Success or Failure of
Competition Formats

The Sustainability of the Aalto Campus 2015
Building

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Introduction

The intention of this study is to clarify concepts regarding sustainability issues in architect competitions, and to be able to present some ideas about how to include sustainability requirements in architect competitions. Currently sustainability issues are often mentioned in competition briefs, and we have seen some competitions with an emphasis on sustainability. Recent examples in Finland are: Ylläs 2010 (Rakennuslehti 2010) and Sibbesborg 2011 (Sibbo kommun). The North Rhine-Westphalia Landeswettbewerb 2012 (Ministerium für Bauen, Wohnen, Stadtentwicklung und Verkehr des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen; Linz 2013) seems to have been an interesting case in Germany and the Norwegian Bodø rådhus with an emphasis on energy efficiency is another attempt to address sustainability issues (Bodø kommune 2013). The sustainability concept is obscure and its integration into the systems of architect competitions is unclear and for these reasons I think it is important to explore this subject and to clarify the concepts. I think it is a central issue in architecture and the production of built environment, but as Fuchs claims with references to Kaltenbrunner: sustainability is not determining an architecture style, this is always an outcome of the societal and situational context (2012, p. 12).

Rönn concludes the findings of his interview-based surveys about competitions into a set of dilemmas. One of them being the problem of foreseeing the coming jury evaluation, another is the dilemma emerging between the interests of the architects as a professional community and the interests of the client (Rönn 2009; 2007, p. 165ff). The former wants the competitions to act as an education arena for architects. Simultaneously it also acts as an arena for development of new artistic codes, as a driver of architecture as an art (Östman 2005, p. 317). I think it is impossible to find a timeless definition for sustainability and that we in the sense of Wittgenstein rather have to look how the concepts are used, and in this case how they are used in the setting of architect competitions. This is a limited explorative study, based on a case study, the Campus 2015 at the Aalto University in Finland (Aalto University 2013b) including a concept analysis, combined with analyses of the current German and Swiss regulations on sustainability in competitions. At the end of the paper I discuss two issues; stakeholder interests and positions, and the evaluation and articulation of sustainability issues in the Campus 2015 competition,
which is about a new big campus building at the very center of the Otaniemi university campus close to Helsinki, which was designed by Alvar Aalto as a winning competition proposal 1949.

The conclusions are that there is still a lot of potential in the field of architectural competitions. There is a dilemma embedded here, asking what is the role of sustainability in architectural judgment – are architectural competitions predominantly about architecture? A closer investigation shows that sustainability was considered as a value in the Campus 2015 competition, but the protocol didn’t provide any written answers to the objective aiming at creating “the world’s best sustainable university campus” (Competition Programme 2012, p. 6). The evaluation became a holistic evaluation with architecture at its center, raising some questions about what a systematic implementation of sustainability in competitions requires. This study is focusing on the issue of sustainability, in a way picking out one issue among many, sidestepping the major issue, the architecture. I do, however, think sustainability is an important issue that needs attention in general and in this competition. The study won’t provide a solution or explanation of a best practice but only try to cast some light on some of the aspects of it in this competition.

**Methodology**

This presentation is based on an exploratory case study, combined with interviews and a close reading of competition material. The aim has been explanation-building (Yin 1984, p. 107), starting from theoretical propositions as strategic means to guide the analysis of the material (Ibid., p. 100). The overall aim is concept clarification (Lundequist 1999) regarding issues of sustainability in relation to quality of architecture. The case study has been complemented by interviews as means to verify my interpretations of the process. The interviews are based on open questions related to the subject, exploring how the respondents see these issues, broadening the understanding of the process and issues with different interpretations. The central explorative issues are: How was the judgment constructed? Which features of the competitions format were important for the outcome? As means to optimize the research efforts I have limited the number of interviews. The interviews with the architects have been complemented by interviews with other professionals involved in order to test different perspectives.

The idea of the case study is to construct a valid case description, based on evidence and producing analytic conclusions. The results cannot be used to generalize about these issues, but can point out weaknesses, describe processes and make them more open to scrutiny and debate. Indirectly this case study addresses the question about how far protocols should be taken as statements about qualities of the proposals. The material is used to construct reasoning and the reasoning should link different aspects of thinking to the empirical material and findings.
Lipstadt asks for relational studies of the field of competitions as a means to overcome the danger of an *affirmative attitude* towards the subject one is studying (2009). Thus, in a sketchy way, I try to “construct methodically the space of possible points of view on the literary (artistic) act” (Ibid., p. 193) as a matter of positions in a space of “possibles” (Ibid., p. 301). I do this by a rather simple stakeholder analysis combined with interview questions, indicating the central action space and cultural positions different agents hold or take due to their professional or given social position, and as Lipstadt sees it “induces a rupture, with intellectualism” (2010). For example the invited jurors are given a leading role in the jury, for this competition. In another competition they might take another position, but the fact is that the roles of the different agents are rather stable.

The original idea was to establish an understanding of quality concepts from the empirical material (protocol statements). It turned out that the competition protocol almost totally lacked statements about sustainable issues so I decided to do a simple concept analysis with a classification of evaluation statements from the phase 2 entries, combined with interviews about the process and the sustainability issues. The categories were selected by a test analysis and a classification, combined with an organization according to the objectives mentioned in the Competition Programme (Aalto University 2012) and the instructions for the second phase (Aalto University 2013). The categories were selected to show the different qualities, where each sentence is an indication of only one type of quality. Sometimes the distinction between categories is not very clear but this problem is mostly related to architectural quality, usability or organization, which are not of central concern in this analysis.

*The competition*

The competition was an open international competition with a competition program, initially prepared by the Aalto University Properties Ltd and written by a consultant and checked by the representatives of the client, The Finnish Association of Architects (SAFA) and the competition jury. Due to the delicate request to add a substantial amount of floor area (48,000-52,000 m²) to the very heart of the Otaniemi campus by the architect Alvar Aalto, listed by the National Board of Antiquities, combined with the branding interests of the recently constituted Aalto University, the competition must be seen as a very demanding and important competition in the Finnish architectural context. This is also the reason why professor emeritus Wilhelm Helander was invited as a juror, as a representative of the Aalto foundation (Chair 2013). The competition was a two stage competition, phase 15 April-10 August 2012 attracting 189 proposals, from which 6 where selected for the second phase. Expert analyses where requested for 12 proposals (traffic, ecology, scope, and costs). Representatives of the communities in
Otaniemi took part in workshops and commented on the best proposals. The second phase took place 15 January-15 May 2013 and the winner was presented 27 September 2013.

The jury consisted of 14 jurors, chaired by the Dean of the Arts, Design and Architecture School Helena Hyvönen. Professor Trevor Harris and architect Aaro Artto were appointed as SAFA-jurors, i.e. independent jurors according to the Competition Rules (SAFA 2008). The university wanted an open process and invited representatives of the students, the staff, the faculty, the university properties and the Aalto foundation. The professional members constituted the majority of the jury. The jury also invited experts, among others for sustainable development, traffic and costs (Aalto University 2013b, p. 6f).

The process was initiated by the Aalto University Properties Ltd, asking the architect Andrew Harrison to compile a preliminary spatial program based on the existing spaces at the different campuses. This was followed by complementary consultant investigations and negotiations regarding parking, traffic and by means of committees at the university (Juror E 2013). The vision of a bike and pedestrian friendly environment came straight from the president of the university, and the sustainability approach was defined through committees and workshops at the university, initially condensed to a 10 page program and later on into the Design Goals in the Competition Programme, with a dedicated section about ecological sustainability (2012, section 4.7). At this stage there was no knowledge of the possibility of getting a metro station to the campus area (Juror E, 2013). Sustainability was one among the 10 objectives of the competition, condensed to “Provides the potential to create the world’s best sustainable university campus” in the Competition Programme (Aalto University 2012). Seppo Junnila, Professor of Real Estate Business at Aalto University, with experience of competitions and expertise in Life-cycle Technologies and Management, Sustainable Buildings and Industrial Ecology was invited as an external specialist (Aalto University 2013b). He was not involved in the writing of the program or defining the objectives, but before the evaluation of the first phase he was asked what is possible to get from the entries with the given objectives regarding sustainability. As an answer he provided some advice to the jury (Junnila 2013). The analysis of the cost calculation consultant was also used as a measure (floor area ratios) to evaluate the energy efficiency of the proposals (Junnila 2013; Juror E 2013). In a later stage of the phase 1

The University wanted to involve the staff in the process as a way of creating an open and transparent process (Chair 2013), but after consulting advice they accepted the normal procedure of SAFA competitions with very limited public access to the proposals before the jury had finished its work. Some small images of the proposals were published, but the independent jurors wanted to avoid the danger of competitors borrowing ideas. According to juror C it is possible to understand and pick details with a second, which in his opinion obscures the idea of a true competition (2013).
Junnila was asked to analyze a dozen of entries selected as first class entries (Aalto University 2013b, p. 18ff). He provided a written report which he presented to the jury and answered related questions, but didn’t attend the jury’s evaluation meeting (Junnila 2013). The procedure was repeated in the second phase. According to Junnila all the first class entries met requirements regarding optimal orientation of the building mass and the windows, and included some kind of solar panels (Ibid.). He found only a few, in the total mass of 189 proposals that showed real competence regarding solar or energy systems. In the interview he also pointed out that it is difficult to select materials without proper knowledge of how they are produced. He took brick as an example of how wrong a simplified conclusion regarding its general sustainability can be, or that it is not enough to use such simple rules of thumb in the jury’s evaluation, but that in this case there was no possibility to evaluate such matters due to the lack of information (Ibid.).

The jury was divided between two proposals, at the two final jury meetings, between entry 125 “4927700 Leap” and entry 131 “VÄRE” (Chair 2013; Juror E), the latter being finally selected as the winner. These proposals are very different regarding their architecture and the debate is said to have been very intense in the final jury meetings, described as an excellent example of professional dialogue about architecture (Chair 2013, Juror A 2013). The major distinction is that entry 125 has a very clear-cut architecture whereas entry 131 is a collection of modules. One juror explains it: Entry 125 would do very well as published in a magazine but entry 131 has much more to offer on site, though it will not be very photogenic (Juror A 2013). Entry 125 is a compact body described as “An extremely thoroughly studied and worked-out project” and “The entry is a very strong one, especially for its urban touch, the qualities of its interior spaces, and its overall feasibility” (Aalto University 2013b, p. 179). A definite disadvantage is, however, “In places, it would be difficult for some users to enjoy direct natural light or to see or sense the landscaped surroundings owing to the depth of the building” (Ibid., p. 182). According to the Chair most jurors saw the advantages of entry 125, but in the end entry 131 was selected, after voting (Ibid., p. 202). Still, one SAFA-juror wanted his disagreement noted in the protocol (Chair 2013).

Figure 1. Entry 131 “VÄRE” plan.
Sustainability is addressed in the competition protocol, phase 1, with the title environmental solutions and starting with wind as “a major challenge”, stating that “creating a reasonable microclimate and pleasant conditions in outside areas” was “a high priority” “; and the need to have any energy or sustainability solution “firmly integrated with the general architectural principles” (2013b, p. 16). Most of the comments are about need for further studies and analysis. These comments are not touched on in the (general) evaluation of phase 2 (Ibid., p. 164ff).

**Sustainability**

It is very difficult to define or describe what would be the relevant sustainability criteria to check in a competition assessment. It was also an initial idea of this research project to try to find out, from the empirical material of the Campus 2015, how the sustainability criteria are defined or expressed. The problem is not only that there is an immense number of topics that can count as sustainability criteria, but the weight of each criteria can also vary depending on what are the goals. Basically I think it is possible to claim that sustainability preferably should include a wide variety of issues, such as life cycle costs, CO$_2$-emissions, social sustainability, preserving nature, indoor climate, energy and material efficiency, to mention a few. Looking at publications about architecture and sustainability you soon realize that they are mostly presenting examples of built solutions, as some kind of inspirational material including pictures of the architecture and basic descriptions of sustainable principles applied in the project. I have selected one publication of this type is “Sustainable Architecture and Urbanism” by Gauzin-Müller (2002), which also holds a more comprehensive explanations about what criteria or trends he has detected and that has been put into practice.

There is one level of political action split on governmental or public approaches. There are different approaches to sustainability based on private initiatives, too. It is often about trying to create architecture that is so to say “more sustainable” than the formal requirements. The initiator can be commercial companies, private communities or individuals. Here we sometimes also meet the tradition of utopian architecture. On a different level we find approaches spread on value principles such as high-tech and low-tech, but also setting the core standards in humanism and social and democratic environmentalism or on commercial branding by means of certified labels (Gauzin-Müller 2002, 16f). We also find that some of these issues tend to be manifested in the architectural language. Forster + Partners is, I think, a well-known representative of high-tech architecture. According to their web-site they combine “advances in technology with sensitivity to culture and location” (forsterandpartners.com, 2013). Gauzin-Müller (2002, p. 16) claims that Paolo Soleri is the most notable exponent of the low-tech, with his Arcosanti village. According
to their web-site they, as an “urban laboratory”, “pursue lean alternatives to urban sprawl” (Cosanti Foundation 2013). Low-tech often includes the use of the materials wood, clay and turf roofs in an European context. Thus the tendency towards low-tech also tends to show in the architecture, which can be seen as standing in contrast to futuristic high-tech sustainable architecture, but also in relation to sustainable architecture approaches with conventional architecture and materials (Fuchs 2012).

Many ideas that have started as political movements are today part of legislation. In Finland the demand for sustainable development was added 1990 (Lag om ändring av byggnadslagen 1990, section 1). 1985 new regulations regarding preservation of old buildings were added (Lag om ändring av byggnadslagen 1985, section 34), and 1994 new rules for the assessment of environmental impact (Lag om förfarande vid miljökonsekvensbedömning 1994) were added, to mention a few Finnish examples. Currently we are seeing a series of legislative initiatives in all Europe regarding energy efficiency (European Commission 2011). One earlier private counterpart to this development is of course the German Passivhause initiative. Currently there are also a number of semi-private initiatives aiming at providing certificates according to given standards for sustainable buildings, for example BREEM and Green Building.

**German methodology for sustainability in competitions**

I have compiled some ideas and conclusions about sustainability issues in competitions based on an analysis of German sources, together with the Swiss SNARC-project established as a recommendation by the Schweizischer Ingenieur- und Architekten-Verein (SIA) for sustainability in public constructions in Switzerland (SIA 2004). I have assumed that these rather new recommendations are currently among the most elaborate approaches. The Swiss SNARC recommendation is from 2004 (SIA 2004), and the German federal SNAP-Recommendations is from 2013 (Fuchs, Hartmann, Heinrich, Wagner & Zeumer 2013). The German recommendations are based on a dissertation by Matthias Fuchs (2012). Fuchs has studied the existing tools and methods within the German competition system, analyzed and selected the most important benchmarks of sustainability, and developed a system of evaluation criteria including recommendations (Fuchs 2012, p. 22f; Fuchs et al. 2013b). He has also tested the methods in one case study. Basically one should notice that these are only recommendations (SNAP is, however, compulsory for federal projects in Germany (2012, p. 14)) and that the systematic must be applied with flexibility, adapting it to the situation and the goals of each competition, specifying what are intended sustainability goals and, of course, an optimization of time spent on preparations and evaluations (Fuchs 2012, p. 154ff). Fuchs concludes that a concept design phase, as the competitions are, must provide a comprehensive picture of the sustainability criteria but they must also remain transparent and simple, and must not promote a
“Spezialistentum”, i.e. avoid shifting the judgmental power to external experts (Ibid., p. 155f). It is preferable that at least one of the jurors has an extensive knowledge of sustainability issues (Ibid., p. 148). Fuchs recommends a traditional presentation of the evaluation criteria: design, functionality, comfort, health, economy, as well as resources and energy (Ibid., p. 136). The basic evaluation is done in an initial evaluation process based on checklists, potentially by means of software-based checklists, conducted by experts. The checklist and the selection of criteria should be based on the goals of the competition and the client.

Fuchs uses a diagram to describe the multitude of sustainability issues (according to some German public recommendations) and their tendency to overlap. The idea is that within this diagram the emphasis can be shifted according to client goals, depending on how detailed it should be (Fuchs 2012, p. 12 and 21). The basic differentiation of sustainability is based on three sustainable aspects; economical, ecological and social dimensions (Fuchs 2012).

![Diagram of sustainability values and selection of goals](image)

Figure 3. Distribution of sustainability values and selection of goals (simplified and translated from Fuchs (2012)).
**Concept analysis**

The quality statements of the six entries in the second phase have been classified in comparison to given program evaluation requirements, see Figure 4. The categories that generated most comments are highlighted in yellow as they seem to indicate some sort of differentiation and reason why it has been selected for Phase 2, i.e. entry 011 has most comments on organization and experiences, whereas entry 075 attracted comments on functionality and urban landscape and was seen to have developed well (2013b, p. 174f). It is important to notice that some of these statements might be negative, too. The most frequent quality statements are about architecture, the urban landscape, spatial organization, respect for the existing architecture and the new unique Aalto University identity. It seems that the development during phase 2 has been important to the jury (Juror C 2013), even though it is not so clearly mentioned in the Phase 2 Competition Programme. Client interest in the form of daylight, feasibility and flexibility are issues that the jury has seen as important to address in the evaluation report (Chair 2013). Entry number 176 is evaluated as being “among the most promising proposals” but “has lost most of its best qualities during Phase 2” and generated much less evaluative statements (Aalto University 2013b). There are also some unrelated general statements in the evaluations, which are noted as “excluded”. One typical is about professionalism of the architects, an issue also mentioned by one of the interviewees as a quality indicator that surfaced in the evaluation from time to time but was found to be outside the scope of the evaluation of the entries (Juror A 2013).

It is clear that the most refined articulations are devoted to architectural and organizational aspects, together with the urban landscape, and this emphasis seems appropriate. Similarly it seems correct to spend only one or two comments on such issues as metro connection, main entrance or feasibility. I also think it is too early or still possible to rearrange spatial solutions and selection of materials or organization of facades, and that it is important to put forward comments where improvement is needed. It is, however, surprising that sustainability, bicycle routes and health is hardly ever mentioned and when it is once commented upon, it is only a statement that it (solar panels) doesn’t fit well with the surrounding architecture (Jury Report 2013, p. 196) and that in this case the comment is that the texts presenting sustainability and ecological issues “are of a rather general nature without being clearly communicated in the design itself” (Ibid., p. 197). According to the interviews and the organization of the evaluation

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2 There is a rather well established practice in Finland, though not documented, of selecting a variety of proposals showing the different ideas emerging from the competition as prize winning proposals. Hence the finalists are not necessarily the best (and quite similar) proposals but rather a display of different solutions that seems important to test in phase 2.
much of sustainability issues will inevitably be included only in the jury discussions, but it remains remarkable that there is hardly any mentioning of sustainable issues despite the very ambitious objective to “create the world’s best sustainable university campus” (Competition Programme 2012, p.6).

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This concept analysis concentrates on the protocol, more than a normal protocol would allow, assuming that it is normally only based on the writing of the SAFA-jurors. It was the intention to provide every proposal with a comment in phase 1, but due to lack of time and the large amount of proposals the commentary is very brief (Juror B). On the other hand this was a protocol based on thorough checking (Chair 2013; Juror D 2013; Juror E 2013) and thus it seems reasonable to think that it displays the evaluation of the jury. Interesting enough is the system with parallel protocols; the protocols of the meetings and the jury report, which is a kind of appendix to the protocols of the final jury meetings.

**Stakeholders**

I have come to the conclusion that it is important to analyze the different positions of the jurors because there is a danger that I as architect and researcher cannot distance myself from an affirmative reading of architectural dogmas (Lipstadt 2010, 2009). Lipstadt proposes, with reference to Bourdieu, a perspective of seeing the situation as a board game (Ibid.). Looking at the jury as a board game, it poses an assumption that different jurors hold different and more or less cards and trumps valid in the playing of the game providing a shift of the reading, thus expanding the case study from the pure descriptive study of the case and its discursive expressions to a sort of power analysis. And, it is clear to most of us that in such a situation there is an obvious imbalance in power regarding the right to judge architecture, for example between a student of architecture and a professor of architecture, regardless of the statement that this was a very egalitarian jury process (Juror A 2013, Juror C 2013). If there is no difference there is little need for professors and education. There is a definitely a value of the client in allowing all voices to be heard, creating a legitimacy for the project.

The independent SAFA jurors, together with the two professors of architecture have, due to their role and position, very much judgmental power compared to the rest of the jury members. This is supported by the words of Juror B, claiming that their task is to manage the evaluation process (2013) and Juror E and the Chair who stated that they see them as representing...
architectural competence (Juror E 2013). According the bourdouvian theory of cultural fields it is necessary to believe in the idea, the illusio, of this cultural practice regardless whether you are an architect or a representative of the property management or the administration (Bourdieu 1996, p. 166ff; Lipstadt 2009; Östman 2005, p. 124ff). There is a majority of professionals in the jury (Aalto University 2013b, p. 7) and as it is a building for the School of Arts, Design and Architecture the users are represented by designers or architects, too (Aalto University 2012, p. 6f; Chair 2013). All in all there are only four or five of the 14 jurors that do not have a close professional relation to architectural design. Furthermore, the professionals of traffic and sustainability are external specialists (Ibid.), with no voting rights, indicating that their profession is not a core profession in this competition. The wording of the SAFA Competition Rules regarding the composition of the jury panel goes as follows (2008): “At least 1/3 of the judges must be professionals in a relevant field”. It seems that sustainability is thus not accepted as a relevant professional field in this competition. This is a matter that Fuchs addresses in his dissertation. He wants the sustainability to be a core issue in all evaluation phases (2012, p. 134), a claim that is repeated in the recent recommendations by the German federal Ministry of Transport, Building and Urban Development (Fuchs et al. 2013). It is not necessary, according to this recommendation, that the specialist of sustainability take a central position but the issue as such must be given a prominence alongside the issues about the urban development, architecture, economy and functionality (Ibid.).

Lipstadt clearly warns against the danger of a complicity of architect researchers with the architect jurors, and an acceptance of the professional dialogue of the competition as a given correct understanding of the situation (2010). We must recognize the objective relations. This means that it is nothing wrong with a strong emphasis on architecture, but it is my task to point out that there is a discrepancy between program and end result that probably is related to the power distribution in the evaluation process. Seeing the competition as a cultural field and the jury as a set of positions, there is an obvious relation between economic powers and cultural powers in juries, between the representatives of the client and the independent jurors, but in this case also a clear location of the competence of sustainability outside the jury, leaving the final judgment to the jurors. This competition and its evaluation are ending in an ultimate debate between two architectural positions, which must be interpreted as a notion of the truly architectural nature of this competition. It is however obvious that economic interests, such as functionality and daylight play an important role here, indicating a dependence on other values than the art for art’s sake values of architecture.
Conclusions

I find it agreeable to see architectural competitions as limited to the concept design phase (luonnosvaihe in Finnish) and thus leaving a great part of sustainability issues out of scope. Materials, energy, HVAC-solutions and method of construction can only be potentially indicated and it is difficult to evaluate their impact on the sustainability in the concept design phase. The German recommendations estimate that only 1/5 of the indicators of sustainability can be determined accurately on the basis of the content of the competition proposals and their illustrations and documents (Linz 2013; Fuchs et al. 2013). The proposals are too sketchy to allow for a closer scrutiny. This is also the case in the Campus 2015 competition (Junnila 2013; Juror D, 2013). Thus it seems important not to put all too much expectations into these issues in architectural competitions in general. I also find a holistic evaluation without detailed checklists or schemas acceptable, relaying mainly on the competence of the jurors. Still, several jurors confirmed that they found the input by the sustainability expert helpful (Juror A 2013; Juror C 2013). It is, however, the neglect of sustainability issues in the report that I find questionable. The client (both the University and the Aalto University Properties) wanted an open process, and as a central public body in the Finnish society it should aim at transparency, and it is a way of creating legitimacy and acceptance for the project (Juror E 2013) (there was no debate at all afterward, which according to Juror E can be seen as an indication of a an acceptance of the judgment (and the jurors) despite the split in the jury). On the other hand it is, according to juror B, the task of the independent SAFA-jurors to manage the evaluation process and to write the evaluations (Juror B 2013). In this case it was checked by several members of the jury (Chair 2013), indicating that the report was thoroughly written. If the client said it wants “potential to create the world’s best sustainable university campus” (Aalto University 2012. p. 6) I think it would be necessary to address this issue in the competition report consequently regarding at least the final six proposals.

It is not necessarily a lack of analysis here, but without reporting it is very difficult to know, and with the very brief comment regarding sustainability in the jury’s recommendation for further development (compared to the detailed recommendations regarding “Building Planning”, e.g. asking for a wider staircase from the market place) (Aalto University 2013b, p. 205) it leaves us easily to believe sustainability is of little interest, or even that the jury hasn’t enough competence to provide suitable guidelines for further development. It is, however, important that sustainability is made operational, and I think a first step in this case should have been that the program had put forward some operational guidelines about sustainability issues and their presentation. It can, however, be seen as a contradiction to ask for an articulation of judgment if the judgment process is only a ranking process – a tendency I found in another case study (Östman 2012) and partly also addressed in Rönn (2009). Still, I think it is important to have a
consequent articulation of the judgment as a means to present the reasoning to both the professional field and the broader public.

A second consideration is whether architectural competitions are suited to address and promote innovation regarding sustainability. Competitions are often marketed as tools for development, and in the SAFA history of competitions they claim that competitions have “made new ways of thinking possible”, as well as promoted “the birth of new perspectives on architecture” (SAFA 2009). This case with a very architecturally delicate site and with a jury including several high rank architects and professors it seems inevitable that architectural issues will attract an overwhelming attention. Competitions and especially the jury work is often seen as a learning experience promoting a better understanding of the situation, its problems and solutions (Rönn 2009, Östman 2012), and in this case several jurors underlined the power of the architectural dialogue during the final jury sessions, promoting the shared understanding of each entry’s distinct qualities. The Finnish Association of Architects puts an emphasis on the writing of the competition program, seeing it as the client’s tool towards the competitors (SAFA 2009b), indicating that the client must prepare well; in order to get what he wants. I think there could be some potential to develop the architectural competitions to better address sustainability issues, by means of testing different approaches, though it seems that there are already some unsuccessful results from good intentions with elaborate expert evaluations on sustainability issues (Fuchs et al., p. 215).

My conclusion from this case would be that the jury constituted a competent and heterogeneous team of professionals in the field of architecture, cultural heritage, urban planning and design, economy and user interests (Aalto University 2013b, Juror D, 2013). Traffic, cost calculation and sustainability seem to have been issues that were investigated outside the jury meetings and the results only presented to the jury. It seems to have been an open and productive communicative jury process allowing the voices of all jurors to be heard. It seems that there were about five architect jurors taking actively part in the analyses and discussions representing the stakeholders of architecture and constituting a de facto majority. The board game is played with the trumps of professional competence, with the architects accepted as professionals regarding architecture, functionality and urban design, whereas the representatives of the client play the cards of economy, usability and the client brand. The advantage of inviting proposals and competent jurors is that the client will get a well-studied and tested solution, with professionals articulating the advantages of selected solutions, and a wider acceptance of the changes in the urban fabric as there has been authoritative jurors analyzing the solution. It has been a common issue in Finland to discuss the potential danger of clients using the competition as an instrument for rising building rights. This was also a central issue here and a crucial outcome of the competition was certainly the conclusion that it is possible to erect a 50,000 m$^2$ university
building at the heart of the red brick campus designed by Alvar Aalto. From a perspective of power distribution it seems necessary to also include a certain amount of sustainability competence and judging powers into the core of the jury, if the ambitions are to substantially promote sustainability. According to Fuchs this must be supported by a demand for interdisciplinary design teams including experts on sustainability and later included in the team that will continue with the design after the competition (2012, p. 153).

It is possible that architectural competitions act as promoters of innovation and development, but I would assume that the major sustainability development tests will take place in pilot projects where the demand for architectural quality is not so high. In this competition they made a clear statement that sustainability solutions must be integrated into the architecture (Aalto University 2013b). That will leave more space for experiments with different technical solutions. It is possible to think of architectural competitions with an emphasis on sustainability, but they will primarily be competitions for architects about architecture. It is foremost a specific form of procurement of high-rank architect’s services, reaching its legitimacy through the competition (and simultaneously acting as an engine within the professional field of architects defining what is new good architecture and at the same time producing some kind of branding of top-level architects). The major potential of architect competitions is found in their capacity to produce a unique artistic solution to a specific (and demanding situation).

I think this explorative case study show that it is not easy to combine the search for a unique architecture with a strong promotion of sustainability issues, and that is important how these issues are made operational. The analysis shows that it is important to focus on the whole competition process, starting from client interests and goals consequently proceeding to the systematic articulation of judgments. I also see the danger Fuchs addresses. You can probably only reach a “Schein”-truthfulness by means of complicated checklists (Fuchs et al. 2013, p. 215). It seems that the vague objectives didn’t support an evaluation of sustainability issues. It could have been improved with requirements for energy modeling and calculations, which would also give an indication of the sustainability competence of the architects (Junnila 2013). Junnila, based on his previous experiences, claims that it is possible to address sustainability issues in competitions but they should have a different format, oriented towards innovation. He sees the usefulness of a competition truly oriented towards sustainability in the replicability of the results. In this case, with its strong orientation towards a unique architecture in a unique situation architecture will inevitably be the dominating issue (Ibid.).
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