Reuse of Dreams/Changes of Foci

Expectations and Steering Conditions in Two City Hall Competition Processes in Kiruna, Sweden, in 2011-13 versus in 1956-58

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This investigation of an empirical material constitutes a delimited two-part case study, where the background historical part of 1956-58 is based mainly on available archive material, while for the contemporary, main part in 2011-13 documentation is constructed through a series of seven interviews of central actors in the competition process. The findings of the pre-competition phase described in this study will be discussed in relation to selected pre-qualification studies relevant here (in particular, Rönn 2012); meanwhile the historical competition process will be found to be reflected in concurrent norms and practice.

In particular, the exceptional conditions and aspects of the present-day Kiruna competition process will serve to highlight one form of imaginary—ideal?—newer competition process that may be reflected in democratic values and openness, dialogue and the contribution of expertise from different types of specialization. This is seen to apply also when aspects may be of a counterfactual character. In Kiruna, the municipality lacking experience in projects of public architecture, the need for input and know-how is particularly great. In this conjunction it will appear that a pre-competition investigative, open dialogue, alongside its opposite, a deferment via agents that may be likened to competition anonymity, is seen to be continued in the subsequent project design phase; but this is mainly a result of specific conditions in the contemporary Kiruna set-up of a double-headed stakeholder body.

As to justification of the method employed reference is here made to an article of central importance in its entirety, “Five Misunderstandings about Case-Study Research” (Flyvbjerg 2006); in agreement with Flyvbjerg’s argumnetation in favour of validity in case study research, I claim here that a well-researched case that does not support normative theory can instead serve as an exception that proves a more general rule indicative of period and a particular phase in an evolution. For the methodology of interviews as research, I refer to Steinar Kvale’s massive studies of the qualitative research interview (Kvale 1997 and Kvale-Brinkmann 2009); my chosen approach has been a stratagem of general questions formulated...
to be used in each of the five major interviews,\(^1\) combined with specific variations applying to the role in the process of the particular interviewee.

The more specific intention, then, of this paper is to create a perspective on the aim and expectations of the organizer/client in response to the steering conditions in the given situation of the two city hall competition processes, respectively, for the same municipality, half a century apart. The interchange and collaboration between implicated agents, both the selected representatives and consultants for the stakeholder bodies, and the competing architects, is here seen as part of the steering conditions. In the recent, 2\(^{nd}\) competition process the governing exceptional precondition has been an absolute time limit for the competition with project design and building process, a fact influencing every aspect of that process.

A concluding comparative analysis of the two competition processes is strongly affected by the fact that it turns out to be hard to generalize the two processes into comparability. This is due both to the divergence of source material and documentation, respectively, but obviously even more so to a divergence in the specific given situation in 1956-58 versus 2011-13. Therefore, I have chosen to introduce the account of the two processes in combination with comments applying to each process, with an outline of actual and postulated givens; these may serve as a guide to different points of issue, or aspects of a problematic illustrated in this case study. Following this, a few concluding remarks concerning the competition scenarios will be made. However, some general observations stand out. Considering the actual set-up determining the character of the two competitions Magnus Rönn has emphasized two present-day aspects of the difference in the conditions then and now: internationalization, and in particular, fragmentation of the organization running the competition.\(^2\) Further to this claim I argue that the particular collective ethos of the specific—local/national--Kiruna process is one healing factor; furthermore, that that collective ethos can be traced back to the first competition process for a city hall in the 1950s.

Outline of actual and postulated givens for a case analysis

**SPECIFIC GIVEN SITUATION.** Main potential problem factors:

In 1956-58: No problem factors, really. A straightforward project in a vigorously expanding town municipality for a proper city hall to replace inadequate quarters for the growing city council and administration. Kiruna had been given city rights and status from 1948, roughly half a century after its establishment as a pioneering mining settlement. After two different sketch projects for an administration building (1946, 1954) during a 15-year period of attempts at solving the task by the consultant town architect, an invited competition is decided on by the town council in 1956, now for a city hall. The invitation to five architects is announced in early November 1957; competition deadline is 15 April 1958 and the selection of a winning proposal to be implemented is announced on 4 June. Project design and implementation were started on directly after, as the brief arctic summer period must be used.

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\(^1\) The major interviews are marked with an asterisk in the list; cf. References.

Post-competition collaboration with the architect was apparently excellent, with the Stockholm architect present in Kiruna much of the time and deeply engaged.\(^3\)

In 2011-13: The specific background situation is described in a separate section to follow below.

I Vulnerability of the new city hall project:

(a) municipal organizer and industrial client: a double-headed stakeholder body
(b) the absolute urgency of the time factor
(c) general exposure: arctic climate considerations for the projected building; the brevity of the yearly construction period; the stakeholder body’s lack of experience in using architect services; a habitual lack of respect in the organization overall for architectural values in preference to practical issues of operations and sustainability
(d) a strived-for collective process and open dialogue between a great many interested parties potentially turning into non-productive deliberations and unhappy decisions.

II A complex start-up for the city hall competition:

(a) a two-part package of competitions, where the city hall competition is made to follow directly upon a competition for a new central city plan; it is only in the resolution of the first competition task that the actual site for the projected city hall gets to be known, and this date was by necessity made to lie in the start-up part of the second, city hall, competition.

(b) the fact of the two inter-related competitions means that entrants in the prequalification could not yet know the precise site of the projected city hall, only the general area of the projected central city plan.

STAKEHOLDER STRATEGY AND EXPECTATIONS

In 1956-58:

An initially straightforward stakeholder strategy by the client alias competition organizer Kiruna town municipality. An efficient invited competition followed by implementation was clearly the aim, and the result was a successful winning proposal.

However, ambition was evidently high, when apart from two north-Sweden architects and the resident LKAB architect Hakon Ahlberg, of national renown, who were invited for the competition, the recognized Swedish modernist architect Artur von Schmalensee was proposed by the SAA while Finland’s already world famous Alvar Aalto was added to the list by the organizer. However, proposals by the first three architects were soon sorted away, but the last two invitations caused a stalemate in the jury deliberations when the competition appeared necessarily to yield two 1st prizes of diametrically opposed modes of form and conception, while a final decision had to be reached as to which proposal was to be

\(^3\) Brunnström (1993), p 131f, as well as personal communication in Oct. 2013. Cf. protocols kept by the the city hall building committee 1958-62.
implemented.\textsuperscript{4} When Schmalensee’s project was chosen as a result of a congenial analysis by the jury, the city council accepted it and never questioned the decision, as it offered the particular solution needed in Kiruna in practical and social terms.\textsuperscript{5}

It is only in the matter of functions analysis and the planning of the use of space in the projected building for administrative units and city services that expectations could not keep pace with reality, neither before, nor after the competition, leading to successive revisions of space planning.

In 2011-13:

In February 2010 the town municipality had drawn up a municipal target scheme for the new city hall ("Kommunens målbild") of requirements and values which was to serve as the central objective for the architectural competition, forming the basis of the competition task set up in the brief. A target scheme may be equaled to a strategic plan on the part of the organizer of a competition.\textsuperscript{6}

In 2011 a civil law agreement was signed between the town municipality and the mining company LKAB, to the effect that LKAB undertakes to replace the present city hall from 1962, as regards (a) present-day functions of the city hall, (b) both architectural quality and the quality of ambiance in the central hall expressed in the long used concept “Kiruna’s drawing-room”, and (c) floor area—neither more, nor less.

The town municipality, however, ends up only as organizer of the competition, while LKAB takes over as the client in both the design project phase, conducting the tendering, and in the construction phase. After finished construction the town municipality will take over the building, operating it. This division implies a three-phase shift of responsibility for the project.

STATUS FOR PROCESS INTERCHANGE AND COLLABORATION:

In 1956-58, between municipal city hall building committee – competition jury -- architect

In 2011-13, between (a) municipal competition organizer -- industrial client; (b) between a multiple competence committee alias competition jury – organizer/client – architects; (c) municipal work groups -- the competition jury; (d) the public and politicians -- the competition jury

\textsuperscript{4} For the Aalto proposal in the Swedish context, see Rudberg (2005).

\textsuperscript{5} Brunström (1993), p 129ff. The process of the jury evaluation was investigated through Brunström’s interview contact in 1983 with one of the jury’s architect members, Jan Thurfjell. Cf. also the brief comparative analysis in architectonic and topographical terms in the section below, “The 1950s process: comments”.

\textsuperscript{6} Cf. Rönn (2012) b, p. 7f.
COMPETITION PROCESS with regard to diverging interests and competition form:

In 1956-58: no built-in divergence in a committee process driven by a marked ethos and responsible handling resulting in an invited competition for five architects. Divergence of outlook emerged in the competition evaluation phase, with two first prizes being awarded and with one of them being recommended after intensive deliberation but congenial analysis.

In 2011-13: what might be termed a *multiple competence committee process*, in a complex situation, with a built-in divergence between different—municipal, industrial and architectural—skills and interests. These were represented within the selection committee which was also identical with the jury, active throughout the competition process. The process was prepared and directed by a *consultant competition process leader* and was supported by *municipal work groups*, staff as well as politicians, resulting in an international open prequalification and selection procedure comprising 56 entries, followed by an invited competition for five architectural teams. *The organizer’s intention*, however, has been one for maximum openness, dialogue and multiplicity--also with reference to the public--to characterize this competition process. Equally, a marked collective ethos drives the process in the exceptional predicament of Kiruna.

Background for the 2011-2013 competition process

It is in the Swedish Lapland mining town of Kiruna, situated well above the Arctic Circle, that one finds the unique situation wherein the same town organizes a major invited competition for a city hall twice on an interval of c. 55 years, to replace the first, well-functioning and beloved building by a new one. The present extraordinary undertaking is part of a far greater venture—“*the city transformation*” as it is called in organizational terms—based on the decision to move the entire central area of the town of Kiruna, established only just over a century ago, away from its original location. Below it, massive iron ore mining, having progressed below ground level in the 1960s, has resulted in a honey comb volume at present extending 1365m at an angle of 60 degrees in beneath Kiruna, and already causing ground deformations while threatening collapse of the town site within the near future. This fact was finally established and presented by LKAB as its first prognosis to the municipality in 2004, and work on a municipal action plan was started immediately. That prognosis has since been revised as to even greater haste. The urgency of the undertaking is indisputable, and has led to the adoption of a municipal time plan divided into three phases over the next twenty years, where the limit of the first phase is 2018. It is within this phase that the new city hall must be built, finished and taken over by the entire administration etc of the town municipality; the present plan for the removal is October 2016. The new city hall is expected to be one of the first large buildings in the new town centre, a so-called profile building and in its very essence heavily symbolic.

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7 The account of the background is based on diverse published information material from the town municipality, Kiruna Kommun, and also on Brunnström 1993 as well as Kyander (2004).
The client, then, in the 2nd city hall competition is the perpetrator, the national mining company LKAB, in a “collaboration project” with the town municipality which also comprises the city transformation. In view of the present booming industrial market in southeast Asia and with China’s vast needs for iron the company plans on further extraction and expansion. Permission for this is given by the Swedish state which is of course another stakeholder in the extended city venture. Since LKAB provides the living for by far the largest part of the population of Kiruna and the surrounding region, the fact is that the town is subservient to the company and therefore must be “moved” or rather recreated as new in order to continue to serve the company. Therefore a municipal Vision 2099 was formed in 2004, and the decision was taken in 2011 to run a competition for the new central city plan prior to, but in direct connection with the city hall competition. Both competitions in this package were structured in the same way as an international prequalification followed by an invited competition carried out according to the same procedures, but in the central city plan competition ten teams were invited as opposed to five in the following, city hall competition.

The competitions package was necessary as the designation of the new city hall site was obviously dependent on the outcome of the central city plan competition. At first, in January 2007, the area designated for the new central town lay to the northwest of the present town; however several objections cropped up, including further finds of iron ore. In late 2009 it was suggested that the adopted overview plan [Översiktsplan] was revised, and a new plan outlining an extension of the present town site to the east was adopted by the City Council in September 2011. However, the new site was placed in a flat part of the landscape, a fact that gave rise to the idea of conducting a competition for the central city plan. It was at that same time, too, that the decision to run the two competitions as a package was taken, and that they should be carried through in collaboration with the Swedish Association of Architects, SAA, which also meant in accordance with the Swedish Public Procurement Act, LOU, that includes in it the EU regulation (Directive 2004/18/EC). The first competition was announced in June 2012.

The winning central city plan project, announced on 4 March 2013, “Kiruna 4-ever”, proposes a grid plan in an extended strip of only three city blocks on either side of the main street and therefore in close contact with the surrounding landscape. It was important, according to the jury, that the plan, rather than being spread out, was clearly delimited, yet with direct access to nature. Along this strip of dense townscape are distributed important city functions, and in the middle of it, near the crossing of three traffic arteries, a representative city space—a triangular “square”—is also the site of the proposed new city hall, opposite a new rail station. What is notable in this use of a compact and traditional planning solution, is the reference to the original model city plan from 1900 by a well-known Swedish city planner Per-Olov Hallman; this was a variant of a grid plan—uncommon in Sweden—which however was draped across a slope—opposite to the mining mountain Kirunavaara—and following the variations in the terrain. And it is at a high point along the edge of this plan that the first city

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8 LF 23.10.2013
9 LF 23.10.2013
10 The winning team is White Architects with Ghilardi + Hellsten Architects and Spacescape; also Vectura Consulting (traffic) and Evidens BLW (economic sustainability).
hall—planned out in the 1950s and finished in 1962—was placed as a solitaire, facing the mining company office on the opposite side of the valley. That symbolic balance is now in the process of being disrupted.

Finally it is relevant to note that at one remove from the main actors in the present city hall project is the Länsstyrelse [county government] for Norrbotten, involved because the first city hall had been made a listed building in 2001; the county government has stipulated that the listing cannot be cancelled, but instead it has attempted to direct a selection of elements to be “secured” as public “value bearers” and reused, or re-integrated in a different function, in the new design—for a new site—without dictating the manner of reuse. However, that presupposition has proved to be unrealistic and impossible to realize; as will appear, the town municipality instead has an ambition for reuse of a different nature, of immaterial or immanent values. The single most important “reuse” concerns the quality of ambiance in the central hall of the 1962 building, expressed in the time-honoured and popular concept “Kiruna’s drawing-room”, referring to a large, open and welcoming indoor space for many different civic activities. That concept has indeed been readapted in the winning entry, while a couple of significant elements of the actual building have also been included in the new design. At the present time (November 2013) a legal battle through two courts to cancel the listing of the first city hall—which must by necessity be torn down anyway—has not been concluded. As the building cannot be torn down, according to the law, without the listing having been lifted, this may possibly affect the mode of realization of the winning proposal in that the projected reuse of the city hall tower structure will be impossible.  

The present legal process might well be described as shadow fencing, in the face of an irreversible real-life development.

Account, further comments

(a) THE COMPETITION PROCESS, 1956-58

In a city council meeting on 6 April 1956 a municipal city hall investigative committee (utredningskommitté) is re-appointed and enlarged with four new members to the total of seven. This is done on a proposition in the matter prepared by the borough finance department (drätselkammaren), where the executive chairman is now also made a deputy chair member of the investigative committee. In October 1957, when the committee takes the definitive decisions regarding the organization of the competition, he will also be appointed to the five-member competition jury as a layman representative of Kiruna town municipality, together with an engineer from the municipal real-estate unit. Two other jury members were architects, archivists, and a representative from the Folk Art Museum. The jury members were appointed by the executive chairman of the city council.

11 ÖM, 22.10.2013

12 LL, 25.10.2013 stated that ironically it was the municipality itself that had initiated the listing—which is now a hindrance in the process from the point of view of the municipality—10 years earlier but that it had led to no response whatever until in 2000.

13 In addition to sources consulted and referred to below, see also Brunnström (1993); for that article a thorough investigation of material in the municipal archive and various other sources was made by Brunnström.
and one a commissioner from the national Building Works department.  

As is evident, the number of people involved in the process is quite limited.

**Precompetition process.** The question of an administration building for the town is discussed off and on for decades. At the end of May 1954 the borough finance department had discussed an architectural competition with motions for and against, but a rejection of this motion was supported by the city council chairman—who was identical with the investigative committee chair—referring to previous decisions regarding ongoing design work; this was done in spite of voices in the city council requesting both an architectural competition and an enlargement of the investigative committee. This was in reality a small group/committee of three people long given the task of examining conditions for a possible administration building. Meanwhile requirements for office and meeting space increased fast, and therefore it was the number of square meters required that was apparently a main stumbling block already early on. After the 1956 decision, the administrative units were asked to inform the committee of their needs which were discussed “several times”. There had also been discussions regarding the site, but in late October 1956 this is decided on by the city council to be that of the town office itself (*stadskontoret*). Later on, after the selection of the competition project to be implemented, it was discussed whether the construction work would permit a tearing down of that office in stages; at the same time requirements for space needed were revised together with architect Schmalensee well into the project design process. This means that expectations could not keep pace with reality. Generally, however, it becomes clear that once the public decision for an architectural competition has been taken, collaboration between all parties involved proceeds smoothly.

As already mentioned, the consultant town architect (1936-64) Bertil Höök, with his own office in the coastal town of Luleå in north-Sweden, had worked on the task of a modern city hall for Kiruna during a 15-year period. At the April 1956 city council meeting he is discharged from that task and compensated with a sum taken from the total budget of the competition to be held. On the other hand he is chosen as one of the five invited architects and submits three different competition proposals.

Of particular note in the *competition process* is the need on the part of the organizer for further information and know-how on the task of planning a city hall. As a not uncommon solution in the 1st half of the 20th century in the Nordic countries, study trips to some newly built city halls in Sweden were suggested and carried out in an informal way in June 1957 by

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14 The jury members were—in the order introduced in the text above: Ragnar Malmström and Åke Forsberg as laymen, Sven Ivar Lind, who was a prominent prof. architect at the Royal Academy, architect Jan Thurfjell of Luleå (interviewed by Brunnström in 1983, cf. note 5) and Ulf H Snellman, commissioner. For example, cf. a written account of the competition process up to date prepared by the investigative committee for the city council meeting where the competition results are approved, 9 June 1958 (“Ang. Stadshus i Kiruna. Till pkt 11 å stf:s föredrag lista 9.6.58”).

15 Cf. protocols kept by the investigative committee/the city hall building committee 1956-59, as well as protocols from city council meetings (Stadsfullmäktigeprotokoll): 1954-§189, 1956-§ 116.

16 Brunnström 1993; City Council protocol: 1956-§ 116.


18 Bloxham Zettersten (2010).
the committee--which is now usually described in the protocols as “the city hall building committee”. Towns visited were Halmstad, Borås, Västerås, and Gustavsberg—all in the more densely urbanized south of Sweden—as well as the more “local”, northern coastal town of Luleå, visited in October 1957. What one is particularly seeking information on is the planning and functions aspect. As a consequence, space requirements are yet again revised and the sizes and distribution of meeting rooms and offices on the different floors for the various administrative units and city services can be resolved. This is done in anticipation of the writing of the brief, a task which is given in October 1957 to one of the architect jury members, Jan Thurfjell.

In this same phase, in the autumn of 1957, SAA and its competition board is contacted for advice on competition form and suggestions regarding the three architect members of the jury. This advice is followed.

What is especially notable in the contemporary perspective is that consultants do not appear to have been called in until in the project design phase—and then they seem usually to have been contacted by the projecting architect himself, Schmalensee. This is with the exception of the control of the proposed budget and the quantitative analysis of the different competition entries which is carried out by two jury members and an engineer external to the city hall building committee.

Another point to be noted here is that the competition proposals are received by April 15, but are kept unopened until the gathering of the jury on 29 April. They are then posted in the meeting room of the Kiruna fire station, but kept there under lock and key. Competition rules and anonymity are fully respected. It is not until after the announcement and approval in the city council of the winning proposal that the public is invited in to view the competition entries.

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19 This conclusion is drawn judging from the available protocols in the municipal archive.
20 Åke Forsberg assisted by Jan Thurfjell (author of the brief) and “ingeniör Erik Roshed”. Utredningskommittén, [...]4.6.1958, p 2.
21 The exhibition was open for one week, 5-11 June 1958, by invitation of the city hall building committee, and announced in a local newspaper [attachment to protocol of the the city hall building committee meeting 4 June 1958].
(b) THE 1950s PROCESS: COMMENTS
As regards norms and methods-of-approach steering the competition process, these fit in well with those of the period—the 1950s. There are none of the habitual problems of ineffectual preparatory work, or an insufficient brief or poor client leadership; these phenomena as they appear in the first half of the 20th century in Sweden I have previously traced and discussed (Bloxham Zettersten 2010). From the April 1956 decision onwards, things are done “right” on the part of the organizer, with the clear aim of projecting a city hall building and getting it implemented. Information is gathered, and the necessary preparatory work is carried out. A small number of people are involved in the venture from start to finish with some of them shifting between roles, the chairmen in both the city hall building committee and the city council are competent and a driving force, collaboration is good—even praised at the end of the competition—and the process is characterized by a marked, positive ethos.

The competition brief—a central feature of the competition process—was formulated to the point and in brief and factual terms, with the accompanying documents needed. It led to a successful proposal which was found most satisfactory by all, in all its aspects. Indeed, expectations were more than met. The project chosen for implementation was approved to be built with hardly any architectonic changes; the changes made during project design were, as already described, almost all of a functional nature and can generally be attributed to changes in space requirements and convenient access. This included a widening of all four sides of the building by 1.5 m. The measure respected the preservation of a large central hall space—in a plain cubic building turned inward, away from the darkness and cold climate—to be used in the years to come for a multitude of public activities. In the fifty years of usage it has grown in significance to carry the immanent values wished for in the new city hall of the 2010s. Alvar Aalto’s response to the same brief differed entirely. Together with a team of eight collaborators he produced a proposal which in its own right is generally recognized as a masterpiece in architectonic terms. In conceptual mode it was the opposite to that of Artur von Schmalensee, turning outward towards, and reflecting, the dramatic topography; here the public meeting space (a torg, or “square”) was outdoors, but in the arctic setting this would have been inadequate. The effective brief respecting the competition rules was a model of the period, and here proven to be clearly open to free and innovative solutions.

As regards the divided 1st prize—or rather two 1st prizes, as the prize sum was doubled—what was at issue in the Kiruna process was, as we have seen, a hard choice between operations and functions, budget and comfort versus architectonics. The outcome is to be considered in the light of the contemporary SAA competition rules which permitted only one first prize in non-ideas competitions!

The composition of the jury according to the rules in the 1950s was expected to have a majority of professionals as against local laymen representing a position of trust who could afterwards become members of a building committee. In Kiruna these last two had been

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23 The city hall building committee protocol (Stadshusbyggnadskommitténs protokoll), 1959-1-30, §21.
24 Cf. the jury’s evaluation, SAR:s tävlingsblad 4, 1959, p 148ff.
25 SAR:s tävlingsblad 3, 1960, p 84.
26 SAR:s tävlingsblad 3, 1960, p 81.
members of the investigative committee all along—one of them being the deputy chairman—which would be only natural, particularly in this outpost town.

Finally it may be added that an increase in invited competitions had been seen from 1956, in parallel with a great increase in public building activities which were often project oriented.\(^{27}\) Specialization had come to be regarded as a guarantee (a) for expertise in the field being grounds for choosing the invited competition, and (b) against non-professional competition proposals.\(^{28}\)

(c) THE COMPETITION PROCESS, 2011-13\(^{29}\)

The competition process leader for the city hall prequalification and invited competition, a consultant from an independent firm, was called on by the municipality in preparation of this task from 2009, and engaged from the autumn of 2011, with the start of the competition project, with the effective appointment lasting a good year from mid-2012. Long before this point two other significant parties had been involved in the brainstorming and planning: (a) one experienced architect, hired as a consultant, who also became a member of the jury and who in total came to be involved in the entire city transformation and city hall project during a period of 5-6 years; and (b) the SLG (Strategiska ledningsgruppen), a strategic group of directors for different administrative units, had been considering the differing requirements for the new city hall, making a program analysis, and so they might be described as a proto-committee; their meetings had resulted in written notes/informal protocols kept by the deputy municipality leader who was also participant throughout the following process. It was the SLG who specified the commission to the process leader. Beside their own group, they also constituted six other municipal work groups, also described as “reference groups”, representing different municipal units and functions, staff and politicians; these groups were asked in the early phase to express their wishes and requirements as regards qualities for the new building and these results were fed into the competition brief.\(^{30}\) Later on, for the jury assessment of the five competition proposals the SLG also wrote a statement emphasizing important points for consideration by the jury, without taking any sides concerning a particular proposal.\(^{31}\)

The organizer’s competition process leader wrote the prequalifying program invitation, upon consultation with the SAA competitions secretary, in an ideas exchange with the LKAB process leader for the city transformation and, in particular, an architect appointed by LKAB

\(^{27}\) SAR:s tävlingsblad 3, 1960, p 85ff;
\(^{29}\) This account relies in particular on the interview statements by the municipality’s competition process leader ÖM and the LKAB acting process leader, architect NE, while supplemented by and cross-referred to in the interviews with the LKAB process leader PL, and two jury members appointed by the municipality, consultant architect LF and municipal secretary for culture LL. The SAA competitions secretary present throughout the process has corroborated and added to this information, as has the deputy municipality leader MD and the Henning Larsen Architects partner PTJ responsible for the winning team’s proposal.
\(^{30}\) ÖM, 22.10.2013
\(^{31}\) MD, mail 2.12.2013; LF, 23.10.2013 who diverges slightly in also mentioning “preferences” on the part of the work groups.
for the specific task of following the city hall project; this architect was assigned, in her role as *deputy process leader*, by LKAB to the jury, and for the post-competition project design phase she is now their process leader.

The LKAB then deputy process leader—the architect—has stated that she came to see her role in the interchange with the competition process leader during his writing of the invitation program as one of explaining the nature and detailing of demands for the projects that may be considered fair and possible in an architectural competition. This resulted in his cutting back on some demands. By taking this stand, she chose to represent architectural interests in the first place, before those of her employer, LKAB.³²

Now—in the post-competition project design phase—the municipality’s competition process leader has switched seats, having been appointed as LKAB’s consultant process leader, due to his acknowledged great competence in the areas of operations, sustainability, energy and climate which were all specified as of particular importance for the competition task.

*The jury*, alias the *multiple competence* committee, who were actively engaged—as has been pointed out above—throughout the process, consisted of nine people; of these, the municipality appointed six—the consultant architect engaged from the start of the entire project, three administrative leaders within the municipality, the municipal secretary for culture, and one artist—while SAA appointed two architects, and LKAB the deputy process leader/architect. In the invitation it is stated that experts “within, for example, the fields of sustainability/environment, energy, economics, geotechnique, landscape architecture, construction etc” “will be called in to assist the jury’s work” (*Inbjudan*, p. 5).

On the part of the municipality, the steering factor for the inclusion on the jury of the secretary for culture and an artist was the specific aim of transferring to the new building, and strengthening, the positive qualities and functions characteristic of the present city hall; among these qualities were the customary exhibitions of the large municipal “art collection of a very high quality” (*Inbjudan*, p. 2). However, it was not until in the actual competition brief that an art museum placed inside the city hall was included as part of the competition task!

*The invitation* for an open Prequalification was announced internationally on 2 October 2012, and the last day for handing in an application/notification of interest (*Intresseanmälan*) was two months later, on 3 December. Language specified for the application was Swedish, Norwegian, Danish or English, while language to be used in the competition and for the project was given as Swedish only. The invitation stated the usual formal requirements (cf. Rönn 2012 b, p. 2f, 10; *Inbjudan*, p. 5f); of special note is a declaration of intent (*Programförklaring*) where the entrant was asked to explain how the team intended to work with the project in order to secure the intentions of the municipal target scheme for the new city hall, mentioned above. Reference projects could be five at most, of which two must have been built and at least one of those in a cold/arctic climate, and key roles held by members of the team in those projects must be stated; client referees for the reference projects would be contacted.

³² NE, 24.10.2013, referring to the competition process leader’s initial “tough list of demands”.


56 applications were received which in the Kiruna case were read by all the members of the jury—a measure which appears to be unusual. Individual readings were followed by a group meeting for the whole jury. The selection process outlined in the invitation was in three steps: (1) must requirements; (2) a ranking using points on a scale 1-5, being weighted according to a percentage system, on three counts; and (3) for the 15 entrants ranked the highest, referees were contacted on two more counts, ability to cooperate and the ability to carry through a successful project design of complex buildings of a similar character within the agreed schedule and budget; these answers also gave points. When a referee could not be reached this gave 0 points, but all reference projects did receive a referee statement from at least somebody. After individual ranking, the jury met in groups with different areas of speciality. Competence in the teams that was regarded as particularly important concerned energy in an arctic climate, architectonic and sustainable project design and experience with structures housing art.

Regarding the requirements, a comment from the municipality’s consultant architect jury member took the form of a complaint that eligibility according to merits and recognized status as successful architects was given priority by LKAB, through their company lawyers wanting a 100% guarantee that there would be no battle between the architects afterwards. Therefore they instituted “a rather tough system for the prequalification” which meant that the jury could not carry out the sorting out process the way they would have wanted.

The brief was not handed out to the five competing teams until seven weeks after the announcement of the result of the prequalification and of their having been selected. The late publication of the brief was due, however, as has already been pointed out, to the specific condition of the previous competition for the central city plan having first to be resolved, to indicate the actual site within it for the new city hall. The public presentation of the winning central city plan project preceded the publication of the brief by only four days, an interval that is said to have caused some hectic activity in the competition organizing group, reconfiguring the brief. This was the result of the winners having abandoned a recommendation in the central city plan brief for a particular area located not in the town centre but slightly to the side, in favour of a smaller site in a new town centre square environment. The change meant dropping an original request for a potential city hall extension, and also for parking in the immediate neighbourhood.

Six days later, on 14 March, a one-day start-up meeting in Kiruna for all the selected teams together introduced the actual competition. It was comprised a series of activities: (a) The competitors were divided up into two groups that were then switched round: the first group was shown around the present city hall by the secretary for culture who was one of the jury members, while the second group received a description of the site for the new city hall from the director of the municipal unit for land development who had been a jury member in the

34 NE, 24.10.2013, in particular; LL, 24.10.2013, stating that art structures turned out to be no problem, as that was very common among the entrants.
35 LF, 23.11.2013. The LKAB company lawyers were Svartlings in Stockholm.
36 8 March 2013 versus 18 January 2013.
37 LF, 23.10.2013 and ÖM 22.10.13; also NE 24.10.2013.
first competition for a central city plan. After that (b) there was a closed meeting (in the city hall Council Chamber) for all the teams at one and the same time together with the jury, the SAA secretary, two city planners co-opted to the jury, and in particular, the competition process leader who explained the brief. Afterwards the competitors could ask questions relating to the brief; other questions concerned for example the Swedish Public Procurement Act. These questions and answers were recorded, reappearing together with some adjustments to the brief, as a PM to the competition brief, which was sent out to the competitors on 26 March. The teams could also discuss with each other at this time. Following the closed meeting, (c) there was a site visit, when the competitors could take photos, ask questions and make comments; one such comment was that the site seemed too low-lying (a condition, however, that the client could not change!). (d) The group was then shown around in the topography, passing the one new Kiruna public building on the way, a school designed by one of the two SAA jury member architects. (e) The start-up meeting was concluded on a pleasant socializing note by a trip to the nearby Jukkasjärvi Ice Hotel, where the group was shown around and then invited by Kiruna municipality to a dinner at the inn/restaurant next door. All interviewees present have attested to satisfaction with the day’s arrangements.

The reason for this—unusual--mode of social finish for all the competitors, the jury and the members of the day’s meeting (that included, in particular, the two process leaders from the municipality and LKAB, respectively) was both the fact of a non-existent flights schedule to enable departures from Kiruna in the evening, and, not least, the Kiruna tradition of friendly hospitality in a harsh environment. This was when the whole group could get acquainted in a nice way; the only directive was that there could be no discussion of the competition itself between the parties. On this note the start-up meeting dissolved, and the competitors then had until 10 June, 2 ½ months later, to submit their competition projects.

During part of the competition period questions could be addressed to the jury members for whom the questioners were anonymous. When the competition proposals had come in, a preliminary meeting of the jury was held, to consider whether all five proposals could be evaluated; this was confirmed, in spite of the fact that all had slight deficiencies (“nothing serious”) in the formal accounting. A large number of consultants were contacted, on several different technical aspects, and two teams of controllers checked the cost estimates, for the municipality and LKAB, respectively. During the jury evaluation period the competition projects were exhibited in the large central space of the city hall, where the public could leave written comments for the jury to consider. Moreover, the jury had a meeting with the public who could ask questions and get their explanations, a process in which the administrative units also took part.

38 The city planners co-opted to the jury were one partner representative of the winning city planning team Ghilardi Hellsten, and Kiruna’s city architect.
39 Raketskolan by Mats Jacobsson, of MAF Architects, Luleå.
41 All the interviewees present were positive, when questioned on this social finish, that this measure could in no way have affected the outcome of the competition to follow.
43 NE, 24.10.2013
It was during the summer holiday months that the jury’s internal evaluation took place. They had six meetings and several ("innumerable") group telephone meetings. During the final month of August the two co-opted city planners were called in—a request from the town municipality. This was done due to their special knowledge of the urban environment, and they could give their opinions—which the jury considered valuable—without having the right to vote. The announcement of the winning team came on 13 September: Henning Larsen Architects together with WSP Sverige, Temagruppen Sverige and UiWe, with their proposal “Kristallen” (the Crystal).

The prequalification work had been approved by the municipal executive board, and the winning proposal was approved by the city council. The competition would in the final instance be financed by the client LKAB where the bills would be sent by the organizer, Kiruna municipality. It should be added that during the competition evaluation period itself LKAB attempted to do no further steering.
(d) THE 2010s PROCESS: COMMENTS

In the outline of actual and postulated givens which introduces the account of the 2011-13 process, the main points of issue have already been made clear. In the account above these issues are illustrated through the course decided on for carrying out the competition under the given circumstances. New and important ideals of contemporary openness, dialogue and “softened” procedure such as the Start-up meeting, demonstrated within the specific conditions of the Kiruna competition process, will also be underscored in the concluding remarks below. What follows first is further comments relating specifically to the contemporary competition problematic.

Referring here to one central problematic of the present study considering expectations and requirements versus steering conditions, it may be illustrated by the particular point already brought up in mentioning the differing demands to the invitation program of the architect acting for LKAB and the organizer’s consultant competition process leader. The latter has expressed his disappointment at the limited demands in the brief on climate, energy and environment/sustainability (“miljö”) as well as the non-qualified response regarding those same aspects in the competition proposals. Already mentioned too is the municipality’s consultant architect jury member’s complaint regarding selection requirements being too focused on the professional status of the applicants. In both cases we appear to see evidence of a clash of interest which has grown steadily more central in the present-day competition process, namely the dominance of aspects relating to operations and functions versus architectonics. Apart from demands relating to economic efficiency, always present, this phenomenon may be explained by the present-day emphasis on specialization; consultants, of course, exemplify this clash.

It should be stressed here regarding the Kiruna selection which diverges from the norm--due to LKAB’s status requirements, already mentioned, for the prequalification in order to avoid legal consequences--that this is at odds with the general finding that there is a difference in the tendering of products as opposed to services; there is rarely criticism of tendered
services.\textsuperscript{47} Also, regarding the differing loyalties of jury members, it may be added here that their loyalties or types of responsibility may be seen as of five different kinds; these have been studied in relation to a Finnish context by Swedish researchers.\textsuperscript{48}

As already pointed to in this study, the truly outstanding feature of the Kiruna 2010s competition process has been the strived for open dialogue and collective nature of the process. This is seen exemplified in the direct contact with the public in a shopping mall sought by some municipality officials in one of the work groups, to sound out the expectations of the public concerning the new city hall; the questions asked of individuals centered around what function and meaning the present city hall had had in his/her life and experience. The gathering of this information formed a basis for wishes and requirements to be transmitted to the consultant competition process leader in anticipation of the writing of the brief.\textsuperscript{49} A different example of dialogue/interchange, was the responsible partner from the Henning Larsen Architects team holding a meeting with municipality politicians in conjunction with the start-up meeting.\textsuperscript{50}

The invited competition form was chosen by necessity as being the only option open within the pressed time frame. The need to find teams from the start was also all-important and this was another factor. But all interviewees directly concerned with the competition expressed a wish that a two-stage competition had been possible, as that would have resulted in a greater freedom to elaborate ideas as well as to meet all demands that the organizer might have wanted to include in the brief.\textsuperscript{51} Instead, the chosen competition form would now mean more detailed design work in the project design phase. What happened post-competition is that the client LKAB—who were part of and considered as one with the organizing set-up\textsuperscript{52}—made an attempt to request a significant change in the design affecting the character of the winning proposal which had been approved by the SAA;\textsuperscript{53} however, the matter was successfully solved to the satisfaction of all, and especially the municipal work group concerned, through clever re-design by the architects.\textsuperscript{54}

The invited competition is necessarily preceded by a selection procedure which means a pre-competition investigative effort; in the Kiruna 1950s process this meant a search for information and know-how on the part of the organizer, while in the 2010s case the so called prequalification was a competition routine procedure. In Magnus Rönn’s studies of the

\textsuperscript{49} LL, 24.10.2013 and telephone communication 16.12.2013. The form for the direct contact with the public was devised by the work group: they handed out a questionnaire with 15 options for replies, and additional to that it contained “free questions”.
\textsuperscript{50} PTJ, 12.11.2013.
\textsuperscript{51} In particular, as pointed out by NE, 24.10.2013 and ÖM, 22.10.2013. The range of possible demands had been specified at their introductory meeting with the SAA competitions secretary, when the competition form to be used was established.
\textsuperscript{52} ÖM; 22.10.2013.
\textsuperscript{53} LF, LL and PTJ—post-interview personal communication. Under §18 of the SAA competition rules the negotiation of such changes could potentially be handed over to the organization representing the competitors, here SAA, who have the moral duty of defending the winning proposal; MR, 15.11.2013, personal communication.
\textsuperscript{54} LL, telephone communication 16.12.2013.
organization of the competition process from the municipal or governmental organizer’s viewpoint Rönn has pointed to two fundamental principles that he has formulated in the double concept of *ex-ante* and *ex-post*:\(^{55}\)

\[\begin{aligned}
\textit{Ex-ante} \text{ means that organizers try to control the competition process “ahead of time” through the competition task, the competition conditions and the choice of competing architect firms.}\n
\textit{Ex-post} \text{ means that the competition is steered “afterwards” by the design and the jury’s assessment of the competition design proposals.}
\end{aligned}\]

In a comparison with the Kiruna 2010s competition process, such an *either-or* concept is hard to apply, due to a number of diverging factors in an exceptional situation. Two main factors were the facts of the double-headed stakeholder body and of the prequalification selection committee being identical with the jury; another factor, the alternating roles of several of the people organizing, partaking in and following up on the process. What is seen is in principle a fragmentation of the competition organization, and thereby also the competition process, a general contemporary phenomenon pointed to by Rönn, as already mentioned. However, in this particular case it is contradicted, or at least countered, by the marked collective ethos of the people involved.

**COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS: CONCLUDING REMARKS**

**Some points supporting comparability:**

Both competitions reviewed in this paper have been the invited form, although with a difference in the method of invitation. In the 1950s as in the 2010s the important choice of competition form facing the organizer remains basically the same: an open ideas competition with a follow-up 2\(^{nd}\) stage, permitting in depth elaboration of the project, versus the quicker solution of the invited competition. So again, what is really seen to be at issue is the choice between architectonics being made a priority rather than operations and functions, budget and convenience. IF there should in fact be a need to give priority to one or other of these options that same choice might also determine the *form of the competition: new ideas versus directed, elaborated project*. However, in the 1950s the competition proposal in the invited competition has also been seen as a sketch—a result of haste, not permitting penetration—to be developed in project design and tendering; this is precisely as compared to the two-stage competition! In 1960 one main advantage of the invited competition appears to have been seen as a way of guaranteeing professionalism, avoiding non-professional entries.\(^{56}\)

Anonymity of the competition is a precondition and a basic requirement, and this is as true in the Swedish rules of today as in the 1950s.\(^{57}\) Start-up meetings that may, in principle,


\[^{56}\] *SAR:s tävlingsblad* 3, 1960, p 81, as well as p 79.

potentially compromise anonymity were sometimes used also in the 1950s for the invited
competition, although not in the Kiruna case. However, there is an indicative difference in the
mode of start-up meeting then and now: In the 1950s it was carried out in committee meeting
form which included questions and answers, all recorded in a protocol,58 while in the 2010s
process the Kiruna start-up meeting included various activities—seminars, a closed meeting
session, a guided tour which included the projected building site and finally a communal
dinner—some of which were characterized by a form of socializing that might border, in
principle, on fraternization. The indicative difference appears to confirm a softened and
opened-up competition process in the present.

The same applies to the participation of the public in the competition process: As already
pointed to, there appears to be a fundamental difference in attitudes that may affect anonymity
also in the exhibiting of competition entries during the competition evaluation phase, and the
public’s contact with the jury in 2013, compared to the formal requirements for anonymity in
the 1956-58 process, when entries were locked up and exhibited only after the completed
evaluation.

One may conclude that a main point manifesting divergence is the opened-up process:

What we see now is the larger, democratic stage-set versus the smaller organization, familiar
to all the actors involved. However, in the present-day process there was indeed a wish for
direct contact; as already mentioned, it was an intention on the part of the organizer to see the
process characterized by dialogue and multiplicity. The notion of direct contact expresses a
general wish to avoid a deferment via agents that may be likened to competition anonymity.
This is seen by the culture secretary—one of the officials partaking in the shopping mall
direct contact initiative—as being continued in the present project design phase when
municipality officials have been prevented from direct contact with the architect team on
questions of specific details pertaining to their particular administrative units, or in this case
the projected art museum. It is, however, a requirement by the client LKAB that all contact is
taken via the municipality’s new process leader for the project design phase. Here the double-
headed stakeholder body may be confirmed as being a major steering condition.

A general fear today, as expressed by Magnus Rönn, appears to be that multiplicity of agents
leads to fragmentation of organization. One may speculate if fragmentation is in the final
instance the effect of a general striving for accountability in our time. This is as opposed to an
older, more comprehensive view of the method-of-approach and results strived for, a striving
that reflected a socio-ethical attitude; nor was that so hard, with far fewer agents. Welfare
state ideals and norms dictated method and course of action. In our own post-structural period
studies of mechanisms of control reflect a new inquiry, and have made an impact on
sociopolitical discourse.59

In a general conclusion, what one can see has changed dramatically is the form and method of
the whole process—planning, competition as well as the project design phase—making it, in
the best case, interactive. A key to a paradigm shift governing building control within the

58 SAR:s tävlingsblad 3, 1960, p 82.
59 Cf. for example, Gilles Deleuze (1992), “Postscript on the Societies of Control”.

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earlier Swedish welfare state system versus in the neoliberal audit society of today is discussed by Rolf Johansson as a shift from control by rules to control by goals; this key might also be seen to apply to the competition process. Where competition rules were of paramount importance in the mid-20th century, one now finds the SAA, in a supplementary guide to a book on tendering in public processes, advocating contemporary openness and “softened” procedure, the more easily for clients to achieve the goal of successful tendering. Equally, it might be claimed that the present-day wish for a collective, democratic process is a means to an end—but an ideal end. It appears to correspond with the well-known general paradigm shift between the 1950s and now from qualitative to quantitative analysis. And yet again, these aspects appear to be contradicted to some extent by the specific and, in parts, exceptional process conditions in Kiruna. Here the collective, democratic process is a working ideal. Some foci have changed, dreams are reused—but in newer forms.

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