ibid.: 58ff). It is important to emphasise that neoliberalisation never exists in its pure form, but as a regulatory tool for restructuring the urban politics. This is clear in Baeten’s (2012) analysis of Malmö’s recent urban development projects, which is illustrated in the following chapter.

4.2 Neoliberal urbanism and urban social movements

Baeten (2012) investigates how neoliberal urbanism can be seen as a set of contradictory urbanities. He uses the example of Hyllie: an urban development project initiated in 2007 in Malmö, Sweden. Baeten argues that the project, in the short-term, contributes to the economic growth, but on the long-term it creates significant problems. In line with both Harvey (1989) and Brenner et al. (2012), Baeten sees the neoliberalisation of urban politics as built upon already existing politics. In the case of Malmö, there has been a neoliberalisation of the social-democratic welfare state (Baeten 2012: 21f). The neoliberal planning of Malmö seeks to build a new city with

elitist large-scale developments to rework the demographic pattern of the city. Top-down planning has been a consequence of the implementation of neoliberal urbanism. Top-down planning is caused by Malmö's desire to compete with other cities for investments and to attract the creative class. Thus, the welfare system has been replaced with a demand for economic growth (Baeten 2012: 23f). Baeten does not see Malmö as a completely neoliberal city. There has not been a clean cut with the social-democratic politics, but neoliberalism rather builds upon these politics and shapes the new development of the city (ibid.: 26).

To afford the new urban development project in Hyllie, Malmö Municipality has had to sell out parts of its land holdings to private developers (Baeten 2012: 28). 70 percent of the planned housing stock will be for private sale, which excludes the lower-income families from Hyllie. Instead, the Municipality hopes that Danes will cross the Øresundsbridge and buy private property in Hyllie. To Baeten this seems odd, as Malmö has an increasing population of immigrants and homeless people (ibid.: 31). However, there have been no public debates on the Hyllie project, which Baeten interprets as a normalisation of neoliberal planning in Malmö. Hyllie is built upon an urge from the Municipality to attract the elite and hence change the social demography of the city, but goes unchallenged. Through a discourse of what is good for the market is good for the city, the Municipality of Malmö has increasingly collaborated with the private sector in public-private partnerships. The role of the planning and real estate department of Malmö is now merely to facilitate the market forces. To Baeten, this discourse is the reason why the Hyllie development project has gone unchallenged (ibid.: 38ff).

According to Mayer (2016), neoliberal urbanism is often the motivation behind urban uprisings, as structural factors of neoliberalisation have transformed the city. Mayer underpins that neoliberal urbanism's latest incarnation, austerity urbanism, is a tool for understanding the new types of urban social movements and the boundaries between them (Mayer 2016: 58). Austerity urbanism is when municipal governments cut social services and wages of public sector services, and eliminate affordable housing units, while privatising core functions. This leaves each city on its own, and few manage to go unscathed (Peck 2015: 1). Mayer sees a split between "core" countries like Britain, France and Germany and other European countries in the periphery, when it comes to the implementation of austerity policies. This can also explain differences of urban uprisings in European cities. In Northern European countries, where the implementation of austerity policies has been less visible than in Southern and Eastern Europe, the urban resistance has not become as widespread, as in countries such as Greece and Spain (Mayer 2016: 61ff).

The new form of neoliberal urbanism, austerity urbanism, includes four different policies causing urban social movements, Mayer explains. First, the "growth first" policy with spectacular events and festivals, which has made property prices explode.

The attraction of “the creative class” has caused social displacement, and in turn triggered protests of the displaced groups. Second, austerity urbanism has led cities to implement entrepreneurial forms of urban governance in more areas than before with an increase in public-private partnerships. This has led to more protests concerning non-transparent decision-making. Third, intensified privatisation of public infrastructures and services has been pushed to a new level, and expanded options for capital accumulation. This has led to struggles over public space and the increasing surveillance controlling cities today. Fourth, and last, earlier tool kits for dealing with social polarisation have been replaced with development of mega-projects in former industrial areas inhabiting the working class. This also triggers urban resistance groups (Mayer 2016: 65ff).

All these manifestations of neoliberal urbanism have had implications for collective action and have been taken by individual regardless of the common left-right categorisation of political views. But now there is a new actor: the middle-class based activism (Mayer 2016: 72). Not only has the new austerity urbanism hit the students and working class, but also the creative class and middle class segment. This indicates that more people have experienced the vindictive side of neoliberal urbanism. According to Mayer, there are six variegated forms of resistance groups against neoliberal urbanism; radical autonomous groups, middle-class urbanites, residents in poor urban areas, other disparate groups sharing an unstable existence, artists and creative professionals, and often, local environmental groups (ibid.: 74ff). More and more of these different groups have started working together, as more have a shared experience of being dispossessed by neoliberal urbanism (ibid.: 86).

4.3 The right to the city and urban social movements

Over the past ten years more and more urban social movements have gathered under a claim for “the right to the city”. “The right to the city” is a term coined by Lefebvre in 1968. The claim for the right to the city is now a slogan frequently used by urban social movements across Europe, North America as well as South America, as it expresses a wide range of issues concerning the neoliberal urban development, especially after the economic crisis in 2007-2008. In 1968, Lefebvre (1996) argued that the human individual has certain needs that should be recognised by urban society. These needs consist of creative activity, the “oeuvre” (the social and spatial product of human relationships), the need for information, symbolism, the imaginary and play. However, these needs are not considered by urban planners, which is a problem in the increasingly fragmented urbanity – thus, Lefebvre argued that a renewed humanism was needed in the urban society (Lefebvre 1996: 147f). To Lefebvre, only social movements are capable of changing the old fragmented city and implementing the “oeuvre” in the new city. To bring back the oeuvre, urban dwellers need to recognise their right to the city. To Lefebvre, the right to the city is not only to be understood as the right to stay put or visit a city, but it is the mere right to urban life (ibid.: 156ff).

Likewise, Mayer (2012) sees that “the right to the city” incorporates many different notions, and might not be what local movements are directly aiming at when protesting displacement, urban mega-projects, and surveillance of public space, but is rather an underlying aim. The contemporary movements against neoliberal urban development are significantly different from the earlier phases that urban social movements have gone through since the Fordist-era (Mayer 2012: 65). Mayer sees three distinct phases of urban social movements. The first phase, was a reaction to the crisis of Fordism in the 1970s, where the urban social movements challenged the Keynesian City. Here, the movements demanded improved institutions of collective consumption and more participation in the decision-making. The second phase began with the introduction of austerity politics in the 1980s. Social issues, such as increasing unemployment, poverty, and housing needs, came back on the agenda of urban social movements. Furthermore, globalisation became an issue, and middle-class based movements emerged. The third phase came with the dot com crash of 2001, and movements no longer operated within the Keynesian City, instead it was the neoliberal city that was targeted under a “the right to the city”-slogan (ibid.: 66ff).

The neoliberalisation of cities has in many ways created a more difficult environment for urban movements, but it has also admitted more global urban protests, such as “Occupy Wall Street”. According to Mayer, the effects of the economic crisis in 2008 have further contributed to the politicisation of the movements, where slogans such as “We won’t pay for your crisis!” has been heard across Europe. Mayer observed an intensification of demonstrations, strikes and massive protests in Europe, opposed to the US’ more pragmatic and need-oriented reaction to the crisis. However, the Lefebvrian “the right to the city” demand for democratic cities with transparent decision-making has been a common aim of all the movements. To Mayer, the Lefebvrian notion of urbanisation indicates a metamorphosis of society and common life through capital. Lefebvre sought to create rights against this metamorphosis through social and political action. In this sense, “the right to the city” is rather an oppositional right that challenges the wealthy and powerful than a juridical right (ibid.: 70f). As mentioned earlier, current urban social movements are characterised by the struggle for “the right to the city” due to the neoliberalisation of cities. The asocial impacts of neoliberalisation does not only affect factory workers and minority groups. A growing number of groups, e.g. radical autonomous, leftist organisations, and middle class urbanites who seek to defend their quality of life, are also affected by these macro trends. Thus, the political activism today involves a great number of disparate groups who all seek to defend their “right to the city” (Mayer 2012: 76).

In line with Mayer (2012), Novy and Colomb (2013) have detected three different phases of urban social movements. In their article, they are focusing on the last phase with two different urban social movements in Hamburg and Berlin, Germany, both protesting the current neoliberal urban development. What is interesting about these two movements, is that the conflict is spurred by the people to whom the neoliberal

policies seek to appeal; it is the well-educated middle-class, creative professionals, as well as students and artists (Novy and Colomb 2013: 1817). To Novy and Colomb, the two distinct urban social movements represent a new phase of politicisation and mobilisation among cultural producers, at least in Hamburg and Berlin, as the creative turn in urban development is at its heights (ibid.: 1820). Both cities have for the past two decades been characterised by an entrepreneurial approach to urban and economic development, which has led to socio-spatial polarisation and gentrification along with privatisation and deregulation. Hamburg has proclaimed itself a “Growing City” to attract the “right” people, and thus, economic growth, while Berlin since 2000 has proclaimed itself a “Creative City” to improve conditions for creative clustering (ibid.: 1823).

Novy and Colomb argue that the above mentioned neoliberal urban approaches have led to protests and resistance by the “creative” local elites, exemplified by the Gängeviertel in Hamburg and Berlin’s MegaSpree project. The MegaSpree project is one of the biggest urban development projects planned in Berlin that aimed at attracting creative industries to the city. However, the urban development project was capsized by Berlin’s arguably most successful urban social movement. The protesters took the protests to a different level by not only criticising the project, but the entire urban development policies concerning gentrification, privatisation of public space and the destruction of alternative cultures in Berlin. By means of a successful local referendum, the urban social movement put an enormous pressure on the local politicians. Nevertheless, the politicians saw the deal with private developers as nonnegotiable (ibid.: 1825ff).

In Hamburg, an urban social movement was more successful in turning over what was considered a “done deal”. In Hamburg, local politicians and investors had planned to renew a trendy working-class neighbourhood to create an upscale residential area. Through different experimental forms of protests and a “right to the city” approach, local artists and cultural producers managed to create public awareness of the urban development policies. Through a massive coalition of different groups fighting gentrification in Hamburg, the urban social movement managed to overturn the project, and Hamburg bought back the land that was sold to private investors (ibid.: 1827ff). Both urban social movements were characterised by a composition of people from all walks of life – traditional activists, artists, students, cultural producers etc. Novy and Colomb detected that only few had been involved in urban struggles before, but that all had some amount of “cultural capital” and an urge to stand up against the neoliberal urbanism (ibid.: 1831).

4.4 Partial conclusion

By studying the theories of Harvey (1989) and Brenner, Theodore and Peck (2009) on the entrepreneurial city and neoliberalisation, I have gained a better understanding of how urban governments have implemented neoliberalism into different types of

urban politics. It is important to understand this, as the implementation of neoliberalism has empowered local authorities to cooperate more with private developers, and initiate large urban development projects. This profit-seeking behaviour has changed many governments focus from the welfare state, as the example with Sweden (Baeten 2012), to a focus on a “creative city”, competitiveness and economic growth. In my analysis, I will use these theories to develop my understanding of the motivation behind the privatisation of public space in Copenhagen. In analysing the Copenhagen context, I will use Mayer’s (2016) four characteristics of neoliberalisation; economic growth, privatisation of public space and services, the development of mega-projects, and social polarisation and displacement.

The neoliberalisation of urban politics has fragmented the city through an increased focus on economic growth and attracting the “right people”. This has caused displacement and anomie, as Harvey (1989) explains. To protest this development people from all parts of society are now gathering in urban social movements (Mayer 2012; Novy and Colomb 2013). They want their right to the city and the urban life back. This is an ongoing struggle between urban social movements and local politicians, as the renewal and development of city neighbourhoods have alienated the former residents. Through the empirical example of Germany, it is made clear how new forms of urban social movements are emerging, with cultural producers as the new actor. This new actor is the same actor whom the neoliberal urban politics seek to entice. This contradiction is very interesting, as it provides an entirely new layer to the discussion of urban social movements and neoliberal urbanism. Thus, it is interesting to understand the connection between neoliberal urban politics and urban social movements in a Copenhagen context to examine if the same mechanisms are at stake.

5. Methodology

This study is ontologically and epistemologically grounded in critical realism. Critical realism involves two different dimensions; the transitive and the intransitive dimension. The transitive dimension involves our knowledge about the world – including theory, methods, definitions etc. Thus, the transitive dimension is epistemologically grounded, whereas the intransitive dimension is ontologically grounded. The intransitive dimension consists of the objects that the sciences seek to generate knowledge about. Critical realism insists that these objects exist independently of humans' knowledge about them. This means that no matter how much an object is studied the object will not change with a better scientifically understanding of the object (Buch-Hansen and Nielsen 2005: 22).

According to Buch-Hansen and Nielsen (2005), critical realism is distinguished from other realism by critical realism's notion that reality consists of three different ontological domains. First is the empirical domain (i.e. our experiences and observations). Second, the actual domain consisting of events and phenomena. Third, the real domain, which consists of structures, mechanisms, causal potentials and inclinations that are not directly observable (ibid.: 25). Thus, I acknowledge that there are some underlying structures that I cannot observe directly but which I know the existence of. Therefore, I limit my research to explain events and phenomena, as it is only possible to understand the underlying structures indirectly. Knowledge production is a human activity that happens in social contexts and builds on the already existing knowledge, thus knowledge is never certain or definitive (ibid.: 35).

5.1 Methods

This section provides an explanation of the methods used in collecting and analysing empirics. I chose to use qualitative methods, as I found it appropriate to the nature of the research questions. As I wish to examine why Copenhagen privatises public space and how the urban social movement responds to this, I found that qualitative methods provide a more detailed description and a more people oriented perspective than quantitative methods. I found it profoundly relevant that qualitative research creates the opportunity for interviewees speak more freely and express themselves in their own words (Valentine 2005:111).

I have chosen to make use of both secondary material and primary material, as I found it necessary to understand the background of the urban politics of Copenhagen, but also to understand how the urban social movement experiences its struggle. When collecting secondary material, I used information from the Municipality of Copenhagen and By & Havn's website. Furthermore, I examined former studies on urban politics in Copenhagen to put my research in context. When collecting primary material, I used participant observation at four different occasions to gain a notion of how the urban social movement, Amager Fælleds Venner, works. When interviewing members of Amager Fælleds Venner, I used the method of "walking interviews"

instead of the classic form of interviewing. The reasoning behind using this method is that it provides a more casual and comfortable way for both the interviewer and the interviewee to engage in conversation. Additionally, I made use of netnography and follow-up interviews.

5.1.2 Case study

I chose to focus on a case study, as I found it relevant to the research question of this thesis, and because I believe that case studies can help the understanding of a complex issue (Johansson 2003: 5). Furthermore, the use of a case study allows the researcher to examine data within a specific context. To put my research into context, I chose a small geographical area, Amager Fælled, as my subject of study. By examining data within a specific context, it is possible to understand the complexities of real-life situations, which cannot be captured by for example surveys or statistics (Zainal 2007: 4). I did not choose the case of Amager Fælled on an interest of generalising findings, but to explore the neoliberal urban politics in depth in a Copenhagen context. However, as Flyvbjerg (2005) puts it:

(...) a discipline without a large number of thoroughly executed case studies is a discipline without systematic production of exemplars, and that a discipline without exemplars is an ineffective one. In social science more good case studies could help remedy this situation. (Flyvbjerg 2005: 27)

I chose the case of Amager Fælled on basis of gaining an understanding of the specific case, but also to contribute to the greater understanding of the contemporary urban politics in Copenhagen. Thus, following Flyvbjerg, I reckon that empirical examples can provide a better comprehension of theory than merely theoretical scrutiny

5.1.3 Collecting secondary material

When finding material on the Amager Fælled case and Copenhagen Municipality's increasing privatisation of public space, I used secondary material found on Copenhagen Municipality's website and By & Havn's website. The purpose of using secondary material is to provide a context to the case study and the primary research. When collecting secondary material, you must be careful and attentive to possible aims and attitudes of the people and organisations that collected the data. It is also important to be aware of that the quality of the secondary material is unverifiable, thus you should consider carefully what material you use (Clark 2005: 58). I have chosen to use secondary material from official sources and By & Havn, hence I believe there is some reliability of the data. However, I will analyse the material critically.

5.1.4 Critical discourse analysis

When analysing the collected secondary material, I made use of critical discourse analysis. I found this method appropriate because critical discourse analysis is not aimed at investigating a linguistic unit per se, but rather in studying social phenomena. Discourse can in this sense mean anything from a historical monument, a policy, a

political strategy, text, talk etc. Additionally, critical discourse analysis is characterised by an interest in revealing power structures and ideologies (Wodak and Meyer 2009: 2f). The reason for using critical discourse analysis is that discourse is both socially constitutive as well as socially conditioned. This means that it both helps to sustain and reproduce the social status quo (ibid.: 10). By challenging and analysing the discourse critically it is possible to understand the underlying structures of how the Municipality of Copenhagen has justified the increasing privatisation of public space, and what the motivation behind this has been.

5.1.5 Participant observation

In the beginning of this project, I attended a demonstration held by Amager Fælleds Venner to get a notion of how they work, and to observe what kind of people attend these demonstrations. The demonstration was held before a meeting, which I also attended, where By & Havn presented the winner project for the Amager Fælled Kvarter. At this meeting, I met my first informant – a gatekeeper, we might call the person – and arranged an interview. Additionally, I attended a meeting arranged by Amager Fælleds Venner where they had invited politicians from Copenhagen Municipality to discuss alternatives for the placement of Amager Fælled Kvarter. I decided to attend these meeting and do participant observation to learn about the activities. This provided me with a context for developing interview guides. Additionally, it provided me with ways to check who interacts with whom, how they communicate, and definitions of terms that participants use in interviews. Furthermore, it allowed me to understand the events that informants described in interviews (Kawulich 2005: 2ff).

I also found that participant observation allowed me to increase the validity of this project, as I gained a better understanding of the context and phenomena. However, participant observation, in most cases, cannot stand alone, thus additional strategies, such as interviewing and document analysis, are needed to make the validity stronger (ibid.: 5). Hence, by using different approaches to data collection and observation, my understanding of the social context and the participants therein became richer.

5.1.6 Walking interviews

When choosing whom to interview, I made use of the “snowballing method”. As described previously, I met my first informant at a demonstration, and then arranged an interview. After the first interview, I asked the informant to recommend some additional informants. The informant suggested to interview two other members of Amager Fælleds Venner, and these two members suggested further informants, and so on. This helped me to overcome the obstacle of recruiting informants, while I gained a broader circle of participants compared to finding all interviewees through one single person (Valentine 2005: 117).

I decided to make use of semi-structured interviews, because semi-structured interviews can provide a more casual interview style, but with an orderly, self-

conscious structure. I made an interview guide, where I wrote specific questions instead of themes. I did not ask the questions in numerical order, but instead the interview guide provided me with some focal points, and the possibility for participants to take up issues they found important (Longhurst 2016: 146). When developing the interview guide, I detected four themes to be investigated during the interviews. I found these themes by examining theory (see chapter 4.4). These four themes included: a critique of the current urban politics, the right to the city/the right to nature, the type of people involved in the urban social movement, and the methods used in the urban resistance. See appendix A for interview guide.

I have chosen to make use of walking interviews instead of regular interviews. The reason for this, is that I believe walking interviews can provide a more comfortable and casual way of engaging in conversation between the interviewer and interviewee. Walking interviews are an ideal technique for exploring issues around people's relationship with space, and as Amager Fælleds Venner are concerned with the privatisation of public space, I found this relevant to the research. However, in any interview situation, the power relations between interviewer and interviewee can have a significant effect on the kinds of data that are generated, and walking interviews are no exception (Jones et al. 2008). I considered these power-relations carefully, and found that using walking interviews would empower the interviewees, as they were given the task to show me, what they found important at Amager Fælled.

I set up the meeting point at Sundby Station, next to Amager Fælled, and asked the interviewee to decide where to go. An aspect that I found profoundly important as I have never set foot on Amager Fælled before the first interview. Walks with fixed routes have the distinct advantage that even with a relatively small sample, one starts to get recurring data about specific locations. Fixed routes do, however, lose the empowering element, thus I chose to make the interviewee decide the route (ibid.). One of the main purposes of walking interviews is to examine a person's relationship with the environment; yet, spatial location is often not dealt with. A way of dealing with spatial context is the use of video (ibid.). I tried to film the first interview as we were going along, but I found it somehow disruptive, as it was difficult to film, walk and talk at the same time, and the attempt resulted into very poor video quality. Thus, I decided not to film the other interviews. What I did instead, was to take photos, which eased the process.

I chose not to record the interviews because I found it difficult to capture the voices, as it was very windy at Amager Fælled. Instead, I took notes along the way. It is important, before undertaking the research, to think carefully about the degree to which it is important to have a precise record of what was said or whether it would be sufficient to note key points (ibid.). I found that merely noting key points and places was sufficient to a certain extent, but some follow-up interviews were needed to clear up some issues. This will be explained in the following section. Nevertheless, I found

that walking interviews has great potential for shedding light on how participants understand and use different spaces. Moreover, walking interviews provide a means to take the interview process out of the “comfort zone” of the interview room, and allow the simple act of walking to move the collection of interview data in sometimes entirely unforeseen directions.

5.1.7 Follow-up interviews and netnography

As explained in the former section, I needed to do some additional structured interviews with the participants to clear up different issues that I found when going through my notes. I held these interviews in a very short and structured manner. I even had one informant emailing answers, as I did not find it necessary to meet up and ask two questions. Nevertheless, the follow-up interviews were a good supplement to the notes, also because some of the informants had thought of additional things they did not tell in the first interview.

Besides the follow-up interviews, I did some small-scale “netnography” (social media ethnography). The reason for doing a small-scale netnography is that much of the debates and discussion in Amager Fælleds Venner takes place in their Facebook group. By doing netnography one can gain an insight to a complex world that reflects and reveal peoples lived experiences (Kozinets 2015: 1). I started doing netnography at a very early stage in this thesis by becoming a member of the group. However, I have not participated in any online debates or uploaded pictures etc. By following the group, I have been able to gain an insight in their daily activities, what other members post, who the members are, and what kind of internal discussions that are happening. I did not have the time to go into depth, but it has certainly given me an insight into the organisational structure and discursive style of the urban social movement that could have possibly taken months to reveal. Furthermore, by investigating Amager Fælleds Venner’s Facebook page, I could see all the YouTube-videos, poems, photos, and creativity that did not find its way to the protests. I also found that doing netnography is an increasingly important method since much of the urban resistance takes place online (ibid.: 15ff).

5.1.8 Analysing primary data

I conducted all the interviews in Danish, since Danish is the native language of the informants and myself. When using quotes from the interviews in the analysis, I have translated the quotes into English. I tried to be as sensitive as possible to meanings and symbols; nevertheless, it is always a struggle to capture all the linguistic connotations and nuances in the translation process.

When analysing the primary data, I used coding. I chose to use coding, as it is a framework for organising and thinking about the data. It is also a way of organising symbols into larger strings of symbols, thus the symbols will gain more significance (Kawulich 2005: 12). First, I went through the transcriptions and notes to recognise patterns and key themes. Second, I listed the four themes that I found reoccurring in

the transcriptions and notes: the right to the city/the right to nature, critique of current politics/distrust in politicians, methods for urban resistance, and types of people involved in Amager Fælleds Venner. Third and last, I divided these four themes into smaller and more specific themes as I went back through the material. By organising the different symbols, my understanding of the underlying structures and how the urban social movement responds to the privatisation of public space became broader.

5.1.9 Ethics

One must consider in any research project to conduct the research in an ethical manner. This indicates letting participants know one's purpose, sharing sufficient information with them about the research topic, and research questions. This means that one constantly should introduce oneself as a researcher to reduce the risk of any misunderstandings in the roles you are playing. Another ethical responsibility is to preserve the anonymity of participants, if they wish so, to prevent their identification in the final write-up, and individual identities must be described in discrete ways (Kawulich 2005: 8). When I contacted the participants, I made it very clear what my intentions were, and how I wanted to conduct the research to avoid any misunderstandings regarding my role as a researcher. Moreover, I chose to keep the anonymity of the interviewees even though the majority of the informants did not have any problems in this regard. One interviewee expressed concerns about the anonymity due to the strong critique of the Municipality of Copenhagen. The interviewee was worried that there would be consequences if one wanted to work for the Municipality in the future.

6. Analysis and discussion

This section deals with the analysis and discussion of the findings. First, an introduction to the background of the case study is presented. Second, the discourse of neoliberal Copenhagen is examined to understand why the Municipality of Copenhagen increasingly privatises public space, and what the motivation behind the privatisation of Amager Fælled was. Third, an analysis of how Amager Fælleds Venner (AFV), the urban social movement, respond to the neoliberal urban politics is made. Lastly, there will be a discussion of the findings in relation to theory.

6.1 Background

Copenhagen has since the beginning of the last century been characterised by a social-democratic welfare system. The first social-democratic mayor was elected in 1917, and today the mayor is still social-democratic. However, there have been some changes in the urban politics. In post-war Copenhagen, Fordism, both in planning and production of the city, was the main policy-tool. This is evident in the famous “Finger Plan”. The Finger Plan was established in 1947 as the first urban development plan in Copenhagen. The purpose of the Finger Plan was to expand the city through big-scale investments in infrastructure and the suburbs. The idea was to expand the city through the “fingers” and the “palm”, while the space between the fingers was exempt for agriculture and green spaces (see figure 1). Today, the Municipality of Copenhagen still uses the Finger Plan. However, it has been revised several times (Den Store Danske).

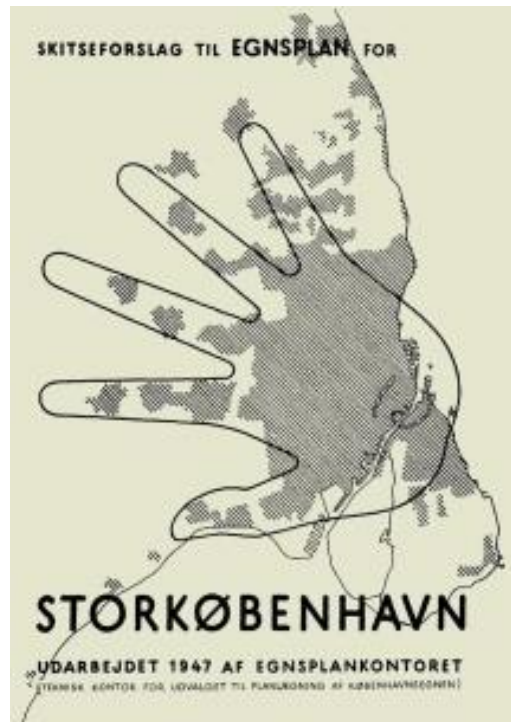


Figure 2 The Finger Plan from 1947 (Source: Danmarks Naturfredningsforening)

In the 1970s, Copenhagen headed toward a major crisis. As many other countries, Denmark was affected by the oil crisis, and Copenhagen was especially affected, both in economic terms but also with a stagnating population. This was a present issue for almost 15 years. Consequently, the development of the city was reduced significantly. Thus, a re-imagining of the city was needed. In the end of the 1980s, the Municipality of Copenhagen became more pro-active in its urban politics (Paludan and Larsen 2000: 15ff). One could argue that a shift from managerialism to entrepreneurialism occurred. It is from this period that Copenhagen began its discourse of being a “growth locomotive”. Copenhagen wanted to be the “growth locomotive” not only for

Denmark, but also to the entire Scandinavian region. The Municipality believed that only through active business policies it would be possible to establish Copenhagen as a target for international investments, and thus, as a growth locomotive in an increasingly globalised, competitive world. To kick-start this growth, the Municipality of Copenhagen needed a fixed link to Sweden, an improvement of the public transportation system between the city centre and Copenhagen Airport, an improvement of hotel and conference facilities, international branding of the city, and create global landmarks, such as Ørestad (Paludan and Larsen 2000: 19ff).

From 1989, the Øresund region becomes an increasingly important asset. This happened on behalf of equal regional growth in Denmark, which had been the leading policy until then (Lund Hansen et al. 2001: 857). To increase the economic growth in Copenhagen, the law of the Øresund Bridge was passed in 1991 and the Ørestad Act was passed in the spring 1992 in the Danish parliament. The Ørestad act was passed the day after Amager Fælled was confirmed a preserved nature area. The area where Amager Fælled Kvarter (AFK) was then planned to be located was thus abolished as preserved area. The Ørestad act was heavily criticised by the public and urban planners for the planned placement on the Amager Fælled wetlands, but also for the profit-seeking behaviour of the Municipality of Copenhagen (Paludan and Larsen 2000: 28f).



Figure 3 Map of Amager. The red line indicates the location of Ørestad. Scalebar: 2 km. (Source: Adapted from Google Maps by author)

To realise the plans of Ørestad as well as a metro line, the Municipality of Copenhagen and the State established Ørestadsselskabet I/S (Ørestad Development Corporation). Copenhagen owned 55% while the State owned 45%. Today, Ørestadsselskabet has split into two parts, Metroselskabet (Metro Company) and By & Havn (City & Port). The State now owns 5% while the Municipality owns 95%. The purpose of By & Havn is to develop Ørestad and the port area. The value of the land in Ørestad was used to pay off the loans that were taken in connection with the first three phases of the metro construction. The value from the State when they transferred their 40% share to the Municipality was used to finance the new metro lines. When Ørestadsselskabet I/S split up, it was agreed that By & Havn was to pay one single

amount to Metroselskabet to cover By & Havn's obligations in relation to the metro. In this way By & Havn and Metroselskabet can act independently of each other. However, this meant that By & Havn was established with an enormous debt (By & Havn: Vision and Mission). By & Havn has debts for 16 bill. DKK and a negative equity of five bill. DKK. It is important to notice that By & Havn operates as a business. This indicates that the corporation tries to create as much value as possible, and is speculative in nature (By & Havn: 3. Kvartalsrapport 2016) The Municipality of Copenhagen is not allowed to engage in trade or profit seeking activity, unless it is in a partnership with the private sector. Thus, the Municipality established By & Havn (Kommunernes Landsforening).

The Municipality of Copenhagen has since the end of the 1990s regarded itself a "creative city" and as a serious player in the globalising world. Through a strategy of economic growth, the Municipality has invested in both luxury housing and renewal of different neighbourhoods in Copenhagen. According to Lund Hansen et al. (2001), this strategy was led to attract the economical sustainable people. The renewal of the neighbourhoods led to gentrification and hence, displacement of marginalised people. However, the Municipality has ignored the social cost of this growth strategy (Lund Hansen et al. 2001: 851f). With the economic restructuring after the crisis in the 1970s, there was an increased demand for qualified labour, which led to polarisation of wage and work conditions. This gave rise to ghettoisation in the inner city and suburbs (ibid.: 858f). Furthermore, public-private partnerships became increasingly important in the wake of the restructuring, and a committee to explore the

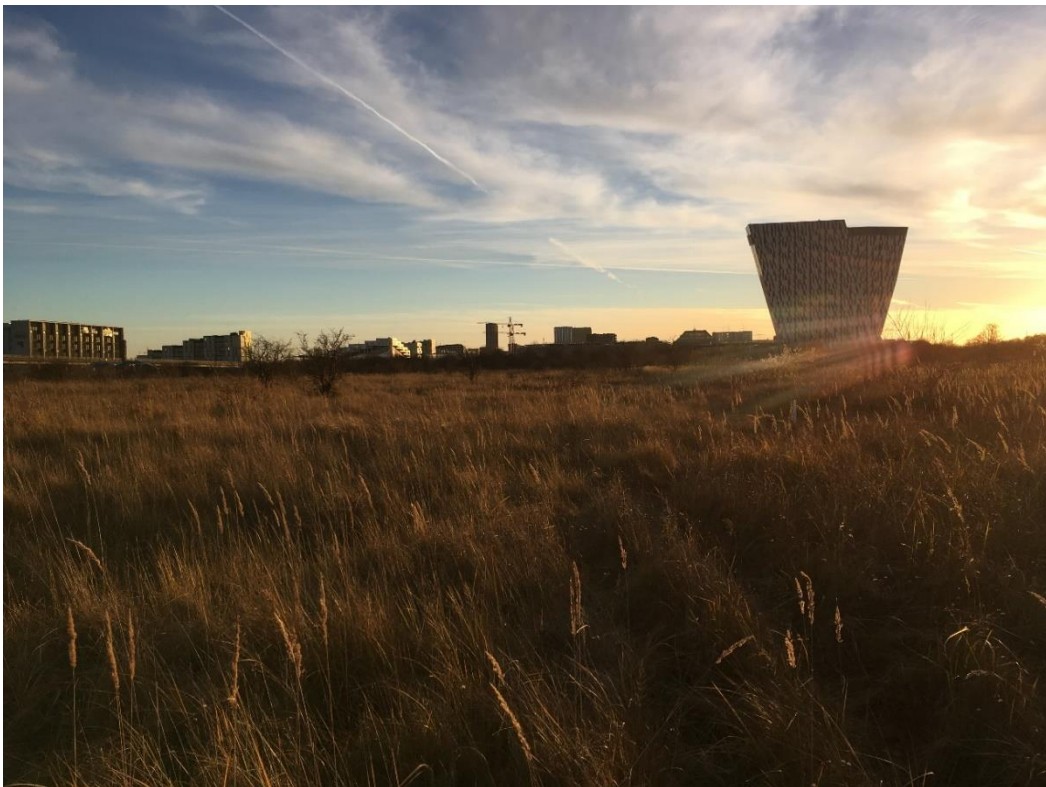


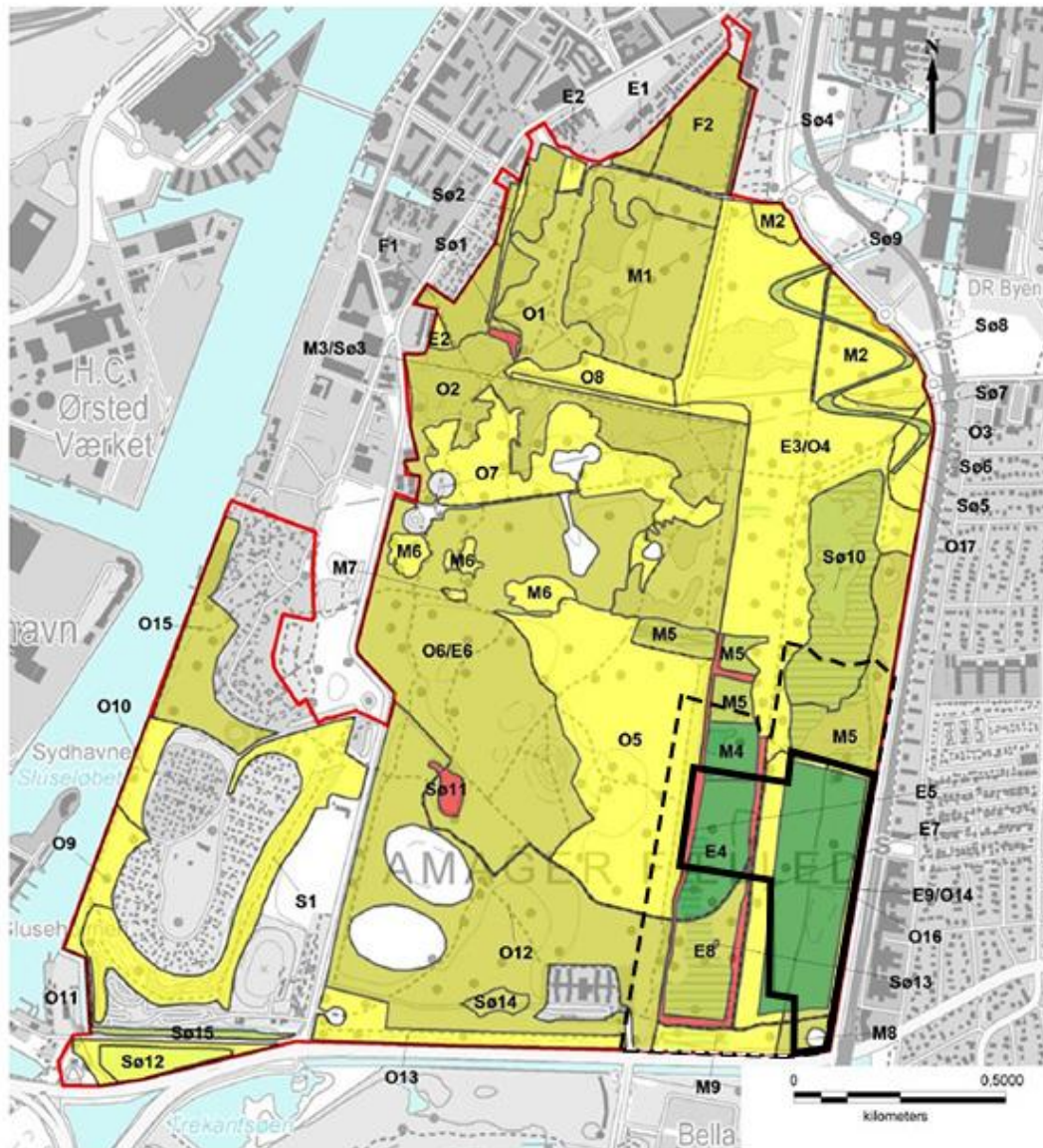
Figure 4 The primordial marsh where Amager Fælled Kvarter is planned to be located. (Source: photography by author.)

opportunities for partnerships were made. Public-private partnerships were an opportunity to attract investments and to create prominent landmarks, such as Ørestad and Copenhagen Opera House (Lund Hansen et al. 2001: 861).

When the Ørestad Act was passed in 1992 it was agreed that AFK was not to be developed in the next 30 years, so that the different plant and animal species had a chance to spread to the rest of Amager Fælled. Nevertheless, this has not happened, and now By & Havn has decided to develop the area earlier than expected. This is what AFV is very unhappy with today. As mentioned in the introduction, Amager Fælled is a 7000-year-old marsh with endangered species. Most of Amager Fælled consists of dammed seabed and areas filled with waste soil that is of relative low nature value (See figure 3). Except from one place, the area where AFK is planned to be located. This area is the last piece of primordial nature in Copenhagen. This means that the area has a unique ecological composition that cannot be moved to another location with another soil type and vegetation. (Danmarks Naturfredningsforening: Amager Fælled Kvarteret). Amager Fælled is 318 Ha, and By & Havn owns an area of 40 Ha but has planned to build on 18,7 Ha. This is approximately 6% of the total area of Amager Fælled (Ørestad: Ørestad Fælled Kvarter). By & Havn has planned to develop the area in the forthcoming years. Besides the AFK, the Municipality of Copenhagen has planned to build a camping area in 2017, asphalted super-biking highways and an underground high way for cars, the so-called “harbour tunnel”.

Currently, Copenhagen is experiencing a housing crisis. Because of record-low interest rates, the demand has been driven up, thus the cost of housing in Copenhagen has been rising. The short-term interest rates have turned negative, and it is now much cheaper to finance a new house or apartment. In the first half of 2016, the prices on owner-occupied apartments rose 11.3% compared to the same period last year. Now, the prices on apartments and houses are near the pre-financial crisis levels, which causes a fear of a new housing bubble (Reuters Sep 14, 2016). The Municipality of Copenhagen expects a population growth of 100,000 until 2027. This increase demands 45,000 new homes, whereas 6,000 are for youth housing. Most new housing will be in Ørestad (11,900), Nordhavn (7,400) and Sydhavn (7,400), while the rest of the city needs to be densified to accommodate 8,000-10,000 residents. However, the Municipality can only demand 25% non-profit housing. This means that most apartments will be too expensive to buy or rent for the common Copenhageners (Information July 13, 2016).

Delområdernes estimerede naturværdi



Vidensindsamling Amager Fælled Estimeret naturtilstand

- 2 - God (3)
- 3 - Moderat (21)
- 4 - Ringe (21)
- 5 - Dårlig (4)

□ Undersøgelsesområde 2013



Byggegrund:
Amager Fælled Kvarteret

Figur 53. Oversigt over delområdernes estimerede naturværdi. Den estimerede naturværdi er en subjektiv vurdering foretaget af inventøren i forbindelse med en besigtigelse. Naturværdien estimeres ud fra floraen og vegetationsstrukturen mv. på området.

Figure 5 Estimated nature quality at Amager Fælled. Green = good, dark yellow = moderate, light yellow = poor, red = bad. The black line indicates where Amager Fælled Kvarter is to be located. (Source: Biomedica for København 2013)

6.2 Neoliberal Copenhagen

This chapter seeks to analyse the shifting discourses of the Municipality of Copenhagen from 2009 to 2025 with a focus on the four different characteristics of neoliberalisation. These four different characteristics are; growth first, implementation of neoliberal forms of urban governance, increased privatisation, and social polarisation due to development projects. The focus will mainly be on growth, urban governance and privatisation. Through a critical discourse analysis, the aim is to understand what the motivation behind the Municipality of Copenhagen's privatisation of public space is.

6.2.1 Metropolis for people and community Copenhagen

As mentioned in chapter 6.1, Ørestad was built on a vision of Copenhagen being a “growth locomotive” to the entire Scandinavian region, and as cementation of Copenhagen being a “creative city” (Lund Hansen et al. 2001). These are still dominant notions, but the discourse has changed. In 2009, the Municipality of Copenhagen released their vision for 2015. They wanted Copenhagen to become a “metropolis for people”. The vision had a strong focus on the uniqueness of the city, sustainability, a diverse city life and the creation of the best public space in the world. To create the great public space and a diverse city life, the Municipality aimed at attracting tourists, creative people and companies. They saw this as an advantage in the competition with other cities, because it would enhance the economic growth and create a positive image of the city as well as the business and culture life (Vision 2015: Metropolis for People 2009: 3). Thus, we still see the former discourse of Copenhagen being a “growth locomotive” and “creative city”. Furthermore, Copenhagen's notion of being the “growth locomotive” of the Scandinavian region has not yet vanished. In Vision 2015, the Municipality of Copenhagen explains how they want to collaborate with Malmö and the Øresundsregion in developing and attracting spectacular events and festivals, such as Copenhagen Jazz Festival, Copenhagen Pride, and Copenhagen Marathon. The idea behind the collaboration is to become the “centre of the Nordic countries in great outdoor events” (ibid.: 8).

However, the focus in “Metropolis for People” is not only centred around economic growth but also to create a city for all kinds of people regardless of ethnicity, social status, age, and economic situation. The Municipality of Copenhagen wanted to achieve this goal through the involvement of more Copenhageners in the decision-making process concerning the development of public space (ibid.: 5). Nevertheless, what is most important to the Municipality is the co-creation with the private sector to ensure the economic growth. In the action plan for Vision 2015, the Municipality of Copenhagen suggests that public space can be both privately and publicly owned. Especially in the developing areas and the newly developed areas most of the public space is privatised. The privatisation of public space can help strengthen the city and urban life, as the open spaces can provide a framework for the meeting between different people and ways of life (Vision 2015: Action plan 2006: 7).

In 2015, when the Vision 2015 was executed, a new vision was created. “Vision 2015: Metropolis for People” was exchanged with “Vision 2025: Community Copenhagen”. “Community Copenhagen” is a ten-year report from the Municipality of Copenhagen, where the vision is to create the city together. The title itself indicates a discourse of community, unity, and positivity. Being a community is a very positive statement that brings forward the discourse of Vision 2015 of including the Copenhageners in the decision-making. Where the word “metropolis” symbolises a city of the world, “Community Copenhagen” is more “down to earth” and locally based. However, if you look carefully there is a more underlying “co-creation” discourse of Vision 2025, *“It is an open invitation to all who use the city, to all the citizens, commuters from the surrounding regions, enterprises, organisations, collaborators etc.”* (Vision 2025: Community Copenhagen 2015: 1).

In the action plan for Vision 2015, the Municipality of Copenhagen had a very positive attitude towards public-private partnerships and co-creation. This seems to be unchanged for the next 10 years. According to Vision 2025, the Municipality of Copenhagen needs to engage in public-private partnerships if they want to be in the *“(…) new league of pulsating, vibrating metropolises that show global leadership”* (ibid.: 1). This quote shows how competitiveness between Copenhagen and other cities is a very important aspect in the Municipality of Copenhagen’s argumentation on engaging in public-private partnerships, and thus privatising public space.

6.2.2 A green, liveable, business friendly city

In January 2014, the Municipality of Copenhagen launched its 10-year plan for creating a sustainable, green city, called “Copenhagen: Solutions for Sustainable Cities”. It is important to emphasise that the report is aimed at inspiring other cities around the world. In this report the Municipality share its thoughts on creating a green economy and a liveable city. The goal is to make Copenhagen carbon neutral by 2025 (Copenhagen: Solutions for Sustainable Cities 2014: 1). Their idea of a sustainable city is a city with a focus on growth and quality of life combined with initiatives for improving climate. This is also what makes a city “liveable”, according to the report. *“Reducing carbon emission is just a small part of being a sustainable city. It is also about growing our economy and, ultimately, improving the quality of life for our residents.”* (ibid.: 4). With this statement, it is clear that the Municipality of Copenhagen equals quality of life with economic growth. The Municipality are burying the economic growth and competitiveness discourses in platitudes such as “liveability”, “sustainability”, and “green transition”.

Whenever the report lists a solution for cutting carbon emissions, there is a list of social, environmental, and economic benefits. Throughout the report, the economic benefits seem to be of higher value than other benefits. An example of this is the solution for cleaning the water in the harbour. In this example, the social benefit is listed as the possibility for people to now enjoy themselves swimming in the harbour,

the environmental benefit is an improved marine environment, while the economic benefits are increased value of real estate, increased tourism, revitalisation of local business life etc. (Copenhagen: Solutions for Sustainable Cities 2014: 15). This is just one example out of many where the discourse of economic growth is covered in platitudes.

When it comes to planning, the Municipality believes that collaboration between knowledge institutions, architects and private and public partners leads to “creative solutions” and an overall good impression of the city. Public-private partnerships are an important aspect of innovative solutions, sustainability and urban qualities (ibid. 44). In “Copenhagen: Solutions for Sustainable Cities”, Ørestad is mentioned as a successful urban development, as *“The masterplan secures high-quality architecture, public transport close to major destinations, and focus on sustainability. Several buildings in Ørestad reflect the cream of contemporary architectural standards of form and function”* (Copenhagen: Solutions for Sustainable Cities 2014: 45). Furthermore, the financial benefits from the “sustainable, green Ørestad” is the increase in land values which are capitalised in By & Havn, the increase in the attractiveness of Copenhagen for residents, businesses, and tourist, and businesses located in central parts of Copenhagen (ibid.: 45). It is interesting to see how the Municipality promotes Ørestad as a success, when it has been heavily criticised by urban planners, architects and environmentalists (see chapter 6.1). Nevertheless, the conclusion is that a climate plan will create solutions that promote green growth and improve quality of life (ibid.: 47)

Economic growth is the most important target of the Municipality of Copenhagen. In 2015, they released a report where they focused on how to improve business life in Copenhagen to enhance the economic growth, called “The City of Copenhagen’s Growth and Business Policy 2015-2020 – A Business Friendly Copenhagen”. Here there is a strong focus on being a “team-mate” to businesses. “The liveable city” and “green growth” are recurring themes once again. Both themes are now seen as beneficial to the international competition among cities. Through investments in “green, healthy and creative solutions” Copenhagen will become “an even more liveable and green city” (Growth and Business Policy 2015-2020 2014: 2). These investments are to happen in collaboration with the private sector to gain more innovative solutions “to create growth in the capital and the rest of the country”. Here, it is evident again that the thought of being a “growth locomotive” to Denmark and Scandinavia still applies.

Additionally, the Municipality of Copenhagen brings forward the importance of being “a European nerve centre” and at the top three of Europe’s best cities. The vision of being a European nerve centre is meant to attract businesses and investments, as growth is the key to happiness and welfare, according to the Municipality (ibid.: 5). It is clear that the growth discourse is legitimised through the discourse of welfare,

“Copenhagen needs to accelerate its growth to finance our welfare” (Growth and Business Policy 2015-2020 2014: 2). The growth target is 5% and to create 20,000 new jobs in the private sector, thus public-private partnership will increase in the next 5 years. The Municipality of Copenhagen already now participates actively in partnerships with private businesses in different cluster initiatives (ibid.: 8)

6.3 Amager Fælleds Venner

This chapter seeks to examine how the urban social movement Amager Fælleds Venner (AFV) is organised, what kind of methods they use, what their cause is, and in what way this is a response to the neoliberal urban politics in Copenhagen. The chapter is organised in three subsections, each focusing on different themes.

6.3.1 Organisation and methods

AFV began in spring 2016 when By & Havn announced a competition to find a new masterplan of the forthcoming building of Amager Fælled Kvarter (AFK). A group of people living at Islands Brygge, a gentrified neighbourhood in Copenhagen, convened a meeting to discuss the case. People were very unhappy with the decision of building at Amager Fælled, as many used the nature area daily and as a site for recreational purposes. Therefore, they decided to found AFV. AFV consists of a steering committee of five to seven people and a Facebook group of almost 2,000 people. According to one informant, the steering committee meets on a regular basis to discuss strategy and organisation of demonstrations etc. It is unclear how many active members there are on a regular basis in AFV, but an estimation from attending several demonstrations and meetings is approximately 500 people. However, at one demonstration almost 3,000 people showed up.

AFV consists of a variety of people. All my informants are well educated, some within the creative industry, others within academia. I detected a huge diversity within the Facebook group ranging from unemployed in Jutland to cultural personalities and politicians in Copenhagen. This was also evident at the meetings and demonstrations, except that most were locals. According to one informant, they have tried to attenuate the more activist types in order not to frighten families and elderlies, *“We want everyone to join us without feeling pressured. By attenuating the more activist types, I believe we can reach a broader audience. We also want families to join”*. When asked to describe what kind of types of people was involved in AFV, all informants agreed that it was impossible to generalise. However, the more outré types has not gone unnoticed, for example “tree huggers”, know-it-all types and old ladies with activist tendencies. The diversity of the group has its pros and cons. On one hand, it opens for creative influxes and greater mobilisation, but on the other hand, it can be hard to control the “loose cannons” and keep focus, as one informant described. Especially on Facebook this is a hard task, as people post whatever they feel like, *“Some people post pictures of for example dolphins in our Facebook group, which we have to delete ruthlessly. We have these 1,800 members and therefore we must keep things relevant”*. In the Facebook group, they are four administrators. The group

is a public group, which means that everyone can see what is happening within the group and apply for membership.

The screenshot shows the Facebook group page for "Amager Fælleds Venner". At the top, there is a header with the group name, a "Medlem" button, and options for "Del" and "Notifikationer". Below the header, there are navigation tabs for "Debat", "Medlemmer", "Begivenheder", "Videoer", "Billeder", and "Filer". A search bar is present with the text "Søg i denne gruppe".

The main content area features a post from "Københavns Kommune" dated "14. december kl. 15:38". The post text reads: "Hej alle. I morgen på Rådhuset i København skal vi tage stilling til etableringen af en 88.000 kvm stor campingplads på Amager Fælled med plads til 440 enheder (hytter, campingvogne, autocampere og telte) samt receptionsområde med café osv. Det er ikke en idé, der er groet i Radikale Venstres baghave, og vi var helst foruden. Derfor taler vi med de partier, der oprindeligt gerne ville have campingpladsen på Amager Fælled, for at se om ikke den kan blive droppet. I må også meget gerne tage fat i de politikere, I kender, for at lægge pres på. I kan læse mere om sagen i linket." Below the text is a link to a document from Københavns Kommune with the title "Det forudsættes, at eventuelle merudgifter, som følger af sagen, afholdes inden for Teknik- og Miljøudvalgets budgetramme." The post has 47 reactions and 16 comments.

Below this post is another post from "Mette Stenning Mortensen" dated "21 timer" ago. The text says: "Kære alle Det var et rigtig godt borgermøde den 30. nov., som jeg gerne vil knytte en sen kommentar i forlængelse af. Det vedrører særligt Jørgen Birk Mortensens oplæg under titlen "Finansieringsalternativer", hvor hans budskab var, at "helhedsværdien" af bebyggelsen af Amager Fælled ikke var tilstrækkeligt vurderet." The right sidebar contains sections for "TILFØJ MEDLEMMER", "MEDLEMMER" (1851 members), "BESKRIVELSE" (Amager Fælleds venner er en borgergruppe der ønsker at tage init...), "TAGS" (Amager Fælled · København · Amager), "OPRET NYE GRUPPER", and "NYLIGE GRUPPEBILDER".

Figure 6 An excerpt of the AFV Facebook group. Here, people post things to start debate or share information on events, activities, politics etc. (Source: adapted from the internet by author)

AFV is primarily organising meetings, demonstrations, and events on Facebook. Here, they have the possibility of reaching people who normally would not attend demonstrations etc. Especially the demonstrations have had a high number of attendants, which would have been much harder to mobilise without Facebook. The decisions on where and how to demonstrate is decided in the steering committee of AFV. Here, as mentioned earlier, they are trying to reach as many people as possible, thus they are trying to attenuate activist tendencies. This is evident in the demonstrations they have held so far. Looking at figure 7, it is evident that the

methods in the struggle are very “soft” and peaceful. As an example, they created a human ring around the building site, where people held hands to protest AFK. Another example is a demonstration held at the presentation of AFK’s masterplan. Here, the protestors were presenting pictures of the endangered species and people were told to bring candles. At the demonstrations, there have not been any shouting or uproar, only a few songs. Many of the demonstrations and events have been held in collaboration with other environmental organisations. Besides demonstrations, AFV are very active in attracting media attention. They are writing letters to the press, they have created a petition (currently at 35,845 signatures), and they are collaborating with big organisations such as the Danish Society for Nature Conservation and NOAH Friends of the Earth Denmark.

The screenshot shows the Facebook page for 'Amager Fælleds Venner', an 'Offentlig gruppe'. The page header features a landscape photo of a wetland area. Below the header, there are navigation tabs for 'Debat', 'Medlemmer', 'Begivenheder', 'Videoer', 'Billeder', and 'Filer'. A search bar is present with the text 'Søg i denne gruppe'. The main content area is titled 'Begivenheder' and includes a '+ Opret begivenhed' button. The events are listed by month, starting with November 2016. Each event entry includes a small image, the event title, date and time, number of guests, and the user's participation status (e.g., 'Du deltog', 'Deltag · Måske').

Month	Event Title	Date & Time	Guests	Participation
november	Bevar urnaturen på Amager Fælled - Folke...	30. november 2016 kl. 19:00	2492 andre gæster	Du deltog.
november	Pandekagehygge og vox pops - Bevar Amage...	25. november 2016 kl. 13:00	52 gæster	Deltag · Måske
november	Ama'r Mod Overflødig Trafik - Hej til ha...	17. november 2016 kl. 19:00	64 gæster	Deltag · Måske
november	Rådhusets planter	16. november 2016 kl. 16:15	43 gæster	Deltag · Måske
oktober	Demonstration mod Amager Fælled Kvareret	31. oktober 2016 kl. 16:30	og 4144 andre gæster	Du deltog.
oktober	Demonstration foran By & Havns hovedkvar...	13. oktober 2016 kl. 14:45	859 gæster	Deltag · Måske
september	Folkering om Amager Fælled	18. september 2016 kl. 10:00	og 19.458 andre gæster	Deltag · Måske
september	Menneskering og demonstration mod byggep...	18. september 2016 kl. 10:00	2149 gæster	Deltag · Måske

Figure 7 Screenshot of Amager Fælleds Venners' events on Facebook. (Source: adapted from internet by author)



Figure 8 Human ring around the building site of Amager Fælled Kvarter (Source: photography by Frej Schmedes)



Figure 9 Amager Fælleds Venner protesting outside a meeting held by By & Havn. Posters with pictures of species that will disappear from Copenhagen if Amager Fælled Kvarter is realised. (Source: photography by author)

6.3.2 Political alienation and distrust

"I don't feel I have any voice. I feel like I'm being crunched in this machinery. I guess it's the classic political alienation. You know, a lot is said, you vote at the election, but you never know what you're going to get, because in the end it's all about the money"

When interviewing people from AFV I detected a general feeling of political alienation and distrust towards the Municipality of Copenhagen and By & Havn. Several informants thought that the Municipality together with By & Havn had been sneaking around in the dark making dodgy deals to accumulate capital, *"By & Havn and the Municipality of Copenhagen have so much power. They have hidden so many things that are now seeing the light"* one informant said. Because they have hidden so many things from the public, so much anger and frustration have been put forward now. Frustration and powerlessness are two important feelings to recognise when trying to understand how AFV has managed to mobilise and engage so many people. These feelings surfaced when asking how the informants felt about the involvement of the public in the decision-making process. They felt that they had been invited to several meetings, but it was only for appearances, as neither the Municipality of Copenhagen and By & Havn were interested in examining the project critically. One informant even felt ridiculed by By & Havn,

"I feel that I don't have anything to say in this and if I try, I'm just being ridiculed, you know? Suddenly, there is this autocracy where we can almost hear By & Havn squeak in the background "god damn idiots, they think they have something to say in this" and then they step forward and say "we're so happy you could all be here today, we're very pleased to include you in the project". Then they go home and laugh their asses off".

The frustrations stem from a feeling of not being heard. One informant considered "breaking up" with Copenhagen, because the person just could not believe what was happening to the city. This was the last straw for the informant. There had just been too many incidents of not being heard, and where the informant felt that the Municipality trumped thing through despite of resistance from the local area that was affected by the decisions. However, the informant turned this frustration into an incentive of fighting the privatisation of Amager Fælled. Thus, one can tell that the frustration not only started AFV, but also keeps the urban social movement moving forward, *"I see it as a democratic problem, the way the Municipality has done this. I think that's why people have halted and said "hey, what are you doing?", and then this huge mobilisation of people has happened"*.

Together with political alienation, distrust is also an incentive of participating in AFV and fighting the privatisation. Distrust was a recurring theme throughout the interviews, but also on Facebook. People see the establishing of AFK as a slippery slope, and as a way of privatising even more of Amager Fælled. It is important to

emphasise that it is not only AFK that is on the agenda, but as mentioned earlier, a camping area is being built in 2017, while the harbour tunnel is not agreed on, yet. Nonetheless, people fear that they might start building AFK, and that they then decide to develop the rest of the area. This distrust concerning the development of Amager Fælled, began when the Municipality of Copenhagen and the Parliament turned over the preservation of the area only one day after it was agreed upon, *“I thought that preserved nature was preserved and thus impossible to touch, but that is not the case. Now I know I can’t trust them”* one informant said when speaking about the privatisation of Amager Fælled and how the Municipality of Copenhagen had pushed Ørestad and AFK through.

First of all, members of AFV feel like the Municipality and By & Havn have duped them. The expansion of Ørestad have been kept away from the public, thus they have taken people by surprise. A very bad surprise, if you ask AFV, *“They have kept this a secret from the initial beginning. It might be in some reports, but it is definitely not something people in Amager have heard anything of before now!”*. The late announcement of the planned development AFK has contributed not only to the distrust of the establishment and political alienation, but one informant also expressed a feeling of unjust to Amager. The island of Amager has been renewed quite late and always had the sobriquet “Lorteøen” (“The Shit Island”) due to the establishment of a cleaning station of latrines in the late 19th century. Thus, Amager has been home to the working class for many years. *“I feel there is an unjust in this. I live in Amager and I think that the politicians who live in other parts of Copenhagen sees Amager as place with maybe some nice nature but it is the working class that inhabits it, and therefore they might as well just sweep the area”*.

6.3.3 The right to the city - the right to nature

To the members of AFV, Amager Fælled is a place for recreation and leisure. A place where you can get lost on your way to school or work. A unique green space in Copenhagen that cannot be compared to other parks. More importantly, Amager Fælled cannot be described as a park. It is a place of wild nature that has never been cultivated or touched by human hand. Thus, to the inhabitants of Copenhagen, it is a place to escape the stress and pollution of the city. It is a very important part of their urban life. *“The nature is under pressure and we are many people in Copenhagen. Amager Fælled serves as the lungs of Copenhagen, one can say”* an informant expressed. Here, it is evident that AFV has taken the opposite viewpoint to the increasing population of Copenhagen whereas the Municipality of Copenhagen argues for more housing, AFV argues for more public green space. AFV sees the privatisation of the public space as a degradation of the urban life, thus their aim is to prevent the development of Amager Fælled Kvarter.

Nature is a big part of what AFV sees as urban life, however there is also the concern that Copenhagen, once again, will be in favour of the upper class. The Municipality

of Copenhagen has said they will demand a 20% non-profit housing of AFK, but once again the distrust of politicians is surfacing, *“It is not going to be the clerks who will inhabit Amager Fælled. Right now, Amager Fælled is free to all, but it is going to be a place where you have to pay so much money to live that not even people with regular incomes can afford it”*. One informant argued that by privatising Amager Fælled, Copenhagen would become poorer. The reason for this is that nature has become such a valuable attribute to a city, and a thing that so many other cities seek to create. Another informant argued that everything is so neat and tidy and controlled, whereas Amager Fælled has managed to survive untouched. Thus, there is still a wilderness to it, which all the parks and green spaces in Copenhagen lack;

“Here, students sleep in tents when they can’t find accommodation, gays fool around in the thicket, and so does the lovebirds and nudists. People go here if they want to sleep in the wild and make a bonfire with their children. All those things you can’t do in a normal park. This is the only place you can do those things. We must preserve this primordial nature”.

As mentioned in the introduction, Amager Fælled means Amager Commons, a place for everyone despite of social status, ethnicity, or sex. Thus, Amager Fælled serves as a free space in the urban life to many people and as a place to escape the bustling city. If Amager Fælled is privatised, AFV feels that their “right to the city” is undermined by the search of accumulating and attracting capital, *“This situation goes against the term “Fælled” [Commons], a Fælled is something that we share. If things are built here, it will turn into something private that we no longer share with each other”*. The right to the city can be equated with the right to nature. The right to the city is not only the right to stay in the city, but it is the right to urban life. Urban life can exist in many forms, but as Lefebvre (1996) argues, it is a cry and a demand, not merely a right. To AFV nature is a very important part of their urban life. If nature is taken away from them, it will diminish their quality of life and experience of the city. Thus, the right to nature can be transferred to and equated with the right to the city. By fighting the Municipality of Copenhagen and By & Havn, AFV demands their right to the city and urban life.

6.4 Discussion

This section seeks analyse what the motivation behind the privatisation of Amager Fælled is, and how Amager Fælleds Venner has responded to this. The first part, will examine the neoliberalisation of the urban politics in Copenhagen through the four different characteristics – growth first, urban governance, privatisation and social polarisation. The second part seeks to relate Amager Fælleds Venner with the characteristics of contemporary urban social movements to understand how AFV is a product of the neoliberalised urban politics.

It should be clear from the analysed material that the urban politics of the Municipality of Copenhagen have been neoliberalised. The urban politics are still social democratic

when it comes to health care, education and social services, but there is a clear discourse of growth first. Thus, every new housing development, urban renewal, festival etc. are planned to increase the economic growth. Harvey (1989) argues that the shift from managerialism to entrepreneurialism happened on basis of the economic crisis in the 1970s. Governments sought to enhance the future through economic growth. This is the exact same thing that has happened in Copenhagen. The Municipality of Copenhagen sought to kick-start the economy through urban renewal, new spectacular projects, and through the improvement of the business environment. All this happened on the background of a wish to attract the “right” people and increase the economic growth. This discourse has not changed over the past years and will not change in the future.

However, something has changed: the way of speaking of economic growth. Economic growth has been a vital part of the urban politics the past 30 years; hence the Municipality of Copenhagen does not have to explain how important it is to the economy and welfare. Now, the discourse has changed into something that is good for us on a community level. Harvey (1989) argues that neoliberalism creates anomie and alienation, thus governments need to counteract these feelings by creating a sense of community and locality. This is exactly what the Municipality of Copenhagen does. However, it is not something they have always done. As Lund Hansen et al. (2001) shows, Copenhagen regarded itself a creative city from the 1990s until mid-2000s. Being a creative city was not meant to create community, but to attract foreign investments and “the right people”. Now, through discourses of liveability and community, the Municipality of Copenhagen has disguised neoliberalism in platitudes. Thus, Copenhagen can still regard itself a social-democratic city. This is in line with Brenner et al.’s (2009) theory of neoliberalisation in “parasitical relation” with other state and social formations. By creating a sense of community and by maintaining the idea of a social democratic city, the Municipality of Copenhagen can legitimise its decisions of increasing economic growth

The second important feature of neoliberalisation of urban politics is urban governance. Urban governance is in relation to economic growth. As Harvey (1989) explains, the urban governments went from government to governance. Governance indicates proactive urban politics that seek to increase public-private partnerships in the developing of the city. These new developments seek to attract foreign investments, enhance the competitiveness and accumulate capital. In Copenhagen, we witnessed a new focus on competitiveness and foreign investments with the development of Ørestad. At the time, Ørestad seemed to be a risky but great idea to ratify Copenhagen’s position in a globalising world. Now, Copenhagen has enshrined its position as a city in the global elite, but it is still necessary to maintain this position. The only way for Copenhagen to preserve this position is to keep attracting foreign investments and ensure a “business friendly” environment. Through a discourse of liveability, the Municipality of Copenhagen attracts new inhabitants, but also tourism

and foreign businesses. “Liveability” is an important branding strategy that not only creates a sense of community for the Copenhageners, but businesses also seek a liveable environment for their employees. Nevertheless, being the most liveable city in the world is an idealisation and glorified picture of Copenhagen. As mentioned in chapter 6.1, Copenhagen is experiencing a severe housing crisis now. Copenhagen is becoming a city for the rich, which adds fuel to the social polarisation.

Social polarisation is another key element of neoliberalisation. In Copenhagen, social polarisation due to new development projects and renewal of inner city neighbourhoods is a severe problem. With the development of Amager Fælled Kvarter, there might not be a direct social polarisation as no one lives there, but there is not any regulation of the size of apartments or price, thus the development might nourish the social polarisation. These concerns were also expressed by the informants from AFV. If AFK is built, they fear that the apartments and surrounding area will only serve the well-off citizens. This concern is legit, as the newly developed areas in Copenhagen have not contained much non-profit housing. Non-profit housing is not a guarantee of cheap housing, but it sends a signal of compliance from the Municipality of Copenhagen. In Nordhavn, a newly developed mega-project by By & Havn only contains 5% non-profit housing. This was mentioned as a great concern several times by AFV. Thus, social polarisation is an increasing problem in Copenhagen and should be of great concern to the Municipality as it is to AFV. It might be a great concern to the Municipality of Copenhagen, but it is not visible in any of the analysed material.

Privatisation is a fourth and last characteristic of neoliberalisation. Public-private partnerships have been increasing in the past ten years, and as shown earlier, the Municipality of Copenhagen has not planned to change this development. The development of Amager Fælled Kvarter in cooperation with By & Havn is not an exception. The reason for privatising Amager Fælled can seem a bit unclear at first sight – why privatising a green space that contributes to the Municipality’s vision of becoming a green, sustainable city? The reason is to be found in the characteristics of neoliberalisation. According to Harvey (1989) public-private partnerships are speculative in nature and seek to attract investments, employment sources and competitiveness. It also helps to create an image of a creative, innovative and exciting city to live in. In Copenhagen, the privatisation of AFK creates an opportunity to reach the goal of economic growth while preserving the notion of being a liveable city. If the development of AFK is realised, it will ensure employment to a lot of people for many years to come, but it will also ensure the competitiveness of the city. As mentioned earlier, AFK might not consist of a high share of non-profit housing, thus it will be a place for the “right” people with a high income. Baeten (2012) argues from the example of Hyllie, Sweden, that this top-down planning on the long-term will cause problems, instead of merely economic growth. One could fear that the same

problems will occur in Copenhagen if AFK is built without attention to potential social polarisation.

Baeten (2012) describes how the new development project has gone unchallenged because of a discourse of what is good for the market, is good for the city. In Copenhagen, the discourse is similar, as shown in chapter 6.2. Here, economic growth is the hegemonic discourse that has gone unchallenged until recently. AFV is fighting this discourse by claiming the importance of nature. Mayer (2016) sees neoliberalisation as the motivation behind many urban social movements, as structural changes has transformed the city. The uprising of AFV can also be seen as a product of the neoliberalisation of the urban politics in Copenhagen. The Municipality of Copenhagen has through “growth first” policies made property prices explode in an attempt to attract the “right” people, which in turn has displaced a lot of people and resulted in the gentrification of many old working class neighbourhoods. AFV heavily criticises this policy, and fear that the same policy will be at play if Amager Fælled Kvarter is developed. Furthermore, AFV criticises the Municipality of Copenhagen for its collaboration and establishment of private developers, such as By & Havn which has led to the privatisation of public space. The combination of non-transparent decision-making, privatisation of public space, social polarisation and economic growth has triggered AFV.

Earlier, students and the working class have been protesting, as most of the urban policies have had consequences for them, but now the middle-class has entered the struggle. AFV is a mix of many different groups from all sides of life, but the creative class has not been seen fighting urban politics to this extent before in Copenhagen. As shown in chapter 6.3, the members of AFV have joined the urban social movement, as they have now experienced the punitive side of neoliberalisation. Mayer (2016) argues that austerity urbanism is the newest incarnation of neoliberalisation and is defined by the before-mentioned four different characteristics. These characteristics have been less visible in Copenhagen; thus, the urban uprisings have not become as widespread as in other countries, yet. Now, it seems that the austerity urbanism has become visible to many Copenhageners through the new development projects, which might explain the establishment of AFV. What people thought sacred is now up for sale to the highest bidder.

AFV does not have a slogan claiming a “right to the city”, but it is an underlying aim of the struggle. Mayer (2012) argues that many contemporary urban social movements have “the right to the city” as an underlying aim, as the term itself holds different notions. “The right to the city” is to AFV incorporated in “the right to nature”. Nature has become the battlefield where the urban social movement confronts the neoliberal urban politics of Copenhagen. “The right to nature” is to be understood in the Lefebvrian context of urban life. The view of nature has changed dramatically in the past 30 years, and is now seen as an important aspect of city life. People have always

sought recreation in the countryside when living in the city, but to AFV, Amager Fælled is their “countryside”. Thus, to AFV, Amager Fælled is a haven that allows people to stay in the city and enjoy urban life. The protests of Amager Fælled have not gone global or viral, but AFV can be seen in relation to many other contemporary environmental protests in defence of common land in the city.

7. Conclusion

This thesis has sought to reveal the underlying structures and motivation behind the privatisation of Amager Fælled, and how Amager Fælleds Venner responds to this. The Municipality of Copenhagen has since the 1980s led neoliberalised social-democratic politics with a focus on economic growth. The focal point of economic growth has created a severe housing crisis. A demand for more housing, as a result, might explain the motivation behind the development of Amager Fælled. Additionally, By & Havn has a significant debt to pay off for the metro line. This is one explanation of the privatisation. However, through the analysed material, I see another explanation. The Municipality of Copenhagen has a growth target of 5% within the next ten years. To reach this target they need to develop as much land as possible and attract foreign investments and businesses. By developing and privatising Amager Fælled, the Municipality of Copenhagen together with By & Havn, secures this capital accumulation through the creation of jobs and luxury housing. There is no guarantee that the development will include cheap non-profit housing, thus there is a large probability that Amager Fælled Kvarter will become another millionaire ghetto in Copenhagen, sustaining the rising social inequality of the city. Inequality of the city is not in the Municipality's interest, but a city inhabited by a wealthy population is. Here, the neoliberalisation of the urban politics of Copenhagen is evident. Additionally, Amager Fælled Kvarter will consolidate Copenhagen's position as an innovative, sustainable, green city in the global league, and secure the required competitiveness, which in turn will secure the 5% economic growth target. Thus, the most reasonable explanation of the motivation behind the privatisation of Amager Fælled is economic growth.

Amager Fælleds Venner is a product of this profit-seeking behaviour. Through a signed petition, a human ring of people holding hands, demonstrations in front of By & Havn, and a huge mobilisation on Facebook, AFV is desperately trying to affect the decision-makers and create awareness for the unique piece of wild nature in the middle of Copenhagen. Not only is this an issue to people who live close to Amager Fælled, but to a great number of people living in Copenhagen. However, members of AFV do not feel listened to or included in the discussion, thus they feel alienated from the political discussions and distrust the politicians and By & Havn. The Municipality of Copenhagen has been so busy realising this privatisation that they have forgotten to listen to their citizens - or at least they have forgotten to pretend to listen. People have joined AFV in an attempt to mobilise and to send a signal of resistance to the decision-makers. Not only have people from the working class or nearby area joined the urban social movement, but people from all sides of life, such as cultural personalities, academics, creative professionals, and students, have taken part in the protest – people that the neoliberal urban politics seek to appeal to. If Amager Fælled Kvarter is realised, Copenhagen will lose a great public space where community

thrives and people meet - a public space where the unexpected happens, where everything is not controlled but has a wilderness to it.

7.1 Suggestions for future research

From a more general perspective, privatisation of public space is a more and more common urban planning strategy in Denmark and other Nordic countries. Thus, a future research could involve a mapping of the privatised public space and of public space that is planned to be privatised in the future. Additionally, another study could include several aspects of neoliberal planning in Copenhagen, such as the ongoing urban renewal or earlier urban renewal. This would include the Municipality of Copenhagen's perspective in order to gain a deeper insight to what mechanisms are at stake. In this thesis, I tried to contact decision-makers from the Municipality of Copenhagen and By & Havn, but I was not able to get a hold of anyone. It would have been interesting to get a different perspective on the Amager Fælled conflict, and to examine the viewpoints of the Municipality of Copenhagen to achieve a bilateral study.

It could also be interesting to investigate the different groups within AFV in depth, as I did not have time to make a thorough sociological study of the urban social movement. I managed to get a notion of the different groups, but a specific study of the members, where they live, their occupation and age, would be of great interest to understand the composition of the movement. Additionally, a future study of the outcomes of the battle of Amager Fælled would be of interest, especially because an election of the Municipality of Copenhagen is to be held in 2017.

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9. Appendices

9.1 Interview guide

- Profession, education, previous activity within urban social movements and age (tell me about yourself)
- Tell me about your involvement in Amager Fælleds Venner (when did you hear about it? What did you feel? How do you feel now?)
- What is AFV aiming at? (What is your aim?)
- How do you think you can reach this goal? (What methods? Will you succeed?)
- Why do you think this is important? (Feelings towards Amager Fælled and Copenhagen in general)
- Do you collaborate with other groups? (if yes, which? If no, why not?)
- Why do you think AFV have gained such prominence? (If nature related, why is nature important to your urban life? If critique of politics, why do you think so?)
- Tell me about the different groups within in AFV? (Fragmentation, internal fights, activists, creatives, cultural personalities)
- Do you have anything to add?