

Reassembling the Splintered City: The Role of Place-Making in Promoting Planning for Diversity for a Livable Neighborhood and an Inclusive City

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Abstract : The research investigated the process and outcomes of an ongoing project “Den Grønne Rute”: a network of recreational rooms to be implemented throughout a former vulnerable neighborhood: Trekanten in the city of Holstebro in Denmark. The aim of the project is to better integrate Trekanten in the city and which initiated reflections upon the (dis)connection and the integration in relation to urban planning and city management, as well as the extent to which the project considers diversity since Holstebro is a growing multicultural city. With this research, it was first verified if Trekanten is splintered from Holstebro city, and secondly if planning for diversity, by engaging people in the process via place-making approaches, can help redress the disconnection between the neighborhood and the rest of the city. More specifically, the paper aims at exploring the role of place-making “Den Grønne Rute” in Trekanten in promoting planning for diversity and reassembling the splintering in the city. The theoretical and conceptual framework served to analyze the relationship between the splintering urbanism concept and the community involvement’s role in an inclusive process. The field study examines the detachment between Trekanten and Holstebro and the extent to which the project can overcome the disconnection. Methodologically a mix-methods approach was adopted where two semi-structured interviews, a focus group, and an online survey were conducted. Contrary to prior assumptions, the results showed that not only is Trekanten splintered from the city, but also the city is greatly disconnected from Trekanten, and hence Holstebro is a splintered city. The surprise was that Trekanten is moreover inner-splintered. The splintering urbanism accordingly has different dimensions. Even though the project’s design seemed to incorporate diverse ages and groups of people, its process lacks an understanding of the diversity’s relevance in promoting inclusiveness. In fact, the analysis revealed socio-cultural and psychological splintering. Since place-making, as a collaborative approach in planning, is itself an expression of diversity (since it brings differences into play), reconsidering diversity within the process by engaging people at the early stages of planning was recommended. Another suggestion was not to limit the project to a destination but more as an experience to remember and a story to tell. Only by bringing people together in re-imagining the place can Trekanten reassemble with Holstebro and vice versa. The aim of the research was to add a new perspective to the splintering urbanism and planning for diversity so to advance place-making as an approach in promoting the latter and redressing the former.

Keywords : the splintering urbanism, place-making, planning for diversity, Den Grønne Rute, Trekanten, Holstebro

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