

The Experience and Beauty in the Cultural Heritage Discourse

Reflections from two case studies

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Abstract

The cultural heritage in the built environment is developing discursively, and the concept is today exposed more variously than a decade ago when I explained in the doctoral dissertation through a case study how the place, the process and the experience were arising in the Foucauldian discourses. My on-going research on the change of the cultural heritage discourse (kulttuuriympäristö) is showing how the designations are changing and the concepts re-defined. The national strategy on the cultural heritage (2014) is emphasizing everybody's right on the good cultural heritage environment and also the responsibilities to take care of that. When we now share the idea that the cultural heritage in the built environment is belonging to all of us, the places and experiences of all are also important.

Nevertheless, in the end is the experience or the aesthetic experience exactly, really important when opinions are contradictory and the crucial decision has to be made: to preserve or to dismantle the building? The absence of aesthetics in decision-making has been extremely explicit since the recession of the 1990s and public discussions and political decision-making seem to involve mostly economic arguments.

Architects are using the experience, meaning the aesthetic, bodily experience or referring to art, in their professional speech but to speak about "the beauty experience" or able to emphasize the meaning of beauty in architecture, and also in the environment is usually left outside the discussions. The experience, together with reflection, following Dewey, is very important in the speech of teaching architects. In the cultural heritage discourse, narratives, experiences and local stories from bottom-up are arising but do we talk about the aesthetics or the experiences of beauty in the built environment?

In this paper, the aim is to discuss about the meaning of experiences and the role of beauty in cultural heritage discourse. The method used here is the case study research, and two local cases from different decades will be introduced to demonstrate how miniscule or completely absent aesthetic argumentation in decision making processes can remain, and how different the solutions ended up, though both cases concerned the question of built cultural heritage. The central question in my on-going research project on the changing cultural heritage discourse is: How "the aesthetic experience" is appearing today in the cultural heritage discourses? This paper aims to cast light on that and tries to answer especially this: How did the cultural heritage discourse evolve from different experiences; and how did ugliness become important rather than beauty in the case studies?

Keywords: aesthetics, cultural heritage, discourse, experience, beauty, case study

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Introduction

This paper is linked with the author's on-going research about the changing discourses in Finland around the cultural heritage discourse (kulttuuriympäristö), and the term "Cultural Heritage" is as the umbrella concept, because of its relevance in the international research literature. This includes the cultural landscape, the cultural heritage in built environment, the archaeological heritage, and the most important thing: also the narratives, meanings and interpretations attached to them all.

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The administrative nature of the concept, the use of words, the discourses, are committed strongly to their premises, and "Environment" is more connected to the land use, and "Heritage" has a strong position in cultural and educational sectors. Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Education and The Finnish National Board of Antiquities (NBA) have 2016 set up a service in the internet¹, which is spreading information about the subject and a part of the implementation of the Cultural Environment Strategy. NBA is also using "Cultural Environment" in its English text, but divides it into Built Heritage and Archaeological Heritage, which in Finnish are "rakennettu kulttuuriympäristö" and "arkeologinen kulttuuriperintö". This is emerging also from the discourse used by UNESCO: the concept "Cultural Heritage" in tangible and in intangible cultural heritage. Looking at "European Heritage Network" reveals that "kulttuuriympäristö" is translated as "Cultural Landscape" and "kulttuuriperintö" is in English "Heritage". From 1992 Finland has also promoted "European Heritage Days" and that has been translated in Finnish as "Euroopan kulttuuriympäristöpäivät".

The cultural heritage in all levels has been the author's long lasting research subject. The starting point for the doctoral studies and research was the frustration with the municipal decision-making in the 1990s, explicit during the recession, when soft and aesthetic arguments were outstripped and mostly economic values seem to be accepted in public discussions and political decision-making. In the 1990s the author held the office of city architect for Lapua, and tried to promote in this position good design and architecture. Additionally to economics, the empowerment of aesthetic and cultural values became essential when Lapua was forced to buy an old industrial area, as a responsibility for the corporation to hold the jobs in the municipality. (Teräväinen 2006)

The design and decision-making process was a real endeavour for the city organization. Speaking on history, architecture, and also beauty were the mission of the architect during the process. Later, my doctoral dissertation (2006) demonstrated the discursive formation of the cultural heritage and the importance of the place and the process, but actually no traces of talk about beauty experiences. This left the author in constant searching after the beauty in discussions, with professionals and in public alike.

Following recent years' public media discussions on land use and on new building projects brought an outcome, that it was very hard to find notions of beauty or aesthetic argumentation even when architecture or cultural heritage seem to be involved. There are discussions on architecture in three Finnish architecture schools and naturally in Finnish Architectural Review *Arkkitehti* and in a couple of other professional magazines on the built environment, but in the public discussions or municipal decision-making, aesthetics and beauty mostly seem to be missing. The arguments are expected to be based more on quantitative than qualitative reasoning and beauty is obviously seen inasmuch subjective that it is left out of the matter.

The public enthusiasm arises when the so-called architectural wow-impact occurs, but usually questions about economics and decision-making in the town planning override everything else. The capital city Helsinki is obviously a target for very hard scrutiny and the neo-classical, iconic Senate Square one of the most

¹ See www.kulttuuriymparistomme.fi

important cultural heritage places in the country because its political and historical impacts. The place is seen so valuable that many new projects in the vicinity have ended up without result. The first unrealised initiative was ARMI House, a common building for Architecture and Design (Architectural Competition 2001). The second case was in 2008 when a Norwegian businessman Arthur Buchardt² wanted to build a Waterfront Hotel in the area, designed by Herzog & de Meuron. The initiative failed to clear the Helsinki City Council in 2010, after generating long public discussions in the media. In 2011, the Helsinki Art Museum started to negotiate with Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, but the project fell through in May 2012, again failing to gain support from the Helsinki City Council after heavy political discussions.³ Now there is a new project rising on the shore line, but astonishingly the Allas Sea Pool by Architects Huttunen-Lipasti-Pakkanen seems not to be rising up in discussions, even no mentions of its suitability neither its impropriety in the place, and so of course nothing about the architecture or its beauty. The reason for the silence might be the impermanence of the project, so not even the land use was questioned.

In the public debates the architecture or cultural heritage, or *beauty* — in spite of the famous names around it — does not seem to have any role, obviously questions about economics and decision-making in the town planning override everything else. Senate Square and the Helsinki Dome are part of the national cultural heritage and the image-like city silhouette is seen far from the sea.

These examples occurred in one of the most significant cultural environments in Finland and were reiterated here to indicate not only the general situation in Finland but also the author's continuous interest on the cultural heritage and the attempt to find notions of beauty or aesthetic in the public discussions on the architecture.

In the author's on-going research "The Change of the Cultural Heritage: The Concept, the Landscape and Seers"⁴ (2015-2018), the subject is wider but following the doctoral dissertation. The post doc research inspired the author to re-visit the case of Old Paukku and the other coincidental case of bus station with a lot of documented material in her local environment. Re-reading the material, including many hours of interviews for the dissertation, and also author's own text, these two cases turned out to give suitable data for trying to respond to the questions presented in this paper.

The dissertation *Old Paukku in Lapua, Re-Built and Re-Spoken, Discursive Formation of Cultural Heritage in a Case Study* was completed 2006 and is presented here as the first case. There was pointed out the importance of the place as well as processes involved in the formation of cultural heritage. In the cultural heritage discourse, beauty did not play a very significant role but instead different, aesthetic experiences arose, and the aim here is to show discursive connections between them. People may not talk about beauty or ugliness, but they have experienced the place and are sharing in their discussions notions of aesthetic experiences and memories.

The issues of Foucauldian power analysis which were studied thoroughly in the dissertation are not the main concern in this paper, though they were important also in the second case, the bus station in Lapua administrative center. The modernist bus station was built in the 1960s but its architecture was obviously not highly appreciated in the town, and it was threatened by the demolition. These

² Arthur Buchardt later found another place for his hotel, and 2016 Hotel Clarion was opened near Helsinki Western Harbour, in Jätkäsaari. The hotel is designed by Architects Davidsson & Tarkela.

³ The so far latest act of the Guggenheim Helsinki was played 2014-2015, a little further of the Senate Square but still in the historic center and on the shoreline, when a huge international architectural competition was organised and the winner was Moreau Kusunoki Architects — but in the end city of Helsinki did not accept the enterprise to be materialised.

⁴ In Finnish: Kulttuuriympäristön muutos: käsite, maisema ja näkijät.

In general, the author believes in the communication and understandable argumentation also in questions of beauty and aesthetic, that involves both the discourse of architecture as well as the cultural heritage discourse.

cases outline how beauty is missing in the discussions and even how the opposite is discussed more eagerly, i.e. ugliness.

The author aims to use two case studies to show that aesthetic experience exists, even if the aesthetics seems not to be present in the argumentation of the cases.

The central question in the on-going research project on the changing cultural heritage discourse is: How “the aesthetic experience” is appearing today in the cultural heritage discourses? This paper aims to cast light on that and tries to answer especially this: How did the cultural heritage discourse evolve from different experiences; and how did ugliness become important rather than beauty in the case studies?

Theoretical background and research methods

Case study research

The research method here is the case study research, and the aim has been to deal it in the most rigorously way, using two comparative cases which share the context and the time period. Case study is the preferred method in situations like these when in the beginning the main research questions are “How?” and “Why?” and the researcher has little or no control over behavioural events and the focus is on a contemporary (as opposed to an entirely historical) phenomenon, in its real-world context (Yin 1989/2014).

A case can be an individual: a group, or a class, or an office, it can be an institution, a factory or another building waiting for the reuse, like Old Paukku and bus station in this paper. A case could also be a large-scale community, like an industry, a profession or a town. It can handle also multiple cases in the same context like here. A case study investigates the subject to answer research questions that may in the beginning be fairly loose, and which seeks a range of different kinds of evidence, which lie there in the case setting. No one kind or source of evidence is sufficient or sufficiently valid on its own. The use of multiple sources of evidence, each with its strengths and weaknesses, is a key characteristic of case study research. Another characteristic is that in the beginning there are no a priori theoretical notions, whether derived from the literature or not, because until the data is there and the context understood, it is impossible to know what theories or explanations would work best or make the most sense. (Gilham 2000)

We can think basically, a case study is an in depth study of a particular situation and to delve in some cases profoundly and to research them from different viewpoints (Shuttleworth 2008). This heartened the author to catch and apply herself also to the second case, which actually was sharing the situation and happening in the same place and time as the first, inclusively documented and explained case. The aim was to describe the phenomena and make new perceptions, not so much to generalize or to find typical features, because usually this method is said not to be able to generalize. On the other hand, the highly recognized researcher Bent Flyvbjerg has pronounced that view to be one of the five misunderstandings about case study research (2006). He argues that it is possible also to generalize on the basis of an individual case, and therefore, the case study can also contribute to scientific development.

The author has been involved in both cases as an actor, which does not make her unable to function, quite on the contrary in this kind of case study, which reminds action study, one can say the actor's or participant's knowledge is very useful and can reveal issues with so called inside-knowledge.

How did the cultural heritage discourse evolve from different experiences; and how did ugliness become important rather than beauty in the case studies?

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Discourse analysis and power

The primary aim in case 1, Old Paukku (the doctoral dissertation 2006) was to understand other actors' subjective intentions and to obtain hermeneutic interpretations of them, which in the end came out as collective structures of meanings, i.e. discourses, allowing for a Foucauldian power analysis to be carried out. According to Foucault the discourse is not merely what is said, it handles also who is doing the speaking, how they have done it, in what context, in reaction to what, and so on (Foucault 1980; 1997; 1998).

Discourse analytic research is described as a triangle, whose corners are meanings, communications and culture. Discourse analysis leans on the whole triangle and the sharp edges intertwine each other. Discourse analysis is based on cultural meanings, which are constructed, maintained or changed through human actions: the communication includes speech, discussions, writings, and pictures, as well as symbolic actions. (Jokinen et al 1999, 55; Teräväinen 2006, 85)

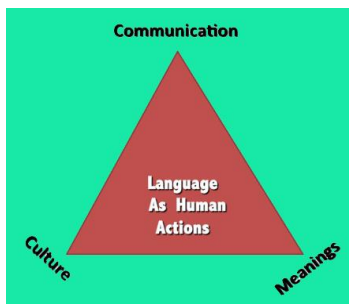


Figure 1. Discourse analytic research can be described as a triangle, its corners depicting meanings, communications and culture. Diagram according Jokinen et al, remodelled by H.Teräväinen.

According to the methodical dimensions of Foucauldian discourse analysis, it is possible to research knowledge in textual form, and the discourses are seen as independent in time and in law, regulated through autonomic formations (Suoranta 1991). In today's mechanically renewed culture of voices and pictures, all products of signification are understood as text; of course in spoken and written language, the relationship of the signifier and signified is conventional and easier to interpret. Pictures on the other hand are rather able to mean (signify) something about which they are reminding, the thing that they are signs of (Teräväinen 2006; 2010).

Discursive rules are strongly linked to the exercise of power: discourse itself is both constituted by and ensures the reproduction of the social system, through forms of selection, exclusion and domination. As Foucault asserts, in every society the production of discourse is at once controlled, selected, organized and redistributed by a great number of procedures. Foucault is involved in a concerted attempt to restore materiality and power, which in the Anglo-American tradition has remained a largely linguistic concept of discourse; it is equally clear that he wants to centre the analysis of discourse within the field of political action. (Hook 2002)

The reason for leaning on Foucauldian discourse analysis in the case studies is due to the extremely centred role of political decision-making in both of the cases. Foucault's discursive practices work both in inhibitive and productive ways, implying a play of prescriptions that designate both exclusions and choices. The data accessible to the discourse analysis has been diverse: for both cases there were a lot of municipal records and planning documents, and also almost 130 contemporary newspaper articles were listed for the case of Old Paukku, which was the focus in my doctoral dissertation. Key actors in the case were interviewed over 10 hours and this produced more than 200 pages transcribed text, which was now read again, as well as the author's own text in the dissertation was scrutinised. For second case "bus station" no special interviews were produced, but all municipal records and a lot of co-actor's knowledge in the process were at disposal, as the author had been able to follow the destiny of Lapua bus station first as an office-holder and planner, later with an association dedicated to value the local cultural heritage. The cultural association Nurkkakivi ry has collected the records and decisions around the bus station on its webpage⁵

How to talk about beauty and aesthetic experience?

The question about beauty in architecture or generally in the environment is difficult to handle, although legislation already obliges us to protect the beauty of the built environment. In Finland the Land Use and Building Act (132/1999,

⁵<http://www.netikka.net/nurkkakivi/laa.html>

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amendment 222/2003 included) references already in the first chapter cultural demands⁶ for the environment, and beauty⁷ is mentioned in the fifth section. Despite this legislation, beauty is very seldom used in architectural argumentation. Rather than written qualifications or explicit instructions, the legislator has trust in expert knowledge, but neither inside the profession (architecture) nor in public discussions is beauty typically a subject. Usually the main difficulty is whether beauty is an objective feature of beautiful things or whether it is subjective; it is so often said that beauty is “located in the eye of the beholder”, and this has ended many discussions before anything has been said. Often the discussion is ended by saying how useless it is to argue about matters of taste, “about taste there is no disputing”⁸.

In the eighteenth century the philosophers David Hume and Immanuel Kant⁹ were convinced something very important would be lost if beauty were treated merely as a subjective state. When controversies arise about the beauty of works of art and literature, it is possible to give convincing reasons. If beauty would be completely relative to individual experiencers, it ceases to be an important value, or even recognizable as a value at all. Nevertheless, people do frequently discuss matters of taste and some persons are held up as exemplars of good taste or of tastelessness. Hume and Kant end up treating judgments of beauty neither precisely as purely subjective nor precisely as something objective, but as something inter-subjective, or as having a social and cultural aspect, or as conceptually entailing an inter-subjective claim to validity. (Sartwell 2014)

The Western conception of beauty is classical: beauty consists of an arrangement of integral parts into a coherent whole, according to proportion, harmony, symmetry, and similar notions, and this has been embodied at least in classical and neo-classical architecture. Like Aristotle says in *Metaphysics*: “The chief forms of beauty are order and symmetry and definiteness, which the mathematical sciences demonstrate in a special degree” (Aristotle *Metaphysics*, here according Sartwell 2014). The gaze of an educated architect can easily distinguish for example a mathematical formula such as the golden section, but classical beauty was not seen in such strict terms in Antiquity and neither is it today. (Sartwell 2014)

In Antiquity, in the first century BCE Vitruvius defines in his book *On Architecture*, three epithets for architecture: Venustas (beauty), Firmitas (strength) and Utilitas (functionality). For beauty, he gives a wide characterization of the classical conception,¹⁰ both in its complexities and in its unity. He writes how architecture consists of order and arrangement, and of proportion and symmetry as well as of decor and distribution. Order is needed for the balanced adjustment of the details, and, as to the whole, the arrangement of the proportions is done with a view to a

⁶ “The objective of this Act is to ensure that the use of land and water areas and building activities on them create preconditions for a favourable living environment and promote ecologically, economically, socially and culturally sustainable development.”

⁷ “The objective in land use planning is to promote the following through interactive planning and sufficient assessment of impact: [...] 3) protection of the beauty of the built environment and of cultural values [...]”

⁸ *de gustibus non disputandum est*

⁹ Hume’s “Of the standard of taste” in *Four Dissertations* (1757) and Kant’s *Critique of Judgment* (*Kritik der Urteilskraft*, 1790).

¹⁰ *Architecture consists of Order, which in Greek is called taxis, and arrangement, which the Greeks name diathesis, and of Proportion and Symmetry and Decor and Distribution, which in the Greeks called oeconomia. Order is the balanced adjustment of the details of the work separately, and as to the whole, the arrangement of the proportion with a view to a symmetrical result.*

Proportion implies a graceful semblance: the suitable display of details in their context. This is attained when the details of the work are of a height suitable to their breadth, of a breadth suitable to their length; in a word, when everything has a symmetrical correspondence.

*Symmetry is also the appropriate harmony arising out of the details of the work itself: the correspondence of each given detail to the form of the design as a whole. As in the human body, from cubit, foot, palm, inch and other small parts come the symmetric quality of eurhythmy. (Vitruvius, *On Architecture*, 26–27.)*

symmetrical result. The result shall be beauty and good architecture, but of course, these concepts would need professional discussions.

Thus, there is no actual standard of beauty that would set out the qualities of something to be beautiful, but it is possible to describe the qualities of a good critic or a tasteful person. Then the long-run consensus of such persons is the practical standard for taste and the means of justifying judgments about beauty. Beauty needs somebody to perceive it, while also important are the history and condition of the observer who makes the judgment of taste, which imply that taste and beauty can be seen as culturally constructed concepts, and can be discussed.

To experience art, beauty, architecture, place or space etc., one needs senses. Arnold Berleant took aesthetics back in its etymological origins by emphasizing the priority of sense perception. Sense experience and perception itself are reconfigured to recognize the mutual participation of all the sensory modalities, including kinaesthetic and somatic sensibility. The aesthetic experience is involvement and engagement in the environment, one's active and constructive operations, in which the environment is inviting him. (Berleant 1991; 1992.)

The aesthetic experience can be approached also from the viewpoint of perceiving. The aesthetic experience and perception stand so close to each other that cognitive premises like words, knowledge, and perception are closely connected. There is "a traditional or general" understanding about the specific form of the aesthetic perception, which enables one to observe the object by taking mental distance or an aesthetic attitude towards it (Rantala 2002; Teräväinen 2006).

In the architectural discourse and teaching at architectural schools in Finland, education greatly appreciates experience and reflection, in the way John Dewey presents it in *Art as Experience* (1934). We speak of "the architectural experience", an aesthetic, whole and full-bodily experience involving all senses.

Dewey explained perception and enjoyment of art to have a lot in common with the creative act. He aimed to find the combining link between the act of production and the act of appreciation of art and how to understand the connection between the productive and appreciative aspects of art one has to see the conscious experience as "doing and undergoing". Thus, "aesthetic" is seen to refer to experience as both appreciative and perceptive. In aesthetics, there is the side of the consumer and yet, production and consumption are not to be seen as separate actions. According to Dewey the product can be aesthetic only if the doing and undergoing are related to form a perceptual whole, and this can happen in imagination as well as in observation. The artist needs to build up a coherent experience continuously through constant change. Everything is made for public consumption: an author's text is public as well as the architect's work is in the medium, while doings and perceptions interact and mutually affect each other in imagination. The experience of the perceiver is comparable to that of the creator – both experiences are important and are parts of the mutual process. (Dewey 1934, 35-57; Dewey 1950)

Following Dewey we can see the structure of "an experience" that is special. The subject undergoes some properties, which determine her doing something, and the process continues until the self and the object are ending with a sensation of harmony, and this, I assume, enables the beauty to be perceived. When the doing and undergoing are joined in perception they gain meaning and this in turn, is given depth through incorporating past experience. An excess of doing or undergoing can interfere with experience and, for example, desire for action may lead to treating resistance as a mere obstacle and not as a moment for reflection. A balance is required between doing and undergoing to achieve an experience. (Dewey 1934, 35-57; Dewey 1950)

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Researching the lack of aesthetic argumentation in two cases

Next follows an attempt to answer the research question by reviewing two research cases. How “the aesthetic experience” is appearing today in the cultural heritage discourses? Both cases appeared in the same town, approximately the same time period and in both cases the writer has been involved first as an active planner, recognized as an actor, and as a reflecting observer.

First case: Old Paukku

The first case has been thoroughly described and examined previously in my doctoral dissertation (Teräväinen 2006). The subject of the thesis was the planning and decision-making process for Old Paukku¹¹ during the period 1993–2003 and the discursive formation of cultural heritage during the period.

In 1992, Lapua town was economically forced to acquire the area of the old State Cartridge Factory, with the aim of preserving jobs by affording a new building to the company as part of the compensation. In the subsequent decade, the old industrial buildings were renovated for cultural and commercial use.



Figure 2. Old Paukku seen from the south bank of Lapua river. Paukku Factory's facilities (1923–1993) were moved to another place. Town municipalities had to buy the abandoned factory area, and after a long process, the town decided to renovate it into a library and culture center. Photo: Jussi Tiainen 1998.

The case offered a unique theme for me as a researcher because I had been involved in the project as the city architect and planner and thus possessed a co-player's knowledge of the case. The research aimed to deepen the conceptual knowledge of the cultural heritage, with especial importance given to shedding light on the role of cultural heritage in the municipal planning and decision-making process. A discourse analysis was carried out on data derived from interviews with the key actors, planning and decision-making documents, reports, newspaper materials, and photographs (from the 1910s until the present).

Fifteen years of work in the small town had led to distraction, because the aesthetic values were repeatedly almost brushed off in municipal decision-making and this was the compelling drive to start the doctoral dissertation. As the architect in the case, the author had somehow tried to emphasize the softer values – as revealed in a new reading of all materials gathered for the thesis. The aesthetic discourse was absent in the municipal decisions but it did come out in

¹¹ Paukku means in English Explosive Charge

the author's own speech and in the dissertation text, offering 26 mentions of beauty¹² and 50 mentions of aesthetic.

Fifteen years of work in the small town had led to distraction, because the aesthetic values were repeatedly almost brushed off in municipal decision-making and this was the compelling drive to start the doctoral dissertation.

The aim in the beginning was to maintain in the town plan this most apparent and prominent milieu which according my opinion was locally significant as a cultural heritage environment. "How does it appear" or does a certain place or subject have aesthetic value, "beauty" – this can always arise suddenly in the speech of the politicians and citizens. This can end very quickly as the final solution, that is, the buildings being demolished, and after that there would be nothing to discuss or experience in the milieu. The easiest argument to use and understand seemed to be the time or the age: many times, it was heard in public that "it isn't even very old- so it can't be valuable". (Teräväinen 2006, 31; own translation)

The fragment tells about the lack of any mention of beauty in the argumentation and decision-making, and the author (town architect) seems to be almost afraid of the consequences of the sudden mention of beauty – and the inadequate age of the buildings.

In greatest danger of being pulled down was the wooden Canteen, designed by architect Onni Tarjanne. It is a beautiful building representing the neoclassic style from the 1920s; it is almost in its original appearance, a two-storey high building, but the weak spot according to the decision-makers has been the building material. The wooden building was suddenly – according to some "taste" or viewpoint – not suitable in the factory area where most of the buildings are built of brick; even if it has already stood there for eight decades. (Teräväinen 2006, 63; own translation)

Here the author is defending the beauty of the wooden building, using 'neoclassicism', because the classical beauty is more easily accepted without counterclaims, and in the town, the dome represents the neoclassicism of the 1800s and the town hall the 1920s classicism and both buildings obviously are highly respected in public opinion.

The chrome plating building (building no 7), which was designed by architect Onni Tarjanne, gave the strongest impression with its beautiful, classical pediment. When this will be opened as the Art Museum in October 2006, which architect Juha Leiviskä has designed, it will certainly be the most beautiful building in the area. (Teräväinen 2006, 262; own translation)

In this extract, the writer is proclaiming one neo-classic building to be beautiful and then finally dares to foretell the renovated building to be beautiful as a museum, because of its famous architect, who is the most honourable living Finnish architect today, the academician Juha Leiviskä.

¹² As the designing architect in the project, I had certain rules about aesthetics in my working group but somehow it might as well have been the "aesthetics of ugliness" than *beauty*. The factory area and most of the buildings there had been heavily used for many decades and the signs of work in the walls and forgotten things on the courtyard were seen as evidence of this. The main design concern was how to conserve the spirit of the place when bringing all the new activities and materials there. We decided that the renovation and repair works should not change the old buildings to become too clean or too "pretty" - "*beauty*" was not discussed, but the architects had their own opinion, inherited from Architect School: The form follows the function and the simplicity of the plan is the guarantee of *beauty* (or the ornament is a crime).



Figure 3. The blue Chapel's (formerly a forge, originally a gas plant) classicist 1920's architecture by architect Onni Tarjanne was noted beautiful already before the renovation. Photo: H. Teräväinen 2012.

Originally, in the decision-making process of Old Paukku, neither beauty nor aesthetic values were emerging in the discourses. In the beginning the project was characterized by strong conflicts between private enterprise and cultural factions. In the theoretical framework, culture (including different explanations) was seen as the network of currents where meanings and discourses arise and periodically establish their own position (Fornäs, 1998).

Old Paukku became conceptually a "cultural environment" little by little through human speech, as the discourses embraced the history of the place, the collective memory, and the new experiences in the process. The renovation process created an open forum where, in addition to the re-use of the old factory, other issues were also dealt with. From the multifaceted variety of speech there evolved two main discourses. The Place Discourse was named with the sentence: "Now we have this kind of place", containing not only the idea of the past and memories, but also issues relating to current identity and the current cultural usage of the place.

The Process Discourse was described with the sentence: "Where did they learn those models?" and it refers to changing power relationships: While before the project the main actors in the field were politicians and municipal officials, now also active cultural and citizen organizations became involved within the process, and they became significant also in other planning and decision-making processes. The design project was, at least for a moment, the base-camp of the knowledge-power, as Foucault describes in *The Will to Knowledge* (1976/1998), the changing relations by the rules of immanence.

The design project was, at least for a moment, the base-camp of the knowledge-power, as Foucault describes in The Will to Knowledge (1976, 1998), the changing relations by the rules of immanence.

In the Process Discourse, mainly about decision-making, the argumentation was aimed at being seen as rational and economic, with no talk about senses, aesthetics or other softness. The Place discourse was loaded with experiences of an aesthetic nature or aesthetic phenomena; like experiences of place, memory or identity of the place, image and town marketing. Nevertheless, as mentioned earlier, there was no talk in the interviews about beauty, it was an old industrial area and the buildings were in a bad condition, so no experiences of beauty were arising.

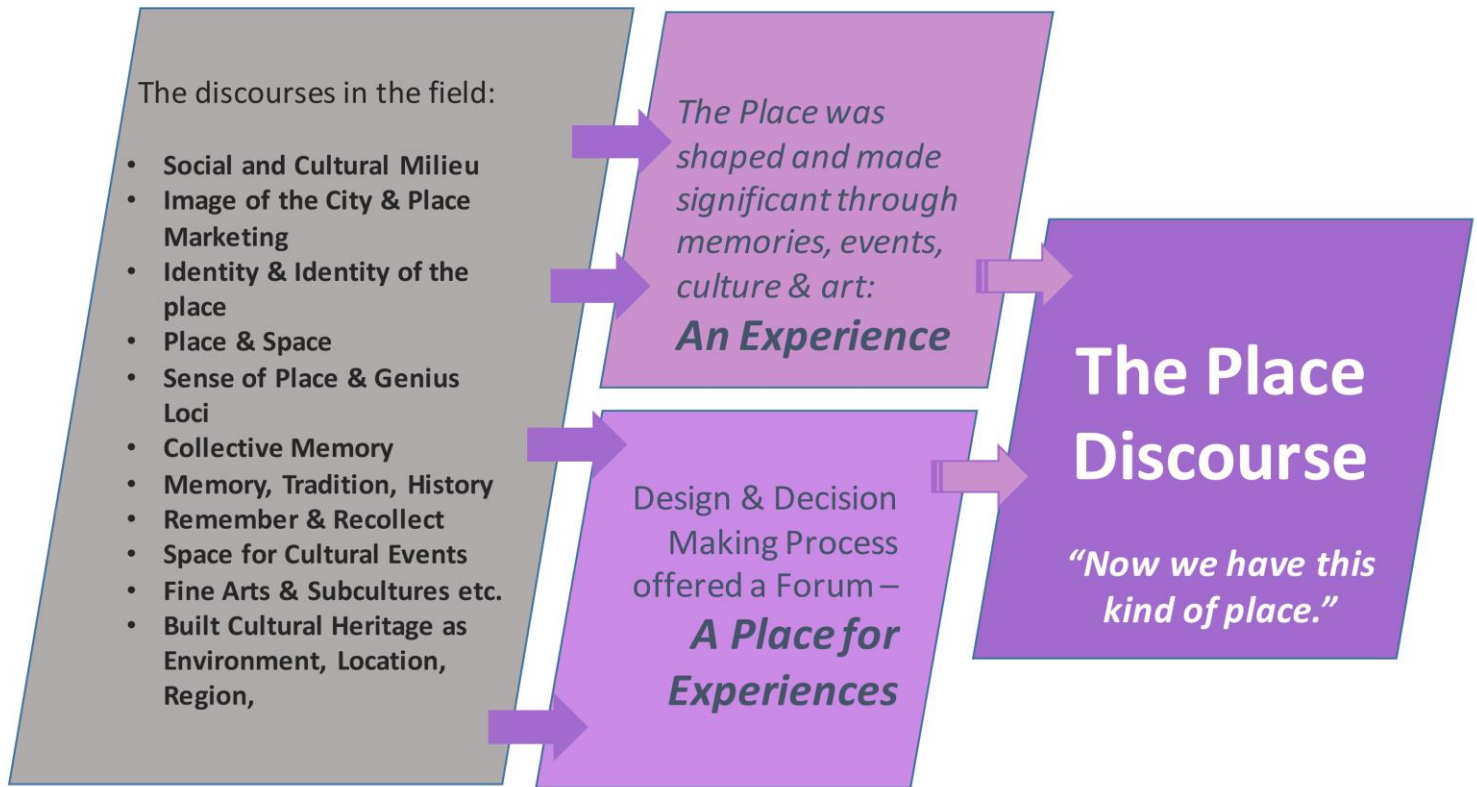


Figure 4. The Place Discourse was constructed through sayings loaded with experiences of aesthetic nature or aesthetic phenomena; like experiences of place, memory or identity of the place. Drawing by H. Teräväinen.

In the end, Old Paukku as an object of cultural heritage, was not heard in the discourses (interviews 2002), at least not until 2009, when the National Board of Antiquities listed it as a nationally valued heritage place. Obviously the governmental discourse has to cope a lot before the adsorption into the local administration, but as a culture centre Old Paukku has ended up to be accepted and well-liked. The new cultural use is constructing also the awareness of the cultural heritage values



Figure 5. The former bus station, Matkahuolto in Lapua. The white building of bus station on the right, and behind it the town hall. In summer 1998, the parking area and market square were green, almost like a park. Photo: H. Teräväinen 1998.

Second case: bus station

The second case introduces another public building, a bus station, which in the late 1960s was described in decision records as ‘the last completing part of the townscape in the monumental municipal centre of Lapua town’ and mentioned as one the three most important buildings in Lapua in an architectural guide book (Salokorpi 1979). The destiny of this building differs radically from the first case, but has also similarities, with relation to discourses of cultural heritage and “beauty”. This building was designed to act as remarkable architecture, but obviously, it started to lose its charm in the public eye very early. Perhaps the modernist style of architecture was too odd to be admired in a small town; Lapua has only 15 000 inhabitants and is located in the Ostrobothnian countryside, appearing more like a village settlement than an urban area.

In the 1960s (1964–1976), the Architects’ Office of Erik Kråkström & Ahti Korhonen from Helsinki carried out the master plan and town plan in Lapua, both likely to have been done for the first time ever in the town. Architect Korhonen had in 1965 also been commissioned to counterpoint the municipal centre with a new bus station and commerce building. This would be situated in the vicinity of the old town hall, which had already been there for four decades and represented the neoclassicism from the 1920s. The megalomaniac talk about “the municipal and monumental centre” can be said to have followed the ideals coming from Seinäjoki town centre, which had been under construction since 1959. That centre was designed by Alvar Aalto and was soon after set to be a world famous architectural attraction.

At the end of the 1990s, Lapua bus station was caught up in a planning altercation. Lapua town made the decision to replace the bus station and the nearby marketplace with a huge super market. The grand commercial dreams were typical of urban development in the 1990s; the previous decade’s enthusiasm with the pedestrian precinct would have integrated smoother into the built environment.

The aesthetic values of the town hall were already accepted; though it was at risk of being demolished in 1960s, thereafter it was carefully renovated, and now its style of architecture – classicism — was recognized. But the bus station's architecture did not have any relevance to the public. Only the professional, that is to say, architects' gaze was sympathetic and approving of the simple beauty of the building. In town planning concerned with new uses for built areas, the cultural heritage values include beauty, but the leading roles are taken by age and history.



Figure 6. The white concrete building of Lapua bus station. A public building, which was described by its construction time in the late 1960s as “the last completing part of the townscape in the monumental municipal centre of Lapua town”. The building was demolished in 2015, and the place has been empty ever since, in spite of many plans. Photo: H. Teräväinen 2011.

In the town plan modification process and discussions around the bus station, it was clear that a modern building was not suited to the realm of cultural heritage. It was not old enough and it was perhaps not beautiful enough. In the discourse around cultural heritage, age was still the strongest argument and ca. 30 years seem to be not enough to qualify. The issue of beauty was also edged out in professional speech, since the leading tendency was to think of beauty as very subjective and also culturally relative, since the aesthetic experience wasn't opened enough in discussions. Yet in the political discussions, many statements about the building came out – rather than being beautiful, it was said to be very ugly.

The reactions opposed to conservation in this case were so strong that the question was even asked: “Is it possible to hate modern architecture?” What could be reason for the unpleasant experience: the flat roof, which is very disliked in Finland or the social dimensions of the place, with shady characters hanging around or the concrete walls without any decorative details? Was it so disliked only because of the modern architecture or was it seen as an obstacle for the new supermarket plan and irrelevant arguments were chosen because of that?

“When you know the philosophy and ideas behind the name, it is easier to accept these buildings as a part of the townscape and even to learn to love them.” Anthony Vidler described in his keynote lecture in DoCoMoMo 2012 in Espoo.



Figure 7. Lapua bus station. ‘The Bus Station in Lapua represents very well the concrete architecture of the 1960s and also highlights the current topic of how to cherish the traffic architecture. The building is Lapua’s own example today of the already widely appreciated “concrete brutalism”. NBA’s statement about the town plan, 19 April 1999. Photo: H.Teräväinen 2011.

In 1999, the NBA did not demand the conservation of the station but did submit statements that the town municipalities would very seriously contemplate the possibilities to maintain the building. In the first statement 19 February 1999, the building was described to be typical to 1960’s functionalism but the use of the term “brutalism” in the second statement two months later was received with satisfaction among those who wanted the bus station to be pulled down. It was misinterpreted to be a classification for ugliness – and not understood as a certain description for a tendency to make the Modern Movement even more pure and idealistic, as architecture critic Reyner Banham had stated (Banham 1955/2010). It is not common knowledge that the name “brutalism” was given by the architects themselves, first by the English architect couple Alison and Peter Smithson, and not by critics. “Brutalism is not concerned with the material as such but rather the quality of the material that is with the question: what can it do? And by analogy: there is a way of handling gold in a Brutalist manner, and it does not mean rough and cheap, it means: what is its raw quality?” as Peter Smithson himself described (Spellman & Umglau 2004). There was perhaps not a program to follow, only a certain community of interests, a tendency to look toward Le Corbusier, and to be aware of something called “le beton brut”, pure concrete. But this (mis)understanding of “brutalism” has really not been merely a local issue; all over world there are serious disagreements about buildings from the same era.

“When you know the philosophy and ideas behind the name, it is easier to accept these buildings as a part of the townscape and even to learn to love them.” Anthony Vidler (2012) described in his keynote lecture in DoCoMoMo 2012 in Espoo.

Yet what happened to the bus station, which obviously was not old enough or beautiful enough (but ugly) to be conserved? The alteration of the town plan in the centre of Lapua was under process during the period 1998–2002 and ended with a proposal to build a supermarket in place of the bus station and the public market square. Before the planning process had even begun, the town council had approved a preliminary agreement regarding the site with the retailer company about the use and the new floor space. A short citation of the text in the renewed town plan in 1999:

Relative to the cultural heritage in the built environment both the market square with planted trees and also the bus station would deserve

conservation but that would be inappropriate under the premises of the new plan and the preliminary agreement made between the town councils and the commercial enterprise – the conservation marks for the bus station would prevent the construction of the new super market. (Translation by the author) Lapuan kaupunki, Keskusta 1.kaupunginosa, korttelit 122, 123, 124 ja 126 etc. tori-, puisto-, liikenne- ja katualueet. Asemakaavanmuutos 2.helmikuuta 1999, p.28.

A group of almost 2000 citizens was against the new super market plan, mostly because of the cultural heritage value of the nearby town hall and the very much loved marketplace, which would be transformed into a parking lot. The politicians were extremely anxious, since they were not ready for this kind of citizen participation: obviously people were very affected regarding the public spaces. In the end, the new plan was confirmed after such a long process, that the new supermarket was already built elsewhere, on a more spacious plot.¹³

Since the bus station was not confirmed as a cultural heritage site by the town plan, the technical section tried to have the building torn down. The local culture association Nurkkakivi complained and after a long administrative process, permission was denied. In 2009, the NBA issued a new announcement about the cultural and environmental value of the bus station and suggested it be protected by the town plan, which is the normal procedure with cultural heritage buildings. The town did not initiate any new planning process, but on the other hand, it anticipated through the master plan sketches and unofficial illustrations that the market square would be moved and the bus station replaced with tall apartment buildings.

In March 2012, the bus station facilities were situated near the railway station, and the old building stayed empty. The town had actively been trying to find an investor and business developer for the plot without any success.

The town again initiated the demolition process and again the local culture association Nurkkakivi complained and the matter was taken all the way to the Supreme Administrative Court. It was at this point in process that the cultural heritage and architectural value was admitted at all levels and the decision was again that the bus station should be conserved by regulations laid out in the renewed town plan. There were, however, holes in the bureaucracy: when The Regional Administrative Court was asking about the town plan being up-to-date, the town administration insisted the 13-year-old plan was up-to-date, even though it was with the useless supermarket plot and without cultural heritage protection. Since the plan was proclaimed as up-to-date, the town received permission to demolish the building, which had nevertheless everywhere been accepted as having value as cultural heritage. The end of this process was widely described not only in newspapers but also in a professional journal by a legal expert Lauri Jääskeläinen (Jääskeläinen 2015). The bus station was pulled down in autumn 2015.

Public opinion in the town municipalities seemed to be that the building was not valuable or suitable for any new use; and people were used to think it was simply ugly. The local cultural society, a group of professionals, were demanding it be preserved, as well as the state-level authorities who had validated the value of this representative of modern architecture.

¹³ This is carefully reported on <http://www.netikka.net/jalava/historia.html>



Figure 8. Lapua bus station. In this second case, the subject (building) was empty several years and without any plans or ideas for the re-use. Photo: H. Teräväinen 2011.

A very interesting public discussion arose in the summer of 2014. At the time, Lapua was trying to get permission for the demolition of the building and the Mayor Arto Lepistö decided to participate in the public discussion and wrote his opinion in the local journal:

[...] The bus station is in the article characterised as “a uniquely fine representative of late modernism”. There are two kinds of buildings in the world: there are beautiful ones and then there the architect’s beautiful ones. The bus station represents the second one. [...]. (Lapuan Sanomat 14.8.2014; translated by H. Teräväinen)

The text also contained further economic arguments for the demolition of the old buildings. The reasoning took on emotional features when he wrote that cost of maintenance for a year was the same as a nurse’s salary for a year.

In the next issue of the newspaper came a response claiming the town is embracing a third kind of beauty, which is embodied by the developers and actually favouring corruption. In this response were also arguments for the philosophy of the aesthetic and the skill of the architects presented by writer and publisher Anssi Sinnemäki from Helsinki (*Lapuan Sanomat* 19.8.2014).

At the same time, the author of this paper arranged an exhibition in Old Pauku. Among others were pictures of the old bus station and also the poster “When does a modern building become suited for the realm of the cultural heritage? Discussions about the built environment and town planning around a case study” which had been presented in Docomomo 2012 conference. The local journal published an interview and wrote how discussions about architecture and cultural heritage are important. The bus station was once more endorsed for its architecture and beauty.

However, in this case, the discussions were not fruitful enough and the cultural heritage discourse did not make it in time – and the bus station vanishes next year. Now the value of the building is a matter solely for history, as something embedded in people's memories and experiences, waiting for somebody to recollect and represent the stories.

Discussion

The initial aim for this paper, as written in the introduction, was the concern about the absence of aesthetic experiences in the planning and decision-making processes - and also with relation to cultural heritage (including architecture). Instead of wide quantitative surveys, I decided to revisit the case of Old Paukku, which I have studied earlier comprehensively for my dissertation and in addition to take along another case that I was involved from the same surroundings. The goal of the case study research is not to produce any generally valid model but to deepen the conceptual knowledge of the research subject and to understand different views. In the chosen cases especially important was the position of the cultural heritage and discourses around it in the planning processes.

Within architectural education, the discourse on architecture requires an experience, as Dewey (1934) explained by way of continuous doing and undergoing and multisensory perception, but this discourse clearly has not landed in public conversations.

In the cultural heritage discourse, the leading role is not given to beauty or to aesthetic values. More importance is given to historic values, which Alois Riegl explains as age value,¹⁴ connected to time and age, reflecting history and the relations between different values in a certain culture (Boyer 1996; Teräväinen 2006). The meanings of place and the memories of the people and their experience of the place came up in the first case study. These experiences or frame of mind are referred to in the previous description about “the experience” in this paper. The experience of the place came up significantly in the interviews, and in the discourses around both Place as well as Process, which were seen combined in the cultural heritage discourse. Also according to Kupiainen (1997), such aesthetic experiences exist even when experiences of beauty and ugliness have not been possible, or when not interpreted in words.

In discourse analysis, the researcher is more interested in HOW people talk rather than with WHAT people are saying, and so there was a possibility to find beauty (and aesthetics) in the discourses even if people were not mentioning it directly. The text is produced in discourses and the discourses have their own rules – they are producing their own representation of reality. The discourses regulate the thoughts and how they are connected together: what is the reason for some consequences and what is the consequence of some cause?

The conclusion in the case of Old Paukku is to accept the aesthetic experiences of actors to be unveiled in the interviews, and to be discovered as important for them, even though there was actually no mention of beauty. In the case, the old building was accepted as a favourable living environment and somehow it was affording aesthetic experiences within the Place discourse (Fig.4.), because people learned to use and value the factory area, which had not been appreciated at all earlier. The key factor was the open cultural use of the place.

¹⁴ Age seems still to be a remarkable factor in cultural values – and the time scale runs very quickly. In the 1980s, it was almost understandable to say that a dignified house (for protection or conservation) should be at least 40 years old, because that meant the building was constructed before the World War II. But the boundary mark seems to be still the same and now “public opinion” finds only houses older than 70 years to be agreeable for conservation.

*Do people not
experience modern
buildings inviting
or are the
professionals just
unable to open up
the discourse of
modern
architecture?*



Figure 9. Scenery in the Factory Museum of Old Paukku. In the cultural heritage discourse, the leading role is not any way given to the beauty – or to the aesthetic values – more important are the historic values. Photo: H.Teräväinen 2010.

In the second case the subject (building) was not handled as an enabling target in the planning process, it was seen as obstacle for the development (the new super market). Now the modernist bus station is gone and only stories and memories still exist. It is difficult to believe that the real reason for the unsolved situation is modern architecture, which people could not experience as inviting or pleasant. Of course, the reasons are more complicated and linked to the economics of the town, but anyway it would be useful to develop the way we are discussing modern architecture and architectural experiences.

It is proved to be possible to discuss a place becoming cultural heritage in the first case. Could it also have been possible to discuss a building being beautiful – instead of ugliness (“brutal”) in the second case? Yet, it was not only because of “brutalism” – there may be something missing in the modernism, which could have given people an experience of the place and make them love it. Architects know “functionalism” – because that is the way, many generations have already been brought through architecture school: pure materials and simple forms are beautiful. But how to explain these pertinent requirements to the layperson? Theodor Adorno writes about how music and architecture are concentrating strictly on expression and construction, while both strive to efface all ornaments. Architecture here refers to Adolf Loos and Bauhaus, known to be totally against ornaments. According to Loos, an artwork need not appeal to anyone, but a house is responsible to each and every one. Adorno wants to correct Loos’s thesis and argues the question of functionalism as not coinciding with the question of practical function. Adorno says that purpose-free and purpose-full arts (architecture) need not form such a radical opposition as imputed, while the difference between the necessary and superfluous is inherent in a work, and is

not defined by the work's relationship – or the lack of it – to something outside itself. (Leach 2002)

Following Foucauldian discourse analysis: second case did not offer any base-camp for cultural heritage discourse, not for beauty nor aesthetics.

Adorno's judgement of art's authenticity embodies its autonomy and uniqueness, and this bears unsolved tensions that society is unable to combine. This makes art renew itself according to historical processes continuously and also act against previous ideals. Culture is changing continuously, it is the network of currents, where meanings and discourses arise and establish their own position for the time being. Modernism is trying so hard to renew itself and be more modern that people have not time to be familiar with the discourse or to experience it. In the second case, there was no organized ongoing design and planning process; in the almost 20-year period, people read in the newspapers or heard somewhere only about decisions to demolish and appeals against them; there were no plans or options for how to re-use the bus station or the exhibition space there, only negative things. Following Foucauldian discourse analysis: second case did not offer any base-camp for cultural heritage discourse, not for beauty nor aesthetics. Not even any architectural discourse had any chances to born; before the super market initiatives, in 1994 the author (as town architect) had organised a photo exhibition about modern architecture, where the bus station of course was included, but there was no space for talks about architecture or beauty when the planning process started in 1998.

Conclusions

The two case studies discussed in this paper are proving how little – or not at all - beauty is concerned in some planning processes. Instead of beauty in architecture, there can be questions about cultural heritage and within that concept, for example, the experience of the place etc. can emerge. These cases show that the discussions on some kind of aesthetic experience are possible - even when the cases seem to totally lack of aesthetic argumentation. Moreover, sometimes instead of beauty people end up talking about ugliness, which seems to be quite convenient expression for them but is not a decent or adequate word for architects.

According Hume and Kant it is possible to discuss critically about beauty, but architects have lost (or they have not reached that?) their position as environmental experts or their rights to justify good taste. Architecture is explained to be a whole, multisensory experience in the educational discourse but this has not landed in public conversation, and of course not in political decision-making. Instead of just to define the subject (a building, an environment) to be beautiful – or ugly —we talk about environmental experiences with all senses, and this discourse should be made more known in public. At first, however, the professionals have to start to discuss critically, using adequate argumentation and also communicate using words, not only in drawings and pictures. Endorsing aesthetic experiences in planning and decision-making process could open better communication and shared values among people. Actually, architects and planners are commanded also to talk about beauty: Land Use and Building Act emphasizes citizen's participation and communication, furthermore it even urges to protect beauty and cultural values. The legislators are aiming at more satisfactory and beautiful living environment when advising people to extended communication.

The two cases here have shown two different outcomes in design and planning when the already built environment – possible cultural heritage –is concerned. Not only good and successful examples are worthy of description, also failures or demolished beauty are evolving the architectural discussion and clarify the discourses. Even if the town municipalities would not invite or allow discussions around the planning and design processes, the architects have to meet the users (inhabitants, citizens) and develop their professional discourse to be understood and suitable also for public and social media discussions, not only among other professionals.

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