

**Аннотация:**

В городском пространстве Белостока особое место занимает историческая застройка ул. Варшавской (прежде всего по поводу своей разнообразности). Однако, несмотря на то, что эта улица находится в центральной части города, некоторые фрагменты застройки нуждаются в обновлении, реконструкции, а иногда и перестройке.

В статье представлены проблемы, связанные с процессом ревитализации пространства на примере студенческих работ, выполненных в 2013 и 2014 годах. Представлены проектные решения, включающие ревитализацию объектов архитектуры.

**Annotation:**

Warszawska street has special meaning in Białystok's urban space (because architecture of historical buildings is very differential). Despite that the street is located in the center of Białystok some fragments of architectural space needs revitalization.

This paper presents the problems of architectural space revitalization. As the examples to illustrate these problems choosed a few students works realized in 2013 and 2014 years. The paper presents conceptual solutions of the scope of architectural object revitalization.

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**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS AS A TOOL FOR INNOVATION IN THE  
DESIGN OF PUBLIC SPACES.  
THE CASE OF SUPERKILEN PARK BY BJARKE INGELS GROUP**

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*This paper presents how a public participation process could be an innovative design tool when projecting public spaces. The study case presented will explain in detail the participation process developed between January and October 2009, as a part of the design project for Superkilen Park, a new public space located in Nørrebro neighbourhood (Copenhagen). This project was designed by the multidisciplinary team formed by the landscape architects of office Topotek1, the local artist group Superflex, and directed by the architecture office Bjarke Ingels Group, based also in the Danish capital.*

*Introduction.* The Superkilen Park is the result of an architectural competition organized by the municipality of Copenhagen and Realdania. When the contest was launched, the area where Superkilen was located aimed to be transformed in the new representative public space in Nørrebro neighborhood. Till that moment it was the urban mark of a former railway line, which was dismantled in 1930 and then used as a part of the city tramway infrastructure till the 70s. Later, in 2003, the footprint that this railway line left in the urban network was the base to create the *Grønne Cykelruter Nørrebro*, one of the most important bike lines in the city, which articulated the North-South connection, linking Nørrebro with *Fredriksberg* municipality.

The so-called "welfare state" is widely implanted in the Nordic context. Among other things it promotes equality of opportunity, and public participation which involves promoting the debate on the city as a base from which to address the issues raised. Beside several social benefits, it has also led to what Bjarke Ingels calls "the culture of consensus". However, this usually extended condition of Danish society, as a homogeneous social group without any kind of conflict, is partly a stereotype that breaks in Copenhagen and especially in this neighborhood. Nørrebro is the area of the city that stretches northwest of the historic center, which emerged from the urban extension from the North gate of the ancient wall. Since its inception, in the middle of the nineteenth century, has been a neighborhood of immigrants (currently representing 30% of the population). This situation is even more pronounced in the area where Superkilen is located, *Outer Nørrebro* and especially in the *Mjølnerparken* openly described as a ghetto. So in a society like the Danish, virtually ethnically and culturally homogeneous, Nørrebro is an exception. Therefore the consensus, as a design tool,

apparently easy to achieve in many other parts of the country is set here in crisis.

Bjarke Ingels, the director of the team that designed and built Superkilen, usually starts explaining the project in his lectures, referring to the urban riots occurred in Copenhagen, and especially in the neighborhood of *Nørrebro* as a result of the so-called "crisis of the Mohammed cartoons". However, these have not been the only riots that occurred in the neighborhood. In fact we could say that this "welfare state" has a not so gentle face, which has appeared on numerous grassroots revolts over the past decades. Lately the area where Superkilen is located, suffered strong social problems which even resulted in shootouts between rival gangs.

Precisely because of these recent events, and claims by the neighborhood, the local administration proposed to act on the neighborhood to improve, among other things, its urban conditions. So politicians, knowing the episodes of social unrest discussed above knew of the importance of public participation to achieve success in these projects, but the question then was: How to achieve consensus in a "conflict zone"?

With the described social and urban situation, the promoters of this urban renewal project, proposed what might apparently seem contradictory: Superkilen, a new urban space, had to become a "lighthouse" for the area, while maintaining the character of the neighborhood. In the words of Astrid Bruus Thomsen, representing Realdania in the jury, Superkilen should not become, what is sometimes called, a *caffè latte* square, as it would be doomed to failure with the given urban and social conditions in the neighborhood (fig. 1).

Under these conditions it seemed that the idea of consensus, that "common minimum" as design tool would not be easy to achieve. Maybe it was not even desirable. Then the question was: how to achieve this goal in a neighborhood with 57 different nationalities and a heterogeneous urban built environment? The theme of the contest and the issues raised on it, were part of the interests stated by the Bjarke Ingels Group, as we can

read in the prologue essay of the *YES IS MORE* exhibition catalog:

"Besides the obvious societal virtues, these principles have had a significant side effect in the realm of architecture: a gray goo of sameness accounting for the vast majority of the urban tissue, where most attempts to stick out have been beaten down into the same non-offensive generic box, and all libido invested in polishing and perfecting the ever finer details. The sum of all the little concerns seems to have blocked the view of the big picture" [1].

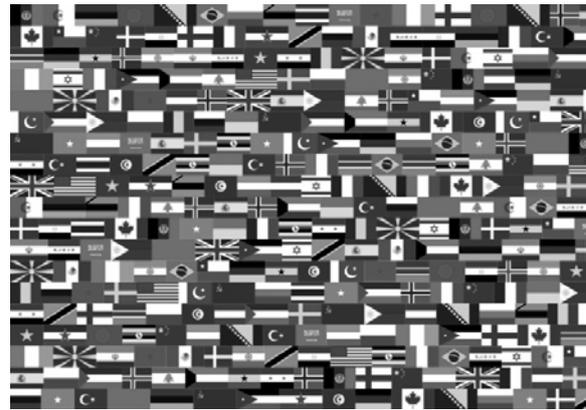


Fig. 1. Collage presented in the competition proposal showing *Nørrebro*'s social diversity

The answer given by the multidisciplinary team was that instead of trying to achieve a design that was able to "invent" a new identity that suited with everybody, it was possible to create the image of the community from the diversity of the "others" (all the "other" people that inhabit *Nørrebro*). So then, Superkilen could be explained as built *figuration* (a representation) of the neighborhood itself: a public space that shows its social and urban heterogeneity, thinking that this condition was precisely the only way to build its identity. Therefore, compared to the usual idea of consensus as a design method in the Danish culture, here we can find a public space as a place of representation of the disagreements in the neighborhood. As a result of this, the idea behind the project was to build a kind of "universal exhibition", a "global park" revisited, placing on it objects coming from all the nationalities present in the neighborhood. This "global park" would be built us-

ing those elements to be proposed by the inhabitants of the district, according to a public participation process: Superkilen would be a public space full of "immigrants' objects" in an immigrant neighborhood.

*The main part.* "Public participation is essential for the development of this competition and subsequent project. Therefore one of the most important aspects of this contest is that the winning team should be able to manage a public participation process in an interesting and constructive manner. Citizen Participation is the basis from which to create an urban space capable of promoting the life of the neighborhood."

"It is expected that the participation of citizens continue once the contest ends. Therefore, the proposal should describe how citizens could participate in its development during its further development." [2]

So the goal of the team led by BIG was not only to give an urban and architectural response to the contest but also address this issue.

Martin Rein-Cano (Superflex): "The brief was: «Deal with the issue of migration in this neighborhood. Can you somehow make this situation better?». So, the original subject was not our idea; migration was the point of departure. We just took it very seriously, almost literally. This idea of having not one tradition, not one identity, having a whole source of identities, and also, obviously, a lot of contradictions around these issues, marked the start of our concept." [3]

Besides the design of new urban space, the proposal described a process of public participation for the search and selection of objects that should colonize Superkilen. Each neighbor could propose the elements that would like, as *cut & paste* action (fig. 2). Finally, the proposed set of elements would be submitted to a jury composed by the multidisciplinary team and a group of representatives of the residents (*Kilebestyrelsen*).

Nowadays to talk about public participation in an urban project like that is no longer an option but most of the times a legal requirement. That does not mean, as in many other aspects of our discipline, that it en-

ures compliance with optimal results. So the way, in which these procedures are usually formulated are processes of *information* or *consultation* (as defined by Sherry Arnstein in 1969). However in this case the situation was different. Firstly because of a representative of the residents was part of the jury that selected the winning project. Secondly, because the project itself proposed that the neighbors were those who had to choose which objects should be placed and where, in a participation process involving also authors and promoters.

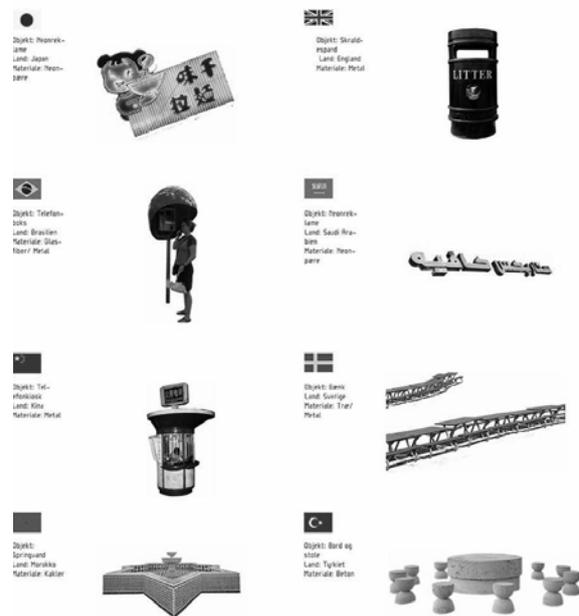


Fig. 2. Objects proposed by authors to be "cut & pasted" in Superkilen

Once the winning project was selected, the process took place between January and October 2009. During that time public participation was encouraged through, let's say, conventional resources: advertisements in local newspapers, creating a website ([www.superkilen.dk](http://www.superkilen.dk)) and finally with the installation of a physical mailbox on the future park for suggestions through a model ballot. In February the authors presented a first triptych in which the neighbors were encouraged to participate in the design of a "universal exhibition" in *Nørrebro* sending suggestions before March 1st, as during that month was scheduled the first public presentation of the project. However in response to

the first call for participation the authors found basically functional suggestions rather than concrete objects. On March 19th it was announced the progress of the project, which was almost definitive in the design of its surfaces. But in relation to the elements that should appear over them, they presented a list of possible objects, classifying them by type and showing a possible location within the project.

Given the low participation received so far, the authors went on to take an active role in the process, understanding that it as a kind of conversation between authors and future users. Maybe to think that the neighbors (or most of them) were to perform an exercise of search and selection of objects was a very bold bet. That is why the authors "broke the ice" making a kind of catalogue of possibilities for them. After this time they continued encouraging the citizen participation by posting new posters in press between May and June 2009, which showed some of the most striking objects already proposed by the authors as a Moroccan fountain, a palm tree full of snow or a giant red octopus (fig. 3).

Finally in September 2009 an exhibition was held in the *Nørrebrohallen* showing which objects had arrived, for the jury (formed by authors and local representatives but without the intervention of the promoters) to decide which should be placed in Superkilen. As a result of this process just five objects were actually directly proposed by the neighbors (as was declared by Laura Koch, the architect on charge of the project at the Copenhagen Park Department) (fig. 4). Therefore most of the objects we see today in Superkilen were nominated and elected by the authors themselves.

Actually this no direct participation of the neighbors was something that worried the developers since the beginning of the project, and it was clearly stated when interviewing Laura Koch: "what we asked them (to the architects) in the beginning was: «What do we do if we can't get enough things to furnish the whole site?». We chose some things (5 objects) but they were not enough and we wanted to pick something

more for the locals. That was actually the process: A few meetings with locals to make proposals for the objects... to know if they wanted trees, benches, etc... summarizing, the process then was to prepare a list of things that they wanted for the new park."

But this was not the only concern about citizen participation. The authors were also concerned about what they called the "theater of participation":

Martin Rein-Cano (Superflex): "The whole conceptual framework of citizen involvement follows the idea of representational democracy. A certain group is chosen to represent others, and then you have to deal with this group. In our case, the group (citizen's group) consisted mainly of slight obese middle-aged white men –with a sort of bitter tonality when speaking. So, you end up sitting in the middle of the most diverse area of Denmark in front of 15 white, middle age-men. These people have a lot of power. But, they probably would say that they do not have any power. However, compared to the kids on the street, they do." [4].



Fig. 3. Participation process poster

In response to this double concern (if the neighbors would be willing to participate in this process of *copy & paste*, and if the necessary presence of the group of representatives would block other voices) the competition proposal eventually included another parallel participation project led by Superflex that was basically asking people: "If you could do anything you wanted, what would you do?"



Fig. 4. Objects in Superkilen directly proposed by neighbours during the participation process

This side project gave a response to different questions: it made true the idea of copying and pasting elements proposed by the neighbors, and on the other, introduced in the process certain groups of population whose interests often do not coincide with those of the neighborhood representatives. This side parallel project was called "extreme participation" and five groups of people were selected to make a journey to any part of the world to select an object to be cut and pasted later in Superkilen. Then Niklas and Benjamin chose a sound system from Jamaica. Conny and Tove, two elderly belonging to *Mjølnerparken Nordic Walking*, decided to bring a small *Osborne* bull from Spain to the hills of the park. Alli and Billal, two friends who grew up together in *Mjøl-*  
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*nerparken* amateur practitioners of *muay thai* and kickboxing, brought an outdoors ring from Bangkok. Inga and Bent members of an association of line dancing brought a dance pavilion that they found in the Tower Grove Park in St. Louis. And finally Alaa and Hiba, two Palestinian rappers proposed for Superkilen a tradition of Palestinians in exile: bringing there earth from their country (fig. 5).

Thus, although the original intention of the project was *cut & paste* all objects to be placed in Superkilen, the result was that only 11 of the 108 objects were actually selected directly by the neighbors: five proposed in the initial process plus six carried by the project led by Superflex. The rest are therefore the result of a selection made by the authors, counting with the approval of *Kilebestyrelsen*.

Conclusion. Being this clearly a significant fact, no reference was located in the developed research. When the project is described the main issue is the performed public participation process but there is no mention to the fact that only these few objects were directly proposed by citizens. Therefore, may we qualify this aspect of the project as a failure?

Firstly we should state that the strategy of public participation was not an end in itself, but a mean to achieve certain objectives. The fact that at least in its most innovative part of the process it did not achieved the expected results, does not mean that it did not achieved the desired objectives. This strategy of cutting and pasting objects pursued at least three purposes: show physically the cultural diversity of the neighborhood, transform Superkilen in a new "lighthouse" for Nørrebro, and improve the social integration of neighbors.

We should recognize that this diversity "designed" by the authors, not as spontaneous as it is usually said, seems to have gotten at least the first two stated objectives. Visiting the project is easy to understand the mixed origin of the objects, and this kind of "world fair" has become a real "lighthouse" for the neighborhood, as it is usual to find people from abroad visiting it.

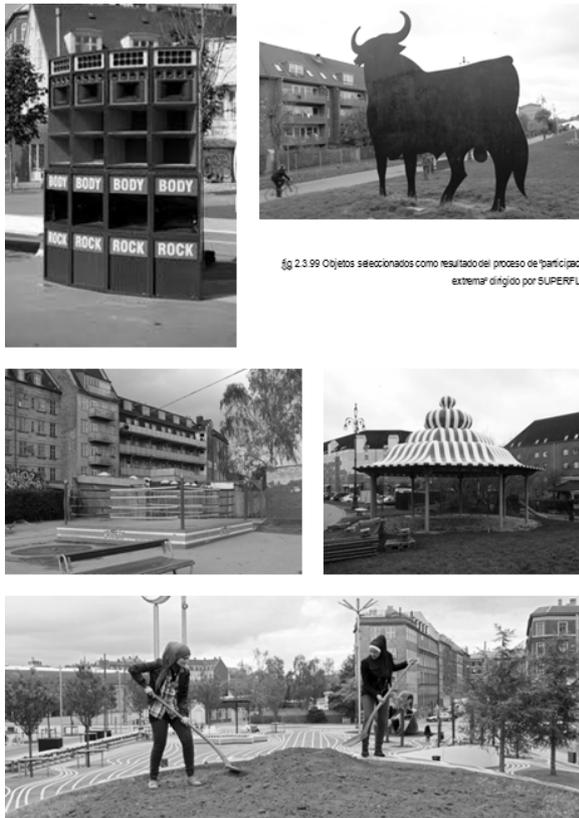


Fig. 5. Objects selected during the “extreme participation” process

Finally, talking about social integration, the developed research is not intended to measure their current value, or the influence of Superkilen on this data. Regardless of these issues here we can reflect here the experience there during the field work performed. During that time (November 2014) no social unrest, like described before, was found there. On the contrary, Superkilen is now a meeting place for the neighborhood. However we can find there a small sign showing that tensions experienced are still present... at least in part. In the park there are several panels with a map showing the position of each object along with its name and origin (in Danish and local language). The object 41 is a manhole cover with Israeli symbols (fig. 6). Two of these panels, the closest to Mjølnerparken, have the Hebrew typography scratched, with the name of the city and state (Tel Aviv, Israel). As

mentioned this little sign, a small act of ideological vandalism on street furniture, evidence, far more than other defects that appear on objects or surfaces, that social conflicts are somehow still present in the neighborhood.

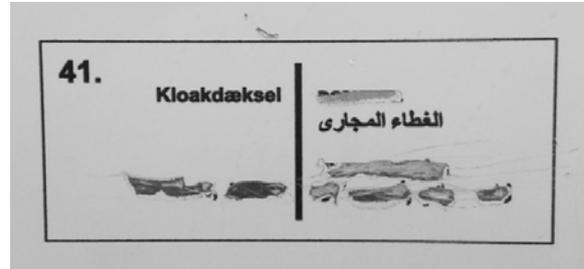


Fig. 6. Object 41 description scratched on the panel

References:

1. Bjarke Ingels. Yes is more. An archicomic on architectural evolution. EVERGREEN GmbH, Colonia, 2009, p. 14.
2. Municipality of Copenhagen, Realdania. Superkilen competition brief, points 1 and 6.4.1.
3. Barbara Steiner. Superkilen. Arvinus+Orfeus, Stockholm, 2013, p.70.
4. Barbara Steiner. Superkilen. Arvinus+Orfeus, Stockholm, 2013, p.50.

**ПРИНЦИП УЧАСТИЯ НАСЕЛЕНИЯ  
(ПАРТИЦИПАЦИИ) КАК  
ИННОВАЦИОННЫЙ ИНСТРУМЕНТ  
ПРОЕКТИРОВАНИЯ ОБЩЕСТВЕННЫХ  
ПРОСТРАНСТВ  
НА ПРИМЕРЕ ПАРКА СУПЕРКИЛЕН  
БЪЯРКЕ ИНГЕЛЬС ГРУПП.  
Висенте Иборра Палларес,  
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В статье рассказывается, каким образом участие населения в процессе проектирования может стать инновационным инструментом при формировании общественных пространств. На примере парка Суперкилен в районе Норребро в Копенгагене детально описывается партиципация населения в разработке проекта в период с января по октябрь 2009 г. Этот проект был разработан архитектурным бюро Бьярке Ингельс Групп в составе мульти дисциплинарной команды, также состоящей из ландшафтного бюро Топотекл и группы местных художников Суперфлекс.

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