



NORDISK ARKITEKTURFORSKNING

Nordic Journal of Architectural Research

1-2021

Nordic Journal of Architectural Research

ISSN: 1893–5281

Editors-in-Chief

Marius Fiskevold

Norwegian University of Life Sciences, NMBU, Norway

Madeleine Granvik

Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Department of Urban and Rural Development, Division of Landscape Architecture, Sweden

Magnus Rönn

Nordic Association of Architectural Research, Sweden

For more information on the editorial board for the journal and board for the association, see <http://arkitekturforskning.net/na/>.

Submitted manuscripts

Manuscripts are to be sent to Marius Fiskevold (marius.fiskevold@nmbu.no), Sten Gromark (sgromark@bredband.net) and Magnus Rönn (magnus.ronn.arch@gmail.com) as a text file in Word, using Times New Roman font. Submitted articles should not exceed 8 000 words exclusive abstract, references and figures. The recommended length of contributions is 5 000–8 000 words. Deviations from this must be agreed with the editors in chief. See Author's Guideline (<http://arkitekturforskning.net/na/information/authors>) for further information.

Subscription

Students/graduate students

Prize: 27.5 Euro.

Individuals (teachers, researchers, employees, professionals)

Prize: 38.5 Euro.

Institutions (libraries, companies, universities)

Prize: 423 Euro.

Membership for the association

5.5 Euro (for individuals who get access to the journal through institutions).

Students and individual subscribers must inform about their e-mail address in order to get access to the journal. After payment, send the e-mail address to Trond Haug, trond.haug@sintef.no.

Institutional subscribers must inform about their IP-address/IP-range in order to get access to the journal. After payment, send the IP-address/IP-range to Trond Haug, trond.haug@sintef.no.

Payment

Sweden pay to plusgiro: 419 03 25-3

Outside Sweden pay in Euro to Nordea IBAN: SE67 9500 0099 6034 4190 3253 BIC/SWIFT: NDEASESS

Published by SINTEF Academic Press

P O Box 124 Blindern, NO-0314 Oslo, Norway.

CONTENTS

EDITORS' NOTES.....	5
MARIUS FISKEVOLD, MADELEINE GRANVIK AND MAGNUS RÖNN	
HOFF, WINDINGE OG DET KOLLEKTIVE TEMA I DANSK BOLIGBYGGERI CA. 1945–1970.....	15
VIBEKE ANDERSSON MØLLER	
DA BYEN FLYTTEDE PÅ LANDET – DET DANSKE PLANSYSTEM & ARKITEKTERNES UTOPIER.....	49
MARTIN ODGAARD	
KUNSTNERISKE OG KREATIVE PROSESSER I STEDSUTVIKLING: EKSEMPLER FRA KYSTSAMFUNN I NORD.....	77
THOMAS HARALDSEID	
LIGHT TOPOGRAPHY AND SPACIOUSNESS IN THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT.....	103
ULRIKA WÄNSTRÖM LINDH AND MONICA BILLGER	
FORUM	
PHD REVIEW: PLANNING COMPETITIONS AS TOOLS TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT: A CRITICAL CASE STUDY EDITED BY TIINA MERIKOSKI (PHD AALTO UNIVERSITY).....	135
REVIEWER: AGATINO RIZZO	
BOOK REVIEW:.....	
ANTIGONI KATSAKOU RETHINKING MODERNITY. BETWEEN THE LOCAL AND THE INTERNATIONAL.....	140
REVIEWER: NINA BERRE	

Front cover:

Photo: Magnus Rönn 2020. Illustration by Leon Keer is a 3D mural in Helsingborg called "Shattering".

See: <https://www.leonkeer.com/>

PHD REVIEW: PLANNING COMPETITIONS AS TOOLS TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT: A CRITICAL CASE STUDY EDITED BY TIINA MERIKOSKI (PHD AALTO UNIVERSITY)

REVIEWER: AGATINO RIZZO, CHAIR OF ARCHITECTURE,
LULEA UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY, SWEDEN



Introduction

The PhD dissertation examines the effectiveness of public, architecture/planning competitions to generate new knowledge and sustainable solutions that apply to urban development projects. She carries out this task by looking at the competition process put together for two recent urban planning/design competitions in Northern and Southern Finland. Tiina Merikoski draws her data from two research projects at her institution in which her research team was asked to develop the preparatory material for the competitions, respectively for a new resort community in Ylläs and for a sustainable community development in Siipo – adjacent to the booming Helsinki metropolitan area.

The topic studied by Tiina is important and timely, as the critical examination of urban planning competitions as a tool to innovate planning practice has not received much attention in planning studies. In Sweden, the country where I work, and Italy, the country where I have studied planning, a number of large-scale urban transformations have been approached with the instrument of the competition. In Sweden, one important example is the case of Kiruna, whereby the city centre had

to be relocated due to the encroaching of mining operations (Ebrahimbadi et al., 2018). In Italy, design competitions are strongly supported by the professional associations there, although the winning entries of a competition are often not used in practice, due to petty political issues. These examples illustrate also how the culture of architecture competitions varies according to the historical paths and political-economic characteristics of each country.

Theory and methodology

Theoretically, Tiina's work can be situated in the field of design sciences, and methodologically she deploys action research as a research strategy. The thesis is of an applied nature, meaning that the type of knowledge produced is at a technological readiness level that is close to the final users/stakeholders. This is reflected in the level of theorization of her work, which is not as sophisticated as for a more theoretical topic. Having said that, the research design is robust: it is inscribed within the advocacy/participatory and partly pragmatic, philosophical worldview, meaning that it is real world, practice-oriented and problem-centred. From this approach, the research strategy derives, i.e. action research; the methods deployed – interviews, drawings and participatory-observations – also follow the qualitative research tradition.

In my opinion, the author made very good use of her visual method (the layering), as well as of the desktop data from the competitions. However, one minor point, which is indeed common for many architectural theses, is the poor visibility of the empirical work collected with the interviews. Typically, theses in geography, which deploy ethnography as a method, are very good at using the text from the interviews as a way to support and complement the rest of the material. I am aware that this shortcoming may be part of the architectural research tradition, which, as the author herself puts it in her thesis, emphasizes visuals over text. Moreover, the author demonstrates knowledge of her field. The use of the theory of reflective design thinking by Schon (1984) is a classic for the planning discipline, and it is becoming popular again with the advent of the living lab and co-creation thinking. Theoretically, I probably would have engaged more with theories of knowledge production, focusing also on transdisciplinarity and co-creation (see below).

Thesis structure

The manuscript is a compilation thesis made of an overall essay ("kappa" in Swedish) and three attached journal articles (all of which have been accepted and published in this journal). While the *kappa* synthesizes and theorizes on the topic of inquiry, most of the empirical data are discussed and contained in the articles/appendices. However, a summary of the articles' findings is provided in chapter 3.

In chapter 1, Tiina sets out the background of her study by situating her topic of inquiry within competition studies. This field of research has been covered by a number of authors in the Nordic countries including, among others, Andersson et al. (2013). Here, Tiina starts to problematize the main assumptions of the design competition, namely, the assumption that the future can be investigated with design methods, and that the knowledge created can be shared visually. In particular, Tiina focuses on the process of communicating knowledge by identifying the main actors, and the knowledge transfer, that needs to take place during a design competition: within the design team; between the team and the jury, and within the jury.

In chapter 2, she sketches her methodological take on her task, i.e. to assess the effectiveness of the design competition in generating meaningful urban ideas. Here, the part that most interests me is that of transdisciplinary knowledge production, as I have myself engaged with the subject in a few works (see Rizzo & Galanakis, 2015; 2017). Briefly, design thinking requires a “mode 2” (Gibbons, 1994) of knowledge production, i.e. a dynamic framework in which multiple players combine empirical and theoretical knowledge to solve applied problems, as the opposite of “mode 1” in which knowledge is eminently a contribution to compartmentalized disciplines. In this sense, transdisciplinarity means “working within an evolving and dynamic framework in which empirical and theoretical knowledge is combined, and where multiple players (e.g., universities, research agencies, informal agencies, private firms, NGOs, etc.) contribute to the creation of such knowledge” (Rizzo & Galanakis, 2015, p. 36). In addition, in this chapter the author describes her layering method and the two case studies.

Findings and conclusions

The main finding of the thesis (chapter 3) is that, by stressing the use of visual tools over other forms of communication, architectural design competitions are effectively disempowering knowledge from other disciplines, which are nevertheless indispensable to deliver transformative urban proposals. Visual tools can go only so far in forming alternative ideas of urban futures. Other forms of knowledge production should be promoted in the making and assessing of urban proposals (texts, videos, etc.). By doing so, other experts and the society at large would be in a better position to contribute to and evaluate urban proposals. To support such a finding, three mismatches are brought forward (in my own words): firstly, the mismatch between means and ends of the competition, i.e. is the need for a feasible plan compatible with that of a design competition; secondly, the mismatch between the object of the competition and the complexity of the brief; i.e. does it make sense to be so ambitious while the client is interested in a feasible proposal; and thirdly, the mismatch between the deliverables and the objectives of the

competition, i.e. is the classic visual material apparatus of an architecture competition consistent with the complexity of the questions? I find these results interesting, and very relevant for the architecture and planning discipline at large.

To address these issues, Tiina suggests some lines of departure (chapter 4). In her own words, planning competitions should respond to demands such as “better consideration of the clients’, i.e. the competition organisers’, aims and expectations, the growing complexity of the planning processes and the built environment, and the need to promote multidisciplinary collaboration” (Merikoski, 2020, p. 71). In this sense, and in my own words, design competitions should move away from the idea of design as a *product* and encourage instead the idea of design as a *process* that is open to experimentation and therefore risks.

References

Andersson, J. E., Bloxham Zettersten, G., & Rönn, M. (2013). *Architectural competitions – Histories and practice*. Stockholm: KTH Royal Institute of Technology.

Ebrahimabadi, S., Johansson, C., Rizzo, A., & Nilsson, K. (2018). Microclimate assessment method for urban design – A case study in subarctic climate. *Urban Design International*, 23(2), p. 116-131.

Gibbons, M. (Ed.). (1994). *The new production of knowledge: The dynamics of science and research in contemporary societies*. London: Sage.

Merikoski, T. (2020). *Planning competitions as tools towards sustainable community development. A critical case study*. Aalto University.

Rizzo, A., & Galanakis, M. (2015). Transdisciplinary urbanism: Three experiences from Europe and Canada. *Cities*, 47, p. 35-44.

Rizzo, A., & Galanakis, M. (2017). Problematizing transdisciplinary urbanism research: A reply to “Seeking Northlake”. *Cities*, 64, p. 98-99.

Schon, D.A. (1984). *The reflective practitioner: How professionals think in action*. Basic books.