



THE ENERGY CITY FREDERIKSHAVN: THE ACTIVISTS AND POWER

Maria Ussing Larsen

Sustainable Planning 8. Semester Elite Student

Aalborg University

INTRO

- Case: Frederikshavn a coastal city north of Aalborg.
 - The municipality created the Energy City Frederikshavn.
 - The goal of the Energy City: 100 percent renewable energy in 2015.
- The Energy City wants to involve their citizens in achieving the goal.
 - The Energy City created a public participation program: “The Energy City Activists”
 - The project investigates the Energy City Activists and the display of power.



COLLECTED EMPIRICAL DATA

- Interviews of:
 - An Energy City Activist
 - The Energy City Communications Coordinator
 - The Mayor of Frederikshavn



THE ENERGY CITY ACTIVISTS SEEN AS PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- The Energy City Activists are still active.
- Deadline: the Energy Week October 2009.
- Key words for the public participation:
 - Openness
 - Shaping along the way
 - Intention: share responsibility and power between the Energy City Activists and the Energy City
- On the ladder of public participation from Arnstein (1969) the Energy City Activists can be categorised as a type of delegated power



POWER AND THE ENERGY CITY ACTIVISTS

- The Seven Ways of Power by Haugaard (2003)

1. Power created by social order - the structures:

- The Energy City Activists as a group
- The Energy City as organisers
- DONG Energy: primary investor (“power over”–
concept)
- The global responsibility



2. Power created by system bias - the agenda:

- In the beginning it was broad and open.
- Along the way it was narrowed down.

3. Power created by systems of thought - the transition:

- From fossil fuels to renewable energy: both technology and attitude need to be changed.
- 100 percent renewable energy in 2015 : a steering goal?



4. Power created by tacit knowledge - energy conservation:

- The interviewed activist is enthusiastic about making habits discursive and changing habits.
- The mayor thinks it is not the main focus.
- Energy conservation is integrated in the business plan of the Energy City (contradictory).

5. Power created by reification – science:

- Climate change is reified through science → technological solutions.



6. Power created by discipline - the meetings:

- Interaction among the activists: some are dominating.
- The organisers from the Energy City see themselves as supervisors not controllers.

7. Coercion: peaceful activists

- The Energy City Activists have peaceful intentions.



EVALUATION AND FUTURE PERSPECTIVES

- What could be done differently?
 - What would it lead to if the structures around the meetings were sharper defined?
 - Would it be beneficial with a clear goal from the beginning?
- The number of activists has fallen from 50 to around 10.
- The question is: will the remaining activists carry on the whole way through the Energy Week?



REFERENCES

- Arnstein, S. R. (July 1969) A ladder of Public participation. *AIP Journal*, pp. 216-224
- Haugaard, M. (2003) Reflections on Seven Ways of Creating Power. *European Journal of Social Theory*, 6(1), pp. 87-113

