

TEMPORARY SUSTAINABLE URBANISM IN KOLDING FOR PEOPLE WITH PEOPLE

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ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on how to create sustainable instant urbanism in Kolding for people and with people. More specifically, this paper addresses Kolding's engagement as a volunteer city and how this can be used to create instant urbanism. I will use data from New Nordic Talent Program – Design Sprint 2, that addresses a public space in Kolding, "Ribbersdyb" and "Holmsminde", which is currently predominated with parking lots. In the paper, I will address Kolding Municipality and the citizens' dreams about how to utilise the area. Furthermore, I will use 'Byens Ø' in Odense as a reference and look into the vibrant volunteer network in Kolding, using Food:RE:Formers as an example. Lastly, I will address sustainability in urban development. I mainly focus on sustainability in relation to the United Nations (UN's) Sustainable development goals (SDGs), since Kolding is branding themselves as a sustainable city. I have used observation studies, photo-ethnography, field study and interviews as methods. Furthermore, I will address the use of Jan Gehl's observation methods to create urban space.

Through research, I have discovered that there are potentials for creating a physical space, where

instant urbanism that is focused on sustainability. A physical space could enhance and support the already vibrant volunteer network, focusing on sustainability, in the city, which is in line with the municipalities and citizens of Kolding and their perception of the city. I am therefore proposing further research and activism among the citizens, and the creation of a new green sustainable quarter.

INTRODUCTION

Temporary urbanism is becoming a part of several cities around the world as a growing international trend. It can range from mobile buildings and gardens to street festivals and temporary construction. The mentioned are just a few examples, but the variety and possibilities of temporary urbanism are immense. In Denmark, several examples of temporary urbanism have shown citizens engagement and transformed an abandoned area to a lively and creative space, which sometimes have created new value. Some examples show that the temporary becomes permanent or turn into a new fashionable area. In Denmark, this is among others seen at Byen Ø in Odense, Institute for (X) in Aarhus and Copenhagen Street food.

The increasing interest and demand for movable architecture and urban spaces have become a practice in both temporary and instant urbanism. It gives a freedom

to be spontaneous and improvise in urban spaces, where there either is an empty space or place that cannot be occupied by permanent solutions due to the city planning or the long process of getting permission for the new plans.

As a part of New Nordic Design Thinking (NNDT) Talent program – Sprint 2, the students were given a task by the municipality, to propose a temporary or instant urban solution to an area in Kolding, which is referred to as 'Holmsminde' and 'Riberdyb' (picture 1). The five challenges that the students were invited to work with were: embracing diversity, spatial experiences, instant urbanism, layered identity and connecting places.

In a meeting with city planners from Kolding Municipality, it was explained that the area has for decades been tried to be implemented into the city, but the attempts have failed, why it is still predominated with parking lots, concrete and wild nature. The Municipality have future plans for the area, that is described in a report (2019) with a proposal for their new urban development. They state that their vision is to create a new active, vibrant and green town district – called 'Kolding Å'. It is empathised in the report, that the new district should be used by the citizens of Kolding even though the main purpose of the new area will be private housing.



Picture 1: Kolding city center. 'Holmsminde' and 'Riberdyb', Photocredit: Koldig Kommune

Kolding is branding themselves with the slogan "Kolding – We Design for life" (Julier and Leerberg, 2014), due to their status as a design city, and their wish to include the citizens in how to design the city, both referring to the activities and spaces. In the study by Julier et al. (2014), it is discovered that the participants see Kolding as a volunteer city, with the slogan "The Design Municipality of Volunteering".

In addition to the design city, Kolding Municipality is recently focusing on becoming a sustainable city. In the report (Kolding Kommune, 2019) they emphasise that they would like to be perceived as a sustainable green city, with a focus on circular economy and recycling. They state that they are focusing on the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and educate the youth to be more sustainable with "Green Youth Council", as an example. Yet another slogan is created for the master narrative "*Kolding – we will together create green-footprint*" (Klima og Bæredygtighed, 2019). In their newest report (Kolding Kommune, 2020), a sustainability strategy 2030 plan for implementing sustainable solutions in Kolding, they are in addition to their previous vision, becoming more visionary regarding their sustainable transformation. Furthermore, they are emphasising community and citizens involvement, inviting citizens to contribute with their suggestions. But do the citizens believe the created master narrative and is the municipality following their manifest?

As an active part of the city's volunteer and green community in Kolding, due to my positions as a co-founder of a newly started food waste organisation, called Food:RE:Formers (2020), I have gathered additional information to the data of the design sprint. The data has been collected through semi-structured and informal conversational interviews. Furthermore, I will have an autoethnographic approach to the data. The data gathered during the design sprints is primarily based on the approach of architect Jan Gehl regarding how to study urban public city life through dwelling and observational

studies and with a focus on cities for people (Gehl Institute, 2019).

In the following section, I will address the literature and theory, that has been used to conduct the research.

LITERATURE

Temporary and instant urbanism

Temporary and instant urbanism has become a part of several urban landscapes around the western world, which is also seen in Denmark. The temporary urbanism has shown examples of how micro-spatial temporary practices within urban space have contributed to economic growth, reshaping urban life, space and regeneration ("University of Copenhagen", 2020). Ali Madanipour (2017) is describing in his book about temporary urbanism and the future of the city, that the term temporary urbanism refers to short-term events, temporary constructions and use of urban space, which also can include gorilla gardening and other pop-up interventions. In his book, he is addressing the question, if the temporary urbanism can have an effect on the future urban environment *"Whether it is an interim fashion aimed at filling short-term economic gaps or a reflection of structural change and an instrument of transformation with long-term impact. If it is associated with the multiplication and acceleration of temporality in the city, does or make life more precarious or more creative?"* (p.6, Madanipour, A, 2017). He argues that temporary urbanism needs to be *understood "though the dynamics of urban temporality: how time unfolds in the city, locating temporary urbanism in the wider context of the multiple and multi-layered timeframes and lifecycles of the city"* (p.9 Madanipour, A, 2017, which can lead to a new and broader perspective on how the life of the city can be expressed. Instant urbanism is focusing on the mobility, flexibility and spontaneous elements in urban spaces (Pinder, D, 2017).

The human scale and Life between buildings

It can be argued that in temporary and instant urbanism, the movement behind the change is often created by the citizens' vision on how to utilise the city space. Building new city space with a focus on the users is not only seen in temporary and instant urbanism but also addressed by architect and urban planner, Jan Gehl, which is focusing on creating cities for people and on the human scale. Furthermore, is he known for his method of how to study urban public city life through dwelling and observational studies (Gehl, J, 2013). In his book "Life Between Buildings" (2011) he is not only addressing public life studies but is also looking into urban planning how to create a city strategically. The data from NNDDT – sprint 2, is based on Gehl's observations tools and methods, which will be addressed in the methods and data section.

Life between building in Kolding

Kolding municipality is drawing upon Jan Gehl's methods in their report (Kolding Kommune, 2019) when they initiated the data collection for their proposal. They state that their inspiration to create three new city spaces is from the planning of 'Nørreport Station' in Copenhagen. The city planners have used footprint detection to discover the routes that people are using and based on the collected data they create at the station, which reflects the behaviour of the users. They explain that this method can be used because the new 'Kolding Å' is a transit area that people are using in their daily routine to enter the city centre (Kolding Kommune, 2019).

On the basis on their data collection, Kolding Municipality is suggesting allocating three areas to respectively a Green city space (1), a city space by the water (2) and a city space for transition (3) (figure 2).

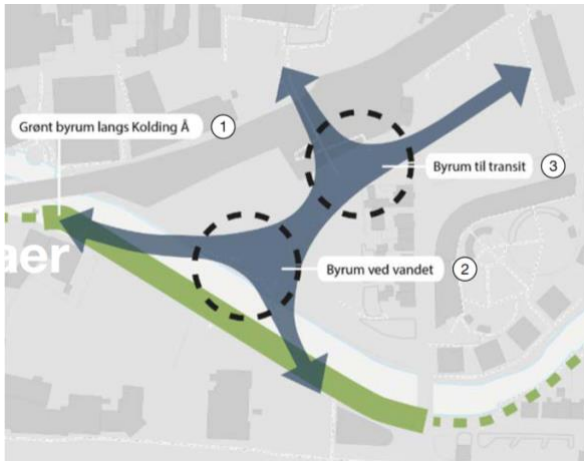


Figure 2: 1. Green city space, 2. a city space by the water and 3. a city space for transition

Furthermore, they state that *"The new district must be characterised of living urban spaces that infuse the city centre new qualities for both residents and other users of the area."* (2019). They are proposing that this can be obtained by creating temporary installations, e.g. information pavilions, cafés, urban gardening, light installations, green spaces, among others.

DATA AND METHODS

In this paper, I have used literature, observational research, photo ethnography, surveys, results from NNDT sprint 2, autoethnography and interviews to investigate my research question.

NNDT sprint 2 – Connections

Kolding Municipality has in their report (2019) stated a vision for the new 'Kolding Å' area. The area is currently occupied by a supermarket, a bakery and predominated with parking lots. The area is referred to as 'Ribersdyb' and 'Holmsminde' and is having wild urban nature and 'Kolding Å' passing through the two areas. The municipality has already installed dwelling spaces for the citizens that is used by a few citizens but are often seen empty. The Municipality created five challenges together with NNDT talent program, SDU, to create a temporary suggestion for the space, before the new plans for 'Kolding Å' quarter will be implemented. The five challenges that the students were invited to work with were: embracing diversity, spatial experiences, instant

urbanism, layered identity and connecting places. The group I was in, was assigned connections, which led us to be inspired by observation techniques of the Gehl Institutes' (Gehl Institute, 2019) for our data collection. Throughout the sprint, we conducted interviews with participants and citizens. Furthermore, we facilitated a design sprint with three tasks, to understand their route through the area, how they perceived the area and their visions for the area.

Draw your route

The first task the participants at the design sprint workshop invited to do was to draw their route through the area. The idea was to map out their footprint and which area they are using more than others in the study area (figure 3). The data from the map shows that people are mostly passing through to the stores or parking lots, but also that they are using the routes along the water. The citizens that participated in the workshop explained that due to the lack of designated routes, the walk through the area was very diffuse and messy. This had the consequence for them that they did not know where to walk. As seen on the map, the route along the river was the most commonly used, which was explained by the fact that it was a design route, which was pleasant to walk along.



Figure 3: Mapping of the different routes the citizens are using

Feeling, thoughts and associations with the area

Furthermore, the participants were asked to describe the feeling, thoughts and associations that they had looking at pictures from the area (figure 4).

panels, that are also a visible temporary installation, what is addressing sustainable living (picture 8).



Picture 8: Solar power panel at 'Byens Ø' – Odense. An example of a sustainable green initiatives

The whole area is created as an instant and temporary urban space. The user of the area explained that the containers and installations are only present, as long as they are used by the citizens and users of the urban space.

DISCUSSION

By examining the literature, the data from both the design sprint, interviews and photo-ethnography from 'Byens Ø' – Odense, I will address some findings. The main focus is the citizens and municipalities vision for a new area, with several potentials which are in line with temporary and instant urbanism, seen as an example at 'Byens Ø'. Furthermore, I will address the citizens engagement, their statement as a volunteer city and wish to become a sustainable city as a potential positive driving force to create a sustainable green temporary urban space in Kolding.

Temporary installations

To draw upon the data from the design sprint workshop, it was shown that the participants were dreaming of a lively and safe area. They mentioned that the area should include interactions, art, colours, street food and togetherness. Furthermore, the waters were passing through the area mentioned as an important structure that should be maintained in the area. Their visions are aligned with both the report of the Municipality and temporary urbanism seen as an example at 'Byen Ø'. Another group was focusing their research around temporary installations, where they investigated "*How can temporary installations serve to challenge and engage both Municipality and citizens to envision a new future together?*". Through their research they proposed that temporary installations can be a solution for the area, especially when it is under construction to become a housing area. The participant at the workshop for temporary installations pointed out that Kolding should embrace an area that can be used as a quiet break zone. The participants suggested that discrete pop-up installations would be interesting but also emphasised that there should still be space for parking.

Citizens engagement of the area

The participants at the workshop all agreed that they would like to use the area, but do not feel that it is inviting them to pause and enjoy the little nature present at the current moment. The parking lots are primarily dominating the area, which is creating an unsafe environment and a messy appearance of the area. Although the participants of our workshop, did not use the area for leisure purposes, it was shown by our observations, that the area shows some trace of use by the citizens for other purposes than passing through. An example was youngsters hanging out by the bridge and the water. Another discovery was a love chain connected to a sign close to the water, which is a small sign of an instant urban installation and engagement of the area (picture 6).



Picture 6: A love chain placed on a sign near the water

FUTURE VISION FOR THE AREA

Through the research, it is discovered that both the citizens and the municipality share the same vision for a sustainable, green area that is created with the citizens and for the citizens. They all express that the current area is uninviting, but that they would like to have a safe space. The dreams and visions are present, but why has nothing happened to the area? By conducting interviews with active stakeholders in the city based on my own vision for the area, which I will propose in the next section, it seems like the municipality is waiting for a movement from the citizens. As it is stated in the study by Julier (2014), the citizens are identifying themselves as a volunteer city. On the other spectrum, I have discovered that the citizens and volunteers of the city do not feel that they have the capacity to start a huge project by themselves. None of the interviewed was furthermore aware that the municipality is dreaming of creating temporary urbanism at 'Ribersdyb' and 'Holmsminde'. Lastly, the parking lots is a controversial topic to address in Kolding and is frequently being discussed in the local newspaper. Even though that Kolding is on the top of the scale when it comes to parking lots per citizens, the citizens will not give up their central parking space. How can the vision become a reality?

Green quatre of Kolding

The city has several green initiatives and educational institutions that are working within sustainability. Still, there is no physical space to connect, inspire and gather all of these initiatives. As an example, the Design School and SDU, which is an SDG University, are focusing on sustainability and are often developing exciting projects. These include both physical exhibitions and collaborations with local organisations and businesses that are focusing on sustainability. Additionally, the number of shops that are closing in the city centre is, unfortunately, rising, leaving Kolding more deserted than both the citizens and the municipality is satisfied with. I will propose that 'Ribersdyb' and 'Holmsminde' could create the physical space since it has great potential to become a place where students, Kolding residents, and tourists can meet to explore and connect. The idea is to create a physical space inspired by 'Byens Ø', Odense and Fredericia's urban gardening project, where temporary and instant urbanism is flowering. The area should ideally include a central space, such as a dome inspired by Dome of Vision, that can be used for information, exhibiting local artist and student work, and hosting smaller events. The area would potentially contain rebuilt containers and small buildings, constructed following sustainable principles.

Furthermore, the area could provide a physical space where students and locals could temporarily exhibit their projects. In addition, an urban gardening project and containerised study hall could be included and expanded to include empty stores around the area in the future. This space would essentially create a hub that includes Kolding's green ambitions, attracts tourists, connects the different educational institutes, and strengthens the community in Kolding.

The idea is based on my observations and informal conversations with citizens in Kolding. It is important to stress that the space should be for the people in Kolding and created together with people in Kolding. I will argue,

that by addressing the needs and include people in the planning, the citizens will feel an ownership of the space that they hopefully will use and care for.

During the study, I tested the idea among stakeholders in Kolding that is working with sustainability and community building, as well as representatives from Kolding Municipality. The idea resonated among several of the stakeholders, and it has created a reflection on how to utilise the space at Ribbersdyb and Holmsminde. This was demonstrated in a workshop 'Food Waste Utopia' (Fog, 2020), where the idea about creating a space for community building, as an example at Ribbersdyb and Holmsminde was addressed again. Based on the data and follow-up interviews, I will argue that the citizens in Kolding are interested creating a space for the people with the people, which could be the Ribbersdyb and Holmsminde.

CONCLUSION

This paper shows that there is a correlation between the municipalities and the citizens wish for a new sustainable, green and safe area. The new 'Kolding Å' has great potential, but create instant and temporary urbanisms, both the municipality and the citizens need to invest their time. In the proposal, it is suggested to utilise the green volunteer organisations and students, but also to let the municipality invest time and money to kick-start the project, as seen in Odense.

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- ENDNOTE:
- The article is a part of an exam in New Nordic Design Thinking Talent Program 2019. The article have been updated in 2020 with a few new additions.

COLUMNS ON THE FINAL PAGE SHOULD BE OF EQUAL LENGTH