Competition Juries as Intercultural Spaces: Between Evaluation, Experience, and Judgement

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With the growing complexity of architecture projects comes the growing complexity of the jury deliberation process in competitions. Competition participants have historically been challenged on how best to represent their projects so that juries can understand their spatial composition, formal qualities, material and structural choices, scale, and even narrative. Typically, project presentations have focused on communicating the project's function and cultural strength.

With the increasing digitisation of the design process and the paralleled rise in environmental certification requirements in competitions – in Canada, specifically in the last decade – the competitors now produce large amounts of performance data during their design process. In order to remain competitive, design teams are expected to demonstrate the efficiency of their project regarding heating/cooling systems, water use/reuse strategies, structural efficiency, material thermal capacities, the ventilation system's ability to produce fresh air, and other technological inclusions. In turn, jurors are required to understand how the projects can minimise various environmental risks through a multiplicity of means, specifically in the form of quantitative information.[1] Environmental risk refers to the potential negative impact of the construction and use of the building on the environment. In Canada, this may manifest in a variety of forms. For example, the extreme summer and winter seasons in Canada require that architecture teams carefully design their projects

to be energy efficient – meaning that they seek to minimise environmental impacts related to energy. Environmental impacts (or risks) in this case can refer to the natural resource demands that result from energy production and consumption, as well as potential toxins in the air, soil, and water.

The increasing imperative for competitors to assess and communicate how environmental risks can be minimised requires that the juries in architectural competitions today are much more diverse than just a decade ago. The ability to read and comprehend such reports requires new forms of knowledge within the jury. With this, juries have the potential to become spaces of complex dialogue, which may include discussions of analysed objective facts, interpreted subjective experiences, and imagined normative expectations. The environmental concerns, in Canada especially, are both existential and political. In Canada competitions are often organised for public municipal projects (libraries, museums, cultural centres, sports centres and so on), so they are even more scrutinised as they are widely published.

If the architectural project is considered as a set of traces and indices of reflective practices embedded within the epistemology of Donald A. Schön's 'how professionals think in action', the project is quite different for socio-anthropologist Jean-Pierre Boutinet.[2] For Boutinet, the architecture project reveals theoretical problems with respect to

the complexity of anticipating the form of a place through 'design thinking'.[3] Competitions are understood as devices, exposing situations that allow the study of interdisciplinary and intercultural issues related to contemporary design projects.[4] Recent work in competitions studies shows that from the construction of the brief to the selection of the winning project, competitions are true communication platforms.[5] These communicative exchanges also emphasise the value systems of the various stakeholders with regard to overall design quality.[6]

Observations of jury deliberations reveal at least two things. First, how architecture project representations are interpreted, and second, how the social, disciplinary, cultural, and cognitive origins of the jurors influence the selection of the winning project through this process of qualitative debate and judgment. Given that juries often comprise actors with diverse backgrounds, they have the potential to be rich intercultural spaces of deliberation. However, the contemporary imperatives regarding the provability of environmental performances have had an impact on these typically rich deliberations. So, the question asked in this article is: how does the diversity of jurors influence the competition outcome? This is especially important in a contemporary context where environmental questions are at the forefront, where such concerns are most often dealt with through the quantitative assessment of environmental risks.

In this article I will first describe the basic theoretical canvas of this study in order to delineate the methodology for the analysis of the jury observations. This will constitute a mapping device, developed from Jean-Pierre Boutinet's compass for studying anticipative projects. I also draw on the work of Jurgen Habermas from the perspective of communicative action and John Dewey for defining the components of judgment. This mapping will be used to analyse the observations of jury competitions. Second, I present the mapping along with

general observations on how the winning projects were deliberated. This analysis and mapping outcome consider the structure of the jury and the lexicon of the debate for a series of architecture competitions that took place in Canada between 2008 and 2014. In the discussion and concluding section, the mapping results are considered through this theoretical framework and interpreted from a broader epistemological perspective, using the lens of contact zones as intercultural spaces. I reflect on how the imperatives for evaluating environmental risks in competitions have influenced the way in which the jury addresses uncertainty and unverifiability of data. Finally I will address how this has influenced how the built environment is judged in the competition context.

Mapping jury deliberations after Jean-Pierre Boutinet

According to Jean-Pierre Boutinet, the architectural project implies a vision based on a future temporal and spatial perspective.[7] The project allows a shared knowledge to emerge as well as a transformation of the intentions to be manifest. According to Boutinet, in the realisation of an architectural project, anticipation, or anticipative action is characterised by the fact that one must decide which course of action to take when faced with decisions or dilemmas, in a place-based and spatial situation. The activity of design then not only seeks to understand and address the 'what is', but must also seeks to conceptualise the 'what can be', and equally important, the 'what should be' for any given situation in order to improve it – the idea of projection and anticipation are at the foundation. Indeed, for Boutinet, design is a project of intentions.[8]

However, anticipation comes in many forms, as Boutinet emphasises in his book *Anthropologie du projet*, first published in 1990. These forms are: adaptive, cognitive, imaginary and operational (refer to Table 1 or the details of this categorisation). According to Boutinet, the adaptive mode

Modes of anticipation		Forms of anticipation	Conceptions linked to anticipation
adaptive	empirical	foresight prevention	conjecture prediction
	scientific	forecast (or prevision)	conjecture/prediction
cognitive	hidden	divination	prediction / destiny
	religious	prophetic	prediction / destined
	scientific or philosophical	prospective / futurology	conjecture
imaginary	rational imaginary	utopia	in the future
	dreamlike imaginary	science-fiction	in the future
operational	rational	goal / objective / plan	to become
	deliberate intent	wish / promise	mixed
	fuzzy	project	to become

Table 1: The characteristic modes of anticipation, based on: *Boutinet, Anthropologie Du Projet*, 59. Translated by author.

is characterised by the ability to identify probable consequences based on adjustment to current behaviour. The cognitive mode is characterised by a preoccupation to pierce the mystery of the future by conjuring all that the future can bring. The imaginary mode is characterised by taking the opposite of what currently exists and elaborating on what does not exist, but it could exist in some distant future. And the operational mode is characterised by some personal future that the author of the anticipation seeks to bring about.[9] The architectural design, evaluation, judgment, and construction processes may comprise elements of all of these forms of anticipation.

Conditions of anticipation represent the basis of architectural projects as the stakes are long-term and, in many cases, far-reaching. In each of these forms of anticipation, it may be individuals or communities that are involved in the project. The project itself can be of a very technical, or very existential nature, with a spectrum of project varieties in-between. Boutinet's analysis grid is reflective of this complexity of projects. In his analysis graph, he has included both aspects of action and actors of the project, each consisting of a different axis on his radial graph. [Fig. 1] The action axis of Boutinet's graph refers to whether the underlying purpose of the project tends more closely towards a technological innovation or to the improvement of the human condition. The actor axis of the project refers to the societal axis – whether the project involves collective or individual involvement. This model is a good starting point and is indeed frequently adopted to analyse design and architectural projects. Here it will be adopted to map out the way in which a jury deliberates on the qualities of projects to arrive at a judgment for a winning project.

The action axis of Boutinet's compass is analogous to the relationship Schön identified in professional architectural practice: the tension between reflection-in-action and technical rationality.[10] Schön's technical rationality is embedded within the much broader reflection-in-action. Indeed, Schön has asserted that architects develop their projects through a series of oscillations between these two modes of thinking.[11] Design thinking, as defined by Schön, remains after more than thirty years an excellent model from which to understand and describe how designers conceptualise, and jurors judge, design projects. Schön's technical rationality is similar to the technical pole (refer to the top pole of the vertical axis in Boutinet's compass, an action aiming for completion. Whereas Schön's reflection-in-action is similar to the existential pole (refer to the bottom pole of the vertical axis in) of Boutinet's compass, an action that can be interminable. Boutinet's compass succinctly captures this tension of authorities through the combination of the two axes (actors and actions), where the actions span from the technical to the anthropological, and the actors can work individually or in collaboration. Therefore, I will build from Boutinet's compass to propose a new grid for mapping the lexicon used in the jury deliberation and the structure of the jury (background and cohesiveness of the actors).[12]

This proposed analysis grid is presented in figure 2. It comprises two axes: one representing the lexicon of the debate (vertical axis), and a second representing the coherence of the jurors' arguments in the debate (horizontal axis). The categorisation in this proposed grid refers to the specific mode of deliberation adopted by the jurors. The resultant four quadrants and their dominant jury deliberative approaches can be understood in the following four ways. First, a technical expert drives the jury decision (quadrant A: driven by solo technical expert). This occurs when a dominant technical expert in the jury, often a world-renowned expert, delivers arguments that no other juror wants to attempt to contradict, and the decision is therefore driven by a single technical expert. A second category is when an architectural expert drives the jury decision (quadrant B: driven by solo architectural expert).
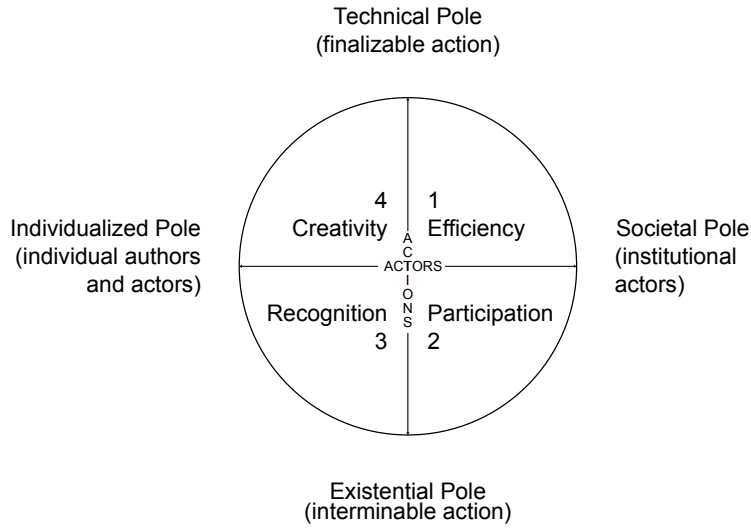
Technical Pole
(finalizable action)

Individualized Pole
(individual authors
and actors)

Societal Pole
(institutional
actors)

4 Creativity	1 Efficiency
ACTORS	
Recognition 3	Participation 2

ACTIONS

Fig. 1

Existential Pole
(interminable action)

anthropological

↑ debate ↓

technical

(B) an architectural
expert drives decision

(D) coconstruction of
architectural qualities
drives decision

(A) a technical expert
drives decision

(C) co-review of tech-
nical results drives
decision
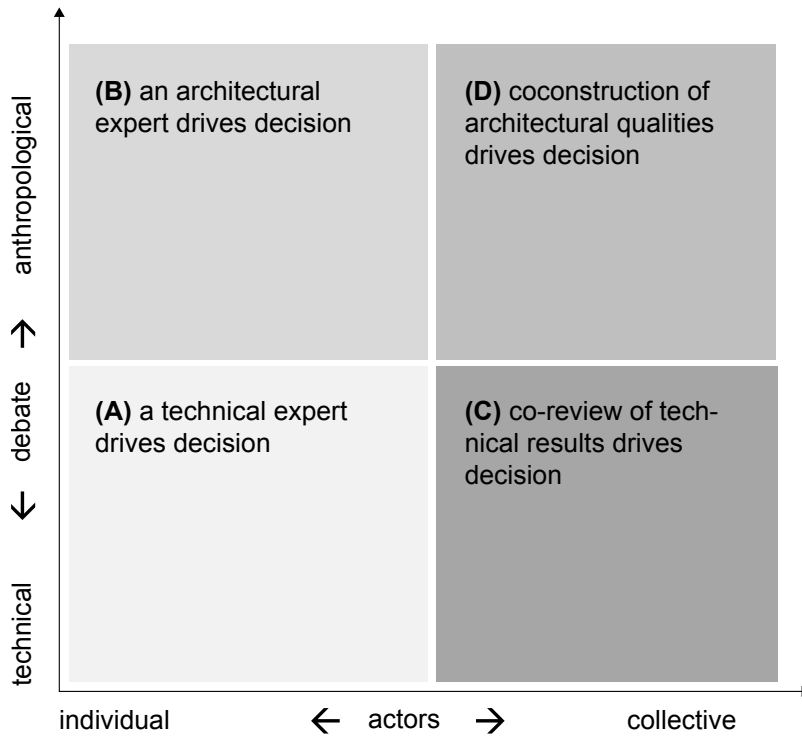
Fig. 2

individual   ←   actors   →   collective

Fig. 1: Jean-Pierre Boutinet, radial graph for mapping anticipative projects. Translated by author, from Boutinet,
Grammaires des conduites à Projet (Paris: PUF, 2010), 149. Sector 1: Cross between technical pole and societal pole:
efficiency. Sector 2: Cross between societal pole and existential pole: participation. Sector 3: Cross between existential
pole and individual pole: recognition. Sector 4: Cross between individual pole and technical pole: creativity
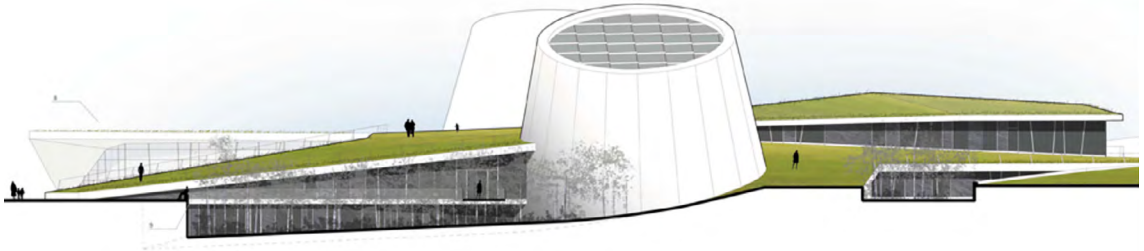Fig. 2: Compass for analysis of jury observations. Diagram: author.

Fig. 3a

Fig. 3b

Fig. 3a: New Montréal Planetarium, image from competition panel. Source: Cardin Ramirez and Aedifica.

Fig. 3b: New Montréal Planetarium. Photo: author.

Fig. 4a

Fig. 4b

Fig. 4a: Saint-Laurent Library, image from competition panel. Source: Cardinal Hardy, Labonté Marcil, Éric Pelletier Architects.

Fig. 4b: Saint-Laurent Library. Photo: author.

This occurs when an architect, often a world-renowned architect, delivers arguments that are left uncontested by other jurors. This is often due to her/his authoritative voice in the profession, where her/his arguments deliver the winning project. A third category is when the jury collectively reviews the technical results for making the final decision (quadrant C: driven by collective technical experts). This is when the technical experts present arguments from the technical reports, which predominate all arguments and deliver the winning project. A fourth category is when the jury collectively constructs the architectural qualities of the winning project (quadrant D: driven collectively by all jurors). This is when the winning project is the result of a series of design debates about the details and overall qualities to a point where the jury redesigns the winning project.[13]

Drawing on empirical observations of competition juries in the Canadian context, I will now unpack the jury deliberation process as they construct a judgment to select the winning project.

Understanding communicative action: Habermas

If we consider the jury deliberation process from the lens of Jürgen Habermas's *Theory of Communicative Action*, then three perspectives of argumentation – objective, normative and subjective – are necessary to constitute a strong argument.[14] We know from previous research that the best way to understand the project during a competition jury is to 'redesign' the project collectively, but this level of communicative exchange and construction of ideas, which represents an ideal contact zone of intercultural deliberation, is not always evident.[15]

Habermas defines the 'ideal speech situation' as an exchange where there is an absence of coercion and where influence over others is possible through the strongest argument and not the most powerful actor (based on wealth or political position).[16] So, an ideal speech situation is one that is fair and just.

If we consider this for the competition jury, it would translate into a jury situation where all members of the jury are free to express their views in order to arrive at a collective understanding and construction of the winning project. Habermas, an idealist, refers to this collective constructed view of any conversation aiming at some form of comprehension as a 'common situation definition'. He claims that this form of communicative action can be a practice of emancipatory moral consciousness.[17]

Habermas's theoretical approach, when it is manifested in its ideal form, can be played out in a competition jury. This would be a situation where the jury is capable of arriving at a common understanding of the design brief and competition submissions through communication and debate. Habermas asserts that 'participants are not primarily oriented to their own individual successes; they pursue their individual goals under the condition that they can harmonize their plans of action on the basis of common situation definitions'.[18] Habermas defines communicative action as a form of spoken exchange where 'the actions of the agents involved are coordinated not through egocentric calculations of success but through acts of reaching understanding'.[19] In this perspective, communicative action is a two-sided equitable dialogue among the members of the jury, rather than a one-sided coercive form of communication.

Any competition jury deliberation, in the process of constructing a judgment, would benefit from such a form of communication. However, ideal speech situations are the exception rather than the mainstay of communicative action, especially within competition juries that include criteria for environmental design.[20] This prevailing confrontational situation is a result of the divisive worldviews embedded in the jury, since environmental experts and designers are confronted with each other's differing objectives for architectural quality.

Habermas claims that the three main pillars of the ideal communicative speech acts are the combined arguments of objective facts, normative expectations, and subjective experiences. He claims that these are increasingly fragmented in our modern society because of how the variety of expertise is growing and dispersing the associated knowledge in modern culture.[21] The theory of communicative action, as developed by Habermas, is therefore adopted as the main theoretical framework for understanding the form of communication for the jury debates, together with the compass represented in figure 2.

Structure of jury and lexicon of debate

John Dewey elaborates on the question of reflection and judgment in his seminal book *How We Think*[22], where he considers that judgment comprises three main characteristics:[23] first, a controversy, or sphere of contention consisting of opposing claims. Second, a process for defining and elaborating claims and for sifting through facts. And third, a final decision, arriving at some closure. Judgment involves many elements before a final decision can be reached, including the collection and understanding of facts, as well as a series of conflicting perspectives that can be weighed. Without contradictory arguments a decision process is reduced to a logical outcome and does not involve judgment. In *The Quest for Certainty: A Study of the Relation of Knowledge and Action,* Dewey further elaborates on both the conflict of authorities during a situation of collective judgement, and on the seat that they hold in attaining a clearer understanding of the world, whether their claims are true or not.[24] The state of reflection, according to Dewey, refers to a suspended state of thinking until a judgment is made.

If, based on Dewey, a judgment comprises a controversy, a process for defining and sifting through factual claims, and a final decision, then in a competition jury we can further identify several influencing factors for reaching a final decision.

This includes the many observers of the media-tised competition (the public, the client, the users of the new space), the many participants of the jury (competitors, jurors, external technical experts, competition organisers) and the agents (whether these are human or non-human, such as environmental certifications or the performance results of digital models) in jury deliberations.[25] The competition juror is then in a constant state of reflection with other jurors that are most often from different cultures, professions, and backgrounds. The premise here is that the competition jury process is ideally a contact zone of intercultural spaces. As the leader in the theory of contact zones Mary Louise Pratt states, these zones are 'social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power'.[26]

If we consider the architectural project as comprising many technological features, as well as a diverse set of anthropological conditions, experiences, and spaces, then the communicative acts in a competition jury cannot escape this spectrum of arguments. In other words, the arguments will likely include technical analyses of structures and resources that are relatively easy to verify with models and tools, but also the exploration of spatial, material, and experiential qualities that are more difficult to verify. The vocabulary adopted by the jurors, along with the inherent values embedded in the form of their arguments, are key indicators for unpacking the jury debate. From this perspective, the jury is an exemplar contact zone.

Ideally, competition juries are constructed with a diverse set of members, representing a variety of communities, so that the exchanges are rich with multiple points of view. It is during these fertile debates that the jury members more fully comprehend the details of the design proposals.[27] However, in a contemporary competition context, with the focus on demonstrating that environmental risks

Fig. 5a

Fig. 5b

Fig. 5a: Notre Dame de Grace Cultural Centre, image from competition panel. Source: Atelier Big City, Fichten Soiferman and associates, L'OEUF.

Fig. 5b: Notre Dame de Grace Cultural Centre. Photo: author.

Fig. 6a

Fig. 6b

Fig. 6a: Saul Bellow Library Extension, image from competition panel. Source: Chevalier Morales Architects.

Fig. 6b. Saul Bellow Library Extension. Photo: author.

have been diverted, is the potential of juries as contact zones not diluted into one where the actors simply exchange a series of technical evaluations rather than deliberate on architectural qualities? A provocative question, which I will explore below.

We can now state that the structure of jury and lexicon of debate, among other factors, have a direct influence on the outcome of the competition decision. 'Structure' refers to the profession, disciplinary background, and level of expertise of jurors. The horizontal axis of the mapping grid in this study [Fig. 2] addresses the variety of actors in the jury and their ability to collectively (or not) come to a final decision. The 'lexicon of debate' refers to the categorisation of the inventory of words used to defend the competing proposals. This comprises the vertical axis of the mapping grid developed for this study. This double-vectored model is adopted as the basis for analysis and mapping.

Competitions as ideal intercultural spaces for collective judgment

In Canada, competitions are most often organised for public projects: museums, libraries, cultural centres, education facilities, sports centres, and so on, as is evidenced in the *Canadian Competitions Catalogue* – an online database that archives Canadian competitions since 1945. These complex socially and culturally embedded projects require the involvement of multiple stakeholders, all of which contribute to this democratic method of design provisioning. Competitions can be both controversial and experimental moments in the design disciplines.[28] This is evidenced in the competition jury, where it comprises both a diversity of views, and a representative mix of disciplinary, professional, and cultural expertise and authorities.[29] The process culminates during the jury process, where a judgment is made in order to select the best of the various submitted projects.

In Canada, architects must make up at least half of the competition jury. This introduces the potential of a diversity of experts embedded in the jury. Given that this mix may influence the jury process, a series of further questions arises. Is the final decision individually driven or collectively constructed? What does the choice of lexicon say about the values highlighted in the projects? Do authoritative voices in the jury pre-empt the debate on excellence? Does the focus on technical data compromise the overall appraisal of architectural quality?

The Canadian competitions selected for this study were launched between 2008 and 2014. This time period is a significant sample since the environmental certification LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) was introduced in Canada only a few years earlier, in 2003. During this time period (2008–14), LEED was quickly becoming a nation-wide norm for ensuring that environmental design practices would be upheld in architectural projects submitted to competitions. It took only a few years after its introduction in the Canadian market for LEED to become a quasi-mandatory requirement in Canadian competitions. Indeed, its introduction in the competition format has influenced how designers present their projects, and how jurors evaluate and judge the submissions, as previous research on Canadian competitions has already shown.[30] The selection of competitions is drawn from the comprehensive *Canadian Competitions Catalogue*. Table 2 lists the competitions that took place in Quebec during this time. Those indicated in bold are those competitions that are analysed, mapped and presented in this article.

Mapping competition jury deliberations

The five competitions selected for analysis are listed in Table 2. They are the New Montréal Planetarium, the Saint-Laurent Library, the Notre Dame de Grace Cultural Centre, the Saul-Bellow Library Extension, and the Pierrefonds Library Extension.

Name of Competition	City	LEED Level	Year
Espace pour la vie – Volet A: la Métamorphose de l'Insectarium (Space for Life - Part A: The Metamorphosis of the Insectarium)	Montréal		2014
Espace pour la vie – Volet B: le Biodôme renouvelé (Space for life – Part B: the Renewed Biodôme)	Montréal		2014
Espace pour la vie – Volet C: le Pavillon de verre au Jardin botanique (Space for Life - Part C: the Glass Pavilion at the Botanical Garden)	Montréal		2014
Concours pour l'agrandissement de la bibliothèque de Pierrefonds (Competition for the Extension of the Pierrefonds Library)	Montréal	Gold	2013
Agrandissement de la bibliothèque Saul-Bellow (Saul-Bellow Library Expansion)	Montréal	Gold	2011
Maison de la littérature de l'institut Canadien de Québec (House of Literature of the Canadian Institute of Quebec)	Quebec		2011
Complexe de soccer au CESM (CESM Soccer Complex)	Montréal		2011
Concours de design urbain Namur Jean-Talon Ouest (Namur Jean-Talon Ouest Urban Design Competition)	Montréal		2011
Complexe sportif Saint-Laurent (Saint-Laurent Sports Complex)	Montréal		2010
Centre Culturel Notre-Dame-de-Grâce (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce Cultural Centre)	Montréal	Gold	2010
Nouvelle bibliothèque de Saint-Laurent (New Saint-Laurent Library)	Montréal	Gold	2009
Musée National des Beaux-arts du Québec (National Museum of Fine Arts of Quebec)	Québec		2009
Bibliothèque de Saint-Hubert (Library of Saint-Hubert)	Saint-Hubert		2008
Planétarium de Montréal (Planetarium of Montréal)	Montréal	Platinum	2008

Table 2: Design competitions in Canada, 2008–2014. The competitions in bold are those studied in this article.

Translation of French competition names by author.

The winning project, along with details of the jury, of each of these competitions is listed in Table 3. Each of the winning competition projects had a LEED certification requirement, of which the level is included in this table. The jury composition was different for each competition, as highlighted in the table. The number of members varied between seven and eleven jurors. In all cases, an environmental expert or LEED-certified architect was included. Each had at least one representative of the project, or the community for which the project was intended. Some juries also included either an artist or journalist. All the competitions were intended for projects in the city of Montréal, and have since been built.

The data for this study was collected from the competition briefs, the winning project proposals, the jury reports, and observations in some of the jury deliberations. Discourse analysis was conducted on the briefs, the jury reports and the notes collected from observations. Image analysis was conducted from the winning project proposals. The quotes presented in the following analysis are selected from the competition jury reports, as these are public documents. The observations of the jury deliberations remain confidential. However, these observations allow us to draw further conclusions.

The first case, the New Montréal Planetarium competition (2008), was the only one among the five competitions studied that required a LEED Platinum level of certification, the highest and strictest level of LEED. [Fig. 3] The others all had a requirement of Gold. The jury of the New Montréal Planetarium included eleven jurors, of which six were architects – so a bare minimum of architects structured the jury (55 percent). One of these architects was a nationally prominent environmental expert. The jury also included three high-level representatives of the planetarium, one artist, and one scenographer. Despite the diversity of the jury, the following quote from the jury report, which is indicative of the overall

arguments presented for the winning project, points to the persuasiveness of the environmental expert, since the architectural qualities, in terms of form and materiality, were not considered of superior quality:

> The architectural concept proposes quality sequences of experiences to visitors. … The architectural concept integrates, in a clear way, the environmental strategies put forth, including passive strategies. … More profound symbolic explorations of the cones, from both iconographical and material points of view is recommended.[31]

This winning project did not win because it offered an exceptional spatial or symbolic experience, but rather because 'the architectural concept integrates, in a clear way, the environmental strategies put forth, including passive strategies'.[32] Indeed, the jury felt that the material, formal, and symbolic qualities had to be revisited before construction. Given that one of the four panels submitted was a mandatory environmental strategy panel, the jury spent considerable time to understand its details, where information was often too technically generic, meaning there was no reference to the actual project and only reference to universally accepted technologies. The environmental expert was decisive in leading the discussion and driving the final decision, almost entirely on their own. However, the environmental arguments were presented in the form of abstract eco-models about universal eco-features in a generically factual manner. They were difficult to dispute since the lexicon adopted was exclusive to the expert's knowledge. This is why New Montréal Planetarium is placed in the lower left-hand quadrant A: Driven by solo technical expert. [Fig. 8]

The second case is the Saint-Laurent Library competition (2009). [Fig. 4] There were seven jurors, of which five were architects (70 percent). Of these, one was a key contributor to the Canada Green Building Council (CaGBC) initiative, whose

Fig. 7a

Fig. 7b

Fig 7a: Pierrefonds Library Extension, image from competition panel. Source: Chevalier Morales Architects and DMA architectes.

Fig 7b: Pierrefonds Library Extension. Photo: author.

key aim was to introduce LEED to Canada in 2003. The other two jurors were a journalist and an urban planner. This jury was less diverse than that of the New Montréal Planetarium case; however, it was deadlocked when finalising the selection for the winning project. Some jurors preferred the runner-up project for its exceptional spatial, material, symbolic, and experiential qualities, while others preferred the eventual winning project for its massive presence and environmental strategies. Regarding the winning project, the jurors argued that 'The concept offers a contemporary distinctive signature and the bridge offers a new relation with the city and the wooded area … The concept of sustainable development is innovative, clear, and pedagogical; the solar orientation is well exploited.'[33] It was the argument of the CaGBC expert that finally drove the decision to select the most easily provable environmental project, since the sustainable development strategy was considered innovative, clear, and pedagogical. However, the deliberation was more agonistic than that of the New Montréal Planetarium, which is why I place the Saint-Laurent Library slightly higher along both axes of the lower left-hand quadrant A, Driven by solo technical expert. [Fig. 8]

The third case is the Notre Dame de Grace Cultural Centre competition (2010). [Fig.5] There were ten jurors, of which only five were architects – one was a local LEED expert. The percentage of architects in the jury was thus the minimum required for juries in Canadian competitions. The other members were three high-level representatives of the client, one representative of the Quebec Minister of Culture and Communication, and one urban planner. The president of the jury emphasised at the very beginning of the deliberation session that the number of LEED credits would not weigh heavily as a criterion for finding the best project. Rather, the aim was to focus on the specific architectural qualities, alternating between detail and big picture. The environmental strategies were discussed within

these parameters. In many instances, the arguments presented by one of the jurors, a nationally recognised architect, helped converge to the final decision. Even if this key juror directed the discussion, the debate about the projects was fertile, and helped the other jurors better understand each of the finalist projects. A statement in the jury report highlights the general lexicon of the argumentation: 'In their comprehension of the changes expected in the usage of such a cultural space, and through its expression of openness, this project reveals a strong potential of development for the community, respectful of the past, and resolutely pointed towards the future.'[34] This is why the Notre Dame de Grace Cultural Centre is mapped on the top part of the vertical edge, between quadrant B: Driven by a solo architectural expert and quadrant D: Driven collectively by all jurors. [Fig. 8]

The fourth case is the Saul-Bellow Library Extension competition (2011), which had eight jurors. Of these, six were architects, one a prominent environmental expert. [Fig. 6] The other jury members were a citizen representative and a representative of the client. The percentage of architects in this jury (75 percent) was higher than the previous cases described. This competition was original in its format and requirements, since it was the first in the province of Quebec to require an Integrated Design Process (IDP) following the selection of the winner.[35] With this inclusion in the design process, the decision was made that many of the environmental details could be worked out during the forthcoming IDP process. This process would entail the development of the detailed design and the construction phases. The following quote summarises the overall argumentation adopted during deliberation: 'The potential of evolution of the concept is elevated since it is flexible, non-rigid, and therefore will facilitate the Integrated Design Process (IDP) to follow; it responds to criteria without formal dogmatism. The team has the potential to evolve this project.'[36] The jury debate was
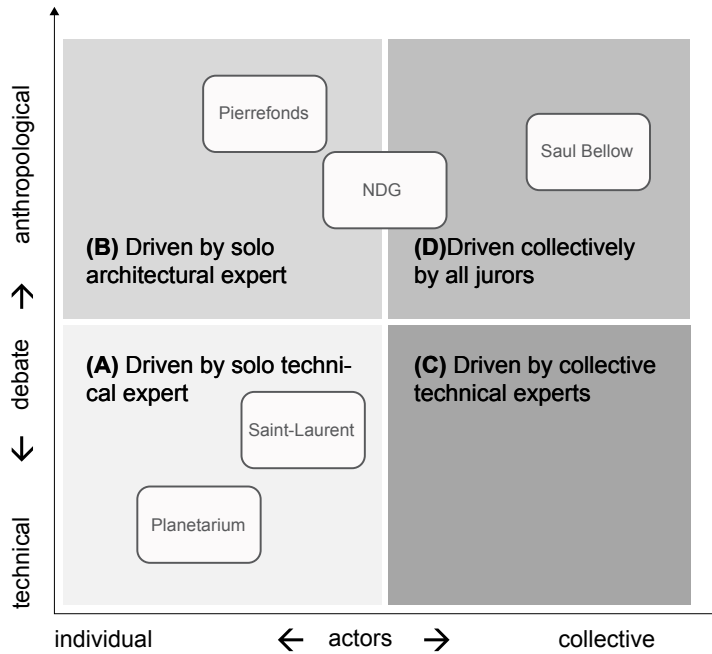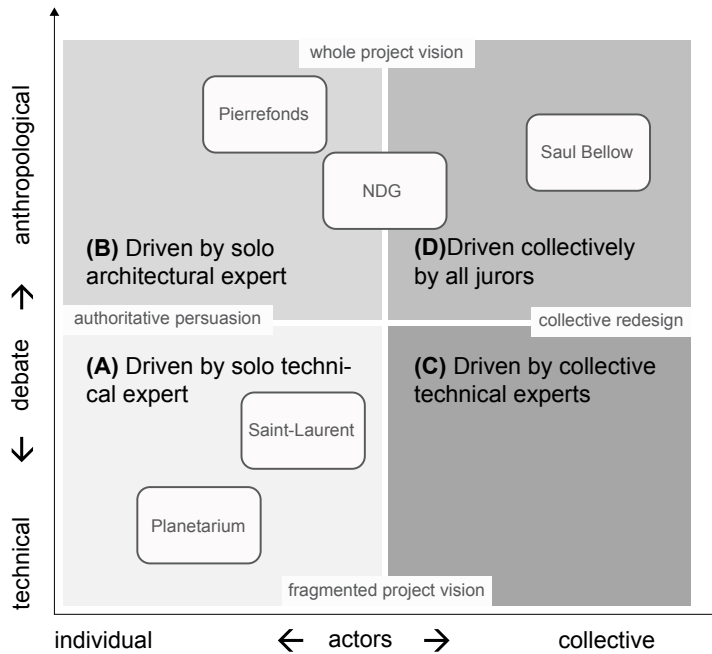
Fig. 8

Fig. 9

Fig. 8: The discursive methods of the five competition juries. Diagram: author.

Fig. 9: Redefinition of the edges of the two axes of the mapping compass: the horizontal axis (actors' involvement) spans from authoritative persuasion to collective redesign; and the vertical axis (lexicon of debate) spans from a whole project vision to a fragmented project vision. Diagram: author.

focused on architectural qualities, such as space, materiality, experience, design potential, constructive qualities, and to some extent, the potential to attain the certification requirement, without strictly counting LEED credits. Since one of the competition requirements was to submit an animation of the space, there was an extensive exploration of spaces and flow. This jury deliberated in a non-confrontational, yet agonistic manner, leading all jurors to understand the projects in terms of their potential for the programme, site, and community expectations. This is why the Saul-Bellow Library Extension is mapped high in the quadrant D: Driven collectively by all jurors. [Fig. 8]

The fifth and final case is the Pierrefonds Library Extension competition (2013), which had seven jurors. [Fig. 7] Of these, five were architects (70 percent), one of which one a local LEED expert, and the president a celebrated architect. The involvement of this prominent architect was pivotal in the deliberation process, and in the way the debates took place. The remaining two jurors were representatives of the library. The structure of this jury was thus very similar to the one for the Saul-Bellow Library extension. The following quote from the jury report represents the overall tone of the debate:

> This project presents a pavilion in the park and not a box in the city. It is open to its environment and takes advantage of the site. It has a marked presence on the street and respects the existing vegetation. … The "all-white" is divine. The beauty of the white resides in the sum of a multitude of colours.[37]

During the debate, there was some discussion regarding the environmental strategies for attaining the required LEED Gold certification. However, these discussions did not drive the final decision, as they were considered inseparable from the overall design. The final decision was determined by the symbolic, experiential, formal, and specific contextual response to the site. This included the sensitivity to and possible disturbance of trees. The discussion was broad, yet to some degree steered by the star architect, which is why the Pierrefonds Library Extension is mapped along the top edge of quadrant B: Driven by solo architectural expert. [Fig. 8] The debate was highly architectural and anthropological, where the final decision mostly converged through the arguments of the world-renowned architect.

General observations

One of the overarching observations about these juries is that environmental imperatives influenced the lexicon as well as the structure of the jury. In all cases, the competition rules established environmental certification as a criterion. In two cases though, the Saul-Bellow Library Extension and the Notre Dame de Grace Cultural Centre, the environmental certification was not considered a necessary precondition at the stage of the jury deliberation. Here, jurors accepted the situation that the LEED certification requirements would be dealt with during the forthcoming detailed design and building phases. Because of the stricter LEED requirements for the New Montréal Planetarium, the debate there tended towards discussions of energy efficiency, water conservation, material toxicity, lighting efficiency, site disturbances, and even maintenance costs.

In all of the competitions, technical experts were invited to present the structural and environmental results (even if they did not have voting power). In some cases, the use of abstract models and quantitative performance measurements were prevalent for explaining the project's merits. These technical expert presentations did not add to the qualitative debate since these facts were simply accepted by the jury. In the cases where an internationally known environmental expert was part of the jury, the arguments presented by this juror, confirmed the presented facts provided by the technical committee (external to the jury). In two of the five

Competition title Year LEED level	Jury composition
Pierrefonds Library Extension 2013 LEED Gold	7 jurors = **5 architect**s of which 1 was a LEED expert **2 reps** of the library
Saul Bellow Library Extension 2011 LEED Gold	8 jurors = **6 architects** of which 1 is a nationwide renowned environmental expert **1 citizen representative** **1 director** of municipal services
Notre Dame de Grace Cultural Centre 2010 LEED Gold	10 jurors = **1 director** of library, **1 director** of sports and leisure **1 art director**, **1 coordinator** for Quebec Minister of Culture and Communication **5 architects** of which 1 is a LEED expert **1 urban** planner/designer
Saint-Laurent Library 2009 LEED Gold	7 jurors = **5 architects**, of which 1 is a LEED expert who contributed to the Canada Green Building Council (CaGBC) initiative and another an architecture academic/professor **1 urban** planner **1 journalist**/author
New Montréal Planetarium 2008 LEED Platinum	11 jurors = **6 architects**, of which 1 is a LEED expert and Canada-wide sustainability expert **1 general director** of science complex **1 president of administration** of science complex **1 director** of Planetarium **1 scenographer**, **1 artist**

Table 3: Competition-winning projects selected for analysis and mapping.

cases, these arguments were strong enough that the environmental expert in the jury almost drove the final decision single-handedly. This was so for both the Saint-Laurent Library and the New Montréal Planetarium. In these two competitions, a qualitative debate was circumvented based on three major reasons: first, a powerful and persuasive argument by a technical expert forced an early convergence to a winner. Second, a discursive gap emerged among the jurors because the technical expert in the jury leaned heavily on abstract data rather than specific qualities of the project. And third, the importance of the environmental certification requirement strongly biased the jury decisions.

If we consider Habermas's dimensions of modern culture for the aforementioned competition jury discussions, we can say that in two, the cognitive-instrumental (objective) dominated.[38] Since the technical expert prevailed, the arguments remained fragmented, abstract and difficult for the other jurors to debate as they were stated in terms of 'pure' facts and impossible to challenge.

In one competition, it was an internationally celebrated architect who provided a series of arguments that would be difficult to challenge. In this case, the jury was swayed in the direction of the expert architectural counsel – similar behaviour as when the technical expert prevails in the jury and the qualitative debate is sidestepped. The following two reasons may explain this. On the one hand, the qualitative and descriptive arguments, highlighting aesthetic-experiential qualities of the project were convincing and seemingly unquestioned by the other jurors because of their high esteem for the prominent architect. On the other hand, the expert's explanation was in the form of a narrative, discussing the anthropological qualities of the space, while highlighting architecture qualities, creating a vision of lived space, that was persuasive to the other jurors.

This was the case for the Pierrefonds Library Extension and the Notre Dame de Grace Cultural Centre, for the latter to a lesser extent. The debate of design quality was usurped, to some degree, by the expert counsel provided by the renowned architect in that specific jury. This is because their arguments, even if they contributed to an overall understanding of the project, quite distinctly drove the final decision. In the case of the Notre Dame de Grace Cultural Centre the debate represented a true contact zone, with a combination of arguments by the expert architect and the fertile mix of arguments by all jurors.

If we consider this from a Habermasian perspective, when the architectural expert prevails, as in the Pierrefonds Library Extension competition, it appears that it is the dimensions of aesthetic-experiential (subjective) and moral-practical (normative) that dominate the argumentative content.[39] If we further consider judgment as elaborated by Dewey in each of the four cases cited above, these expert jurors may have succeeded in controlling the controversies of the judgments, through the careful elaboration of claims of quality and the meticulous selection of facts.[40]

In the Saul-Bellow Library Extension the debates were rather diverse. The arguments oscillated between the environmental expert advice, the other architects, the director of municipal services, and the citizen representative. From a Habermasian ideal speech act, the discussion was balanced between the objective facts, the normative expectations and the subjective spatial and formal considerations.

As a final observation, there were no competitions that fell in quadrant C: Driven by collective technical experts. This condition could occur only if the technical experts, along with the rest of the jury, would sift through just the objective facts to construct a final decision – a decision based on the summation of a series of fragmented facts. This approach

for selecting a winning project would fail to engage in a qualitative debate that would help understand the projects in any depth. Does this finding further corroborate the notion of a competition jury as a contact zone of intercultural spaces?

Discussion and conclusion: juries as contact zones of intercultural debate

Taking into account the small sample of this study, we can identify three preliminary findings. At best, the jury deliberation comprises diverse exchanges, oscillating between the evaluation of technical reports and the negotiation of architectural qualities, in a balanced manner. Furthermore, ideal communicative speech exchanges are inconsistent across the juries studied since the structure of the jury influences the potential of this rich deliberative exchange. And finally, it does not seem possible to have a collective construction of the winning project through the summation of technical evaluations alone, as seen in figure 3.

This study provides a series of openings to new hypotheses. Given these preliminary findings, I have tentatively renamed the four inner poles, as shown in figure 4. When projects are mapped on the top centre pole, this indicates that the individuals in the jury adopted a whole project vision. Projects mapped on the bottom centre pole indicates that they adopted a fragmented project vision. Projects mapped on the centre left pole indicates that the jury project was driven by the authoritative persuasion of a key juror. The opposite end of the authoritative persuasion pole – the centre right pole – indicates that the jury was able to collectively redesign the project through debate. These renamed poles, as shown in figure 4, may help to consider new questions and hypotheses.

Let us now return to the aim of this article: to understand how the imperatives for evaluating environmental risks in competitions have influenced the way in which the jury addresses uncertainty and

unverifiability, and how this has led to an improved comprehension of how the built environment is judged in the competition context. The notion of juries as contact zones is critical as it sets the jury up as a space rich in deliberative potential. We have seen that the competition jury, with its diverse structure, varied value systems, professions, disciplines, and wide-ranging lexicon, is an ideal representation of a contact zone. However, this potential is not always easy to achieve in a competition jury. It may be weakened, depending on the structure of the jury and the way that the arguments are constructed and delivered.

This appears to be the case when the evaluation of technical reports overrides the qualitative reflection of the projects. Schön asserts that the complexity, uncertainty, uniqueness, and value-conflict prevalent in architectural design and judgment situations do not fit the model of technical rationality alone, since in this perspective they are reduced to problem-solving exercises.[41] This problem-solving approach is the space in which many environmental evaluations reside, whereas reflection-in-action is a space of suspension, uncertainty, and imagination. From this Schönian perspective, I have sought to better understand how juries deal with the tension between these two overarching modes of thinking (that is, technical rationality and reflection-in-action) in the deliberation process. Both of these modes can themselves encapsulate a plethora of social and cultural differences.

What this seems to confirm is that the contrast between the rigidness of environmental performance measurements and the complexity of the multifaceted intentions of projects is a disciplinary problem. This becomes quite evident in competition juries and represents a point of fragility, since some jury members prefer to measure quality from an objective perspective, while others will argue that architecture projects can only be deliberated and debated in order to arrive at a collective judgment

of their quality. These different types of experts see the concerns related to architectural quality very differently.

I am not suggesting the exclusion of technical or environmental experts in a competition process, or the total exclusion of rigidly prescriptive green building rating systems, which, in their current use, may stifle debate and openness in the search for innovative solutions. Rather, there are three recommendations that can be offered here. First, I would advise that the technical experts should remain external to the jury process, since their project vision is limited at best, and fragmentary at worst, and could have a counter-productive impact on the way in which quality is established. Second, I would recommend that the expert evaluations are included in the jury deliberation, but that final judgment is suspended until claims from all jurors have been heard, in order to avoid oversimplifying a given project's qualities. Third, I would advise that environmental management tools such as green building rating systems are used as guidelines by competitors without having to be part of the judging process at all – in other words, credits would not be counted and compared by the jury.

As a final note, as there were no competitions mapped in quadrant C: co-review of technical results drives decision, I have formulated questions for future consideration. [Fig. 9] Given the imperatives of climate change today, should the debate of architectural quality in a jury rely mostly on technical expertise to assess the multitude of risks that culture and society are facing? If the answer is yes, then what is left of the complexity of the project in terms of spatial and experiential qualities? Is it even possible to collectively construct an understanding of the winning project through technical evaluations alone? And if the winning project was selected solely through technical evaluations, would the jury believe, or be comfortable with, their decision in seeking to select the best overall project?

In this light, the conflict of experts may be summed up as the contradiction between the fact that technical experts fail to engage with the complexity of design projects, yet, clients require technical expert advice to counterbalance the architect's tacit knowledge. Technical experts in this sense appear to be rather remote from the very idea of a competition as a space for qualitative debate and judgment. What seems to be essential in the competition format is that the competition jury is a contact zone of design judgment, somewhere between the many technical evaluations, user experiences, and the deliberation of overall architectural quality.

Notes

1. Literature on environmental risk spans many disciplines, from philosophy to environmental studies, environmental sciences and environmental design. The following offer a glimpse of the breadth of the discourse. H. Scott Matthews, Lester Lave and Heather MacLean, 'Life Cycle Impact Assessment: A Challenge for Risk Analysts', *Risk Analysis* 22 (2002): 853–59. Philipp Weib and Jorg Bentlage, *Environmental Management Systems and Certification* (Uppsala: Baltic University Press, 2006). Kerry Whiteside, *Precautionary Politics: Principle and Practice in Confronting Environmental Risk* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2006). Risk society is a condition of both scientists' ability to perform statistical analyses and the realization that humans are creating situations of risk faster than we can learn to understand them. A primary author is Ulrich Beck, *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity*, trans. Mark Ritter (London: Sage, 1992).

2. Donald A. Schön, *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action* (New York: Basic Books, 1983). He deconstructs the professional project of various fields (medicine, architecture, etc.). He suggests various conceptual processes that take place in order to reach decisions during these practices.

3. The project is comprehensively described and analysed in Jean-Pierre Boutinet, *Anthropologie du*

projet (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2005 [1990]).

4. Architecture competitions are particular formats of design procurement that best permit a transparent process. Competitions have been thoroughly studied and theorised by several teams of researchers, in Europe, in Canada, and in the United States of America, among them: Magnus Ronn, Reza. Kazemian and Jonas. E. Andersson, eds., *The Architectural Competition (Research Inquiries and Experience)* (Stockholm: Axl Books, 2010); Stanley Collyer and M. Berk, *Competing Globally in Architecture Competitions* (Chichester: Wiley Academy, 2004); Jean-Pierre Chupin, Carmela Cucuzzella, and Bechara Helal, eds., *Architecture Competitions and the Production of Culture, Quality and Knowledge: An International Inquiry* (Montréal: Potential Architecture Books, 2015); Jonas E. Andersson, Gerd Bloxham Zettersten, and Magnus Rönn, eds., *Architectural Competitions as Institution and Process* (Stockholm: The Royal Institute of Technology, 2016).

5. The design competition as a platform of communicative exchanges is introduced by Jan Michel Silberberger, Joris Ernest Van Wezemael, Sofia Paisiou and Ignaz Strebel, 'Spaces of knowledge creation: Tracing 'knowing in action' in jury-based decision-making processes in Switzerland', *International Journal of Knowledge-Based Development* 1, no. 4 (2010): 287–302.

6. The competition jury as a means for design procurement is representative of values needed for the judgment process as I argued in Cucuzzella, 'Judging in a World of Expertise: When the Sum of the Parts Is Less Than the Whole,' in *Architecture Competitions,* ed. Chupin, Cucuzzella, and Helal.

7. Boutinet, *Anthropologie Du Projet*.

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid.

10. Ibid.

11. Donald A. Schön, *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action* (New York: Basic Books, 1983).

12. Jean-Pierre Boutinet, 'Les Multiples Facettes Du

Projet,' *Sciences humaines* 39 (1993): 20–24.

13. Jean-Pierre Chupin has elaborated extensively on how the ideal judgment process founded on debate essentially results in the jury redesigning the winning project in Jean-Pierre Chupin, 'Judgement by Design: Towards a model for studying and improving the competition process in architecture and urban design', *The Scandinavian Journal of Management: special topic forum on 'Architectural Competitions'*, 27, no. 1 (2011): 173–184.

14. The speech situation, in an ideal context for the exchange of ideas, is thoroughly described in Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action, Vol. 1, Reason and the Rationalization of Society*, trans. Thomas McCarthy (Boston: Beacon Press, 1984).

15. The jury deliberation and judgment process can be seen as a way to collectively re-design the winning project is explained in Jean-Pierre Chupin, 'Quand Juger C'est "Concevoir Un Projet", *ARQ, La revue d'architecture* 154 (2011). Special edition on architecture competitions edited by Jean-Pierre Chupin.

16. Ibid.

17. Jürgen Habermas, *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action*, trans. Christian Lenhardt and Shierry Weber Nicholsen (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1990).

18. Habermas, *Theory of Communicative Action,* 286.

19. Ibid., 285–286

20. In Canada, once the LEED certification was introduced in 2003, there was a period when its adherence was usurping the debate, as demonstrated in Carmela Cucuzzella, 'When the Narrative of Environmental Certifications Replaces the Debate on Quality', in *Faire des histoires? du récit d'urbanisme à l'urbanisme fictionnel: faire la ville à l'heure de la société du spectacle*, ed. Architectes Fondation Braillard, (Geneve: Fondation Braillard Architectes, 2015), 43–47.

21. Jürgen Habermas, 'Modernity: An Incomplete Project' in *Postmodern Culture*, ed. Hal Foster (London: Pluto Press, 1985).

22. John Dewey, *How We Think* (Boston: D.C. Heath and Company, 1933).

23. Ibid.

24. John Dewey, *The Quest for Certainty: Study of the Relation of Knowledge and Action* (London: Allen & Unwin, [1930] 1990).

25. Kersten Reich, 'Observers, Participants, and Agents in Discourses: A Consideration of Pragmatist and Constructivist Theories of the Observer', in *John Dewey between Pragmatism and Constructivism*, ed. Larry A. Hickman, Stefan Neubert, and Kersten Reich (New York: Fordham University Press, 2009).

26. Mary Louise Pratt, 'Arts of the contact zone', in *Professing in the contact zone*, ed. Janice M. Wolff (Urbana, IL: NCTE, 2002), 2.

27. Chupin, Cucuzzella, and Helal, *Architecture Competitions*.

28. Albena Yaneva, *Mapping Controversies in Architecture* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, 2012); Hélène Lipstadt (ed.), *The Experimental Tradition: Essays on Competitions in Architecture* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1989).

29. Elizabeth Tostrup, *Architecture and Rhetoric: Text and Design in Architectural Competitions Oslo 1939–1997* (London: Papadakis Publisher, 1999); Paul D. Spreiregen, *Design Competitions* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1979); Kristian Kreiner, 'Designing Architectural Competitions: Balancing Multiple Matters of Concern', *Conditions: Scandinavian Magazine on Architecture and Urbanism* no. 7 (2010): 12–17.

30. Carmela Cucuzzella, 'Is Sustainability Reorienting the Visual Expression of Architecture?', *Revue d'art canadienne / Canadian Art Review (RACAR)* 40, no. 2 (2015): 85–100. https://doi.org/10.7202/1035398ar.

31. City of Montréal, 'Rapport du jury: Étape 2 (Jury Report), Le Planétarium/Concours d'architecture' (Montréal, 2009).

32. Ibid.

33. City of Montréal, 'Rapport du jury, Étape 2 (Jury Report), Concours d'architecture: Bibliothèque Saint-Laurent', Centre D'exposition et Réserve Muséale, Arrondissement de Saint-Laurent' (Montréal, 2010).

34. City of Montréal, 'Rapport du jury (Jury Report), Concours D'architecture: Centre Culturel De Notre-Dame-De-Grâce'. (Montréal, 2010).

35. The Integrated Design Process (IDP) has been given much attention since the early 2000s. There are many reports and guidelines on the topic, such as: John Boecker et al., *The Integrative Design Guide to Green Building: Redefining the Practice of Sustainability* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2009); Busby Perkins & Will, *Roadmap for the Integrated Design Process Part One: Summary Guide* (Vancouver: BC Green Building Roundtable, 2007); Nils Larsson, *The Integrated Design Process: International Initiative for a Sustainable Built Environment (iiSBE)* (2004). However, very little has been written yet on its effectiveness in completed designed and constricted projects.

36. City of Montréal, 'Rapport du jury, Étape 2 (Jury Report), Concours d'architecture - Agrandissement et réaménagement Bibliothèque Saul-Bellow- Lachine', (Montréal, 2011).

37. City of Montréal, 'Rapport su du jury (Jury Report), Concours d'architecture - Agrandissement et réaménagement Bibliothèque Pierrefonds-Roxboro', (Montréal, 2013).

38. Habermas, *Theory of Communicative Action*.

39. Ibid.

40. Dewey, *How We Think.*

41. Schön, *The Reflective Practitioner*.

Biography

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