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LEGITIMIZING THE TAMPERE DECK ARENA

Analyzing tension points to identify how a growth coalition legitimized their vision using place making strategies.

Bachelor's Thesis
Faculty of Social Sciences
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January 2024

ABSTRACT

Aurora Luukkanen: Legitimizing the Tampere Deck Arena
Bachelor's thesis
Tampere University
Sustainable Urban Development, Social Sciences
January 2024

The Tampere Deck Arena serves as an example of the large-scale growth oriented urban development projects that are increasingly encouraged by global neoliberal processes, such as inter-urban competition and commodification of places. This thesis examines the motivations to build the Tampere Deck Arena and the way the vision of it was legitimized within its political-economic context.

I employ Molotch's growth machine theory to showcase the motivations behind the Deck Arena by comparing the case of Tampere to two contemporary growth machine cases in Europe. To understand how it was legitimized, I use the concept of place making to identify what meanings the key actors of the project wanted the Deck Arena to have.

The objects of the analysis are tension points in a feedback compilation from the early planning phases of the arena project. By applying the method of Flyvbjerg et al., I identify problematic power relations apparent in the responses to the feedback and derive four place making strategies revealed in them.

My discussion finds that the Deck Arena project was motivated by its perceived growth potential that the growth coalition behind its development – and in their interpretation the whole city – stood to gain benefits from and that the Deck Arena was legitimized with a problematic value-free perception of it. The findings also suggest that the global relevance of urban development projects is an important way to for contemporary growth coalitions to legitimize their projects.

Keywords: Tampere Deck Arena, Nokia Arena, growth machine, urban development project, place making, tension points, inter-urban competition.

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TIIVISTELMÄ

Aurora Luukkanen: Legitimizing the Tampere Deck Arena
Kandidaatintutkielma
Tampereen yliopisto
Sustainable Urban Development, yhteiskuntatutkimus
Tammikuu 2024

Tampereen Kansiareena on esimerkki laajamittaisesta kasvua tavoittelevasta kaupunkikehityshankkeesta, jollaisia kaupunkien välinen uusliberaali globaali kilpailu ja kaupunkitilan kaupallistuminen tuottavat. Tämä tutkielma tarkastelee niitä tapoja, joilla visio areenahankkeesta legitimoitiin ja toteuttaminen motivoitiin.

Käytän Molotchin kasvukoneteesiä analysoidessani hankkeen toteuttamista motivoivia tekijöitä. Syvennän tulkintaani vertailemalla kahta nykyaikaista eurooppalaista kasvukonetapaustutkimusta Tampereen tapaukseen. Paikan tekemisen (place making) käsitteen avulla tunnistan kaupunkikehityshanketta legitimoivia merkityksiä, joita keskeiset toimijat halusivat Kansiareenaan kytkeä.

Työn empiirisenä aineistona on hankkeen alkuvaiheissa koostettu asemakaavaehdotuksen palaute ja vastine -dokumentti, jossa kaupunkilaisten, viranomaisten ja muiden toimijoiden hanketta koskeneisiin kysymyksiin ja kommentteihin vastattiin. Flyvbjergin ym. menetelmää soveltaen tunnistan jännitekohtien avulla ongelmallisia valtasuhteita palautteiden vastineissa ja johdan niistä neljä paikan tekemisen strategiaa.

Johtopäätöksissäni osoitan, että Kansiareenahanketta motivoivat tekijät perustuivat kasvukoalition uskoon sen kasvupotentiaalista, josta koalition jäsenet – ja heidän tulkintansa mukaan koko kaupunki – hyötyisivät. Areenahankkeen visio legitimoitiin neutraalilla mielikuvalla, jolla pyrittiin peittämään ristiriidat. Tulokset esittävät myös, että kaupunkikehityshankkeiden kansainvälinen merkittävyys on nykyisille kasvukoalitoille aiempaa tärkeämpi legitimoinnin väline.

Avainsanat: Tampereen Kansiareena, Nokia Arena, kasvukone, kaupunkikehityshanke, paikan tekeminen, jännitekohdat, kaupunkien välinen kilpailu.

Tämän julkaisun alkuperäisyys on tarkastettu Turnitin OriginalityCheck –ohjelmalla.

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1 INTRODUCTION

Contemporary urban development in the Global North is seeing an increase in large scale, globally oriented and economically incentivized projects (Anselmi and Vicari, 2020; Baker and Ruming, 2015; Swyngedouw et al., 2002). Examples of such projects over time would be the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, the Toronto entertainment district and very recently the new Valley mixed-use development in Amsterdam. In his classic 1989 paper, David Harvey explains how globalization has made capital more mobile across borders and therefore cities must increasingly work to attract capital, to get even a slice of it. Many other urban scholars have since pointed to the global competition of cities, rather than nation states, as a driving force in development projects around the world (Anttiroiko, 2015; Degen and Rose, 2022; Swyngedouw et al., 2002). The field of competition is especially prevalent in the economic and cultural value of the city: who can attract the most investors, who has the most tourism, who provides the most entertainment (Degen and Rose, 2022; Dupre, 2019).

So too, is the Finnish city of Tampere aiming to grow into a global actor among world cities that compete in tourism, entertainment, and atmospheres as local politicians Jussila and Rantanen (2023) insinuate in an opinion piece in *Aamulehti*. The newest manifestation of this goal in Tampere is its recently constructed Deck Arena, named Nokia Arena in 2022. It was a host arena to both the 2022 and 2023 Ice Hockey World Championships, which immediately put it on the world map of entertainment locations (Yle News, 2023). The Deck Arena project already began in 2008, and the project includes a deck structure built on top of railway tracks, the multipurpose entertainment arena, and five office and residential towers. So far in 2023, the deck, the arena and two towers have been completed in the first phase of the project. The development is located at the heart of the city center, next to the railway station, the bus station, a business park, a university campus, and shopping malls.

A united growth coalition is at the heart of the Deck Arena's success as a realized project, as I showcase by placing the arena project within the framework of Molotch's (1976) theory of the city as a "growth machine". The theory posits that development projects are led by growth coalitions that are made of local elites who are all interested in the economic or political benefit the development project will bring them through growth generation. In Tampere, the growth coalition was mainly made up of the City of Tampere, developers, the local newspaper Aamulehti and influential businessmen. The benefits are intricately tied to land because the location of the land defines how valuable the development is. The deck structure is the land that the arena project is built on, and it serves as a whole new location, or place, in the city center of Tampere.

As national development in the Global North has been increasingly guided by the ideology of economic growth in the 20th century, growth has become a political project itself, and the goals of politics and economics have come to uphold each other (Schmelzer et al., 2022). This echoes Harvey's (1989) finding that cities in late stage capitalist countries have moved from earlier managerial governance to entrepreneurial governance styles, in order to attract more capital. In consequence, resources such as land have become increasingly commodified. These changes are in line with the neoliberal changes to governance that swept over Europe in the 1970s and 1980s (see for example Anselmi and Vicari, 2020; Brenner and Theodore, 2002; Swyngedouw et al., 2002) but they came to Finland later than many other countries.

Hyötyläinen and Haila (2018) write that in Finland, urban development and land policy saw changes during the recession of the 1990s, which resulted in reduced financial and administrative support for municipalities from the state, as well as increased autonomy for municipalities in their land use decisions. As a result, the role of municipal land switched from a social asset into more of a financial asset, to make up for the lost state support in municipal income. For example in Helsinki, prior to 1993, the city primarily leased land to private users, but since the mid 1990s, it started selling land for income instead. And starting in 2005, Helsinki charged land rents from public services such as schools, which it had not done before. Hyötyläinen and Haila (2018, p. 137) call the new land use policy in Finland "entrepreneurial [or neoliberal] public real estate policy",

because its purpose is to make a profit rather than distribute land for social purposes.

The existence of the Deck Arena, and many similar urban development projects, must be seen in the context of these neoliberal processes such as inter-urban competition and commodification of land. Therefore, in this thesis I want to explore how the Deck Arena was legitimized in its political-economic context. I do this by posing the two research questions, "How is the vision of the Deck Arena motivated?" and "What place making strategies are revealed at tension points arising from this vision?" With vision of the Deck Arena, I mean the idea of what the project will *do* for Tampere as a city, i.e. its impacts. This gives insights into the motives of the growth coalition, even when read in between the lines.

I dissect the vision and motivations by using the theoretical frame of the growth machine as well as by analyzing tension points arising from the vision. As my data I focus on a compilation of feedback left for the project plans in its early planning stages, in order to return to the roots of the project's incentives. The feedbacks I have chosen show tension points as defined by Flyvbjerg et al. (2016), and at those points I identify the use of four place making strategies.

Place making is a concept used in urban studies to describe what gives places meaning, and this is done more and more intentionally by developers and planners to create atmospheres, experiences or identities (Dupre, 2019). By applying the concept of place making to my analysis, I identify the meanings that legitimized building the Deck Arena, which are related to but separate from the motivations to build it.

The discussion shows that the Deck Arena is legitimized through the cultivation of a positive, or neutral, perception of its impacts. The coalition achieved forming such a perception by using their position of power to undermine feedback givers opposition to the vision. An important part of the perception was its international value that the coalition used as a legitimating factor. Previous growth machine literature (Anselmi and Vicari, 2020; Mboumoua, 2017) has observed cases with similar findings, and this thesis contributes to the discussion by drawing the observations together and asserting that such appeal to projects' world-class character has become an essential way for growth coalitions to legitimate development.

2 GROWTH MACHINE THEORY AND PLACE MAKING STRATEGIES

2.1 *Growth Machine Theory*

To study the Deck Arena, I draw on the theory of the “city as a growth machine” developed by Harvey Molotch (1976). His theory was based on the context of urban planning in the USA and is thought to be less applicable in the European context due to different structure of governments and their levels of involvement in urban planning. However, authors such as Mboumoua (2017), Anselmi and Vicari (2020), as well as Laine and Peltonen (2003), have found application for this theory in European contexts. As Finland, along with the rest of Europe, has moved towards a neoliberal form of urban governance, the growth machine theory is only gaining relevance on this side of the Atlantic.

Molotch’s 1976 paper on “The City as a Growth Machine” was an innovative and significant contribution to the field of urban studies. The paper presents two key arguments, which form the basis of the growth machine theory: 1) the *raison d’être* of any city is growth and 2) growth is the one issue that brings local elites to find common ground with each other, regardless of other differences. Growth here is understood as population growth in an urban area. For the elites - they are property owners, business and industry leaders, politicians, and local metropolitan newspapers - it translates into benefits through different ways: more and higher land rents, more customers, wider readership, and more government revenue. Population growth is therefore closely tied to economic growth.

Molotch (1976) weds these arguments with his earlier argument (Molotch, 1967) that any city or region is a collection of land-based interests, which Cox

(2017) summarizes well as a city being a “market of locations” (p. 396). Land is a very finite resource, and locations which have “growth potential” are competed for by coalitions (Molotch, 1976, p. 311). Hence, the elites and their networks form growth coalitions in cities to achieve their differing yet interdependent goals, all reachable by facilitating growth in key locations. The coalitions partner with public power out of necessity, because with governments on their side, it is easier to realize projects. Public authorities can enable growth through resource distribution, especially of land and locations. Zoning of land, public money invested into development projects, and taxation all determine the growth potential of the specific land plot itself as well as others near and far through impacts of the development.

In 21st century Europe, examples of a growth coalition at work can be found in many cities. Two cities, Milan and London, stand out as cases that bear resemblance to the case of Tampere. In Milan, the case formed around Porta Nuova, a central district of the city, where the development was comprised of office and residential towers (Anselmi and Vicari, 2020). In London, the development project was the Crossrail 1 railway line, which connected West and East London (Mboumoua, 2017). By comparing the cities’ urban development cases and the hallmarks of Molotch’s (1976) theory present in them, I show how a growth coalition works in contemporary Europe. The comparison to Tampere will be made in my Discussion.

Anselmi and Vicari (2020) write about the case in Milan, specifically highlighting how the role of global capital enabled the success of the development of Porta Nuova through land ownership. The attempts at developing Porta Nuova had been unsuccessful since the 1980s until the early 2000s, when the municipal government of Milan asked an American based multinational real estate and finance company Hines to invest in the planned development. Hines could afford to buy all the land from the various landowners who had not wanted to join forces with the municipality for development. The municipality also owned some of the land in the district, and once all the land was under the binary ownership of Hines and the municipality, they were able to start development. Under Hines’ massive capital backing, businesses and banks were secure enough to invest in the development – for example the UniCredit bank was an important anchor tenant - and the Lombardy regional government funded the project as well. Notable here

is that although it was private capital that enabled the realizing of the physical development, the active participation of the public powers, as landowners and investors, was crucial to lure in and interest Hines in the first place.

Similarly in London, Mboumoua (2017) has identified that the Crossrail 1 project took off only once public authorities stepped in to support the project, since, as a public transport project, it required the involvement of public authorities. She writes that although local business leaders had been in favor of the project for the better half of the 20th century, it only became a serious possibility once a local metropolitan government – the Greater London Authority - was reinstated and the mayors in the 2000s took it upon themselves to promote the project. Through government involvement, public funding was ensured alongside private investment from real estate developers. The involvement of the local governments in Milan and London was a crucial component of enabling the growth coalitions to form at all, and in both cases, the government remained an active partner in the development.

Both of the projects were also backed by their coalitions due to their key locations, thought to improve their growth potential. Anselmi and Vicari (2020) note that the Porta Nuova project faced backlash from local residents, and even some in the City Council, because the development would reduce public amenities available in the area, such as greenery and a community center. But since the area bordered a historical business district and was easily accessible by public transit, the ground was fertile for increasing the economic growth that could be made on the land. In London, Mboumoua (2017) writes that the Crossrail 1 was highly favored by business elites because it would connect banks and other finance services to each other, but also to the city center, Heathrow airport, as well as generally far ends of London, previously at a longer commuting distance to central London. This was expected to increase investment into development along the stations of the rail line and generate economic growth.

But even with the elements of private capital, public power, and location, growth coalitions need to legitimize growth for those outside the coalition. Mboumoua's (2017) account of the London Crossrail highlights the classic example, already identified by Molotch (1976), for legitimizing growth: growth will bring more jobs to the region. The value of this claim comes from the consensus that everyone in the city will benefit from more jobs, because they generate

economic growth. Troutman (2004) extends this element of Molotch's (1976) growth machine argument by emphasizing how growth is heralded as inevitable and inherently good for all, through rhetoric that promotes the perceived benefits, and overlooks costs or negative impacts. For example, Troutman (2004) cites road congestion as a real issue due to growth, which often gets overlooked. And Molotch (1976) along with Logan and Molotch (1987) also proves the falsity of the claim to jobs, because as the population increases along with jobs, unemployment rates stay the same.

Despite these findings, the ideology of growth persists in development projects such as the Porta Nuova, London Crossrail and Deck Arena. This is why Troutman (2004) calls the ideology of growth "value-free". With this he means that growth is not perceived as having the dimensions of good and bad, but rather it is perceived as an objectively natural state of things. The naturalization of growth as an organic political goal – as Schemlizer et al. (2020) implied – is a strong ideological tool for growth coalitions to exploit in legitimizing their projects.

Another way growth coalitions identified in Milan and London increased legitimacy was by relating their development projects to the idea of gaining advantage in the inter-urban competition of world-class cities. In Milan, Anselmi and Vicari (2020) identify that the Porta Nuova project was part of a larger strategy by the city to make Milan as a whole an attractive place for global investment capital. With a project in the magnitude and architectural ambition of Porta Nuova, Milan was deemed to have joined the "big leagues" of global cities" (Anselmi and Vicari, 2020, pp. 115). In London, a key argument by business leaders, as well as the mayors, was that Crossrail 1 would maintain London's "world-city status" and allow it to stay competitive with the likes of Paris and New York (Mboumoua, 2017, p. 323).

In conclusion, through comparing cases of a growth coalition at work in Milan and London, I've showcased what are the key features of growth coalitions in contemporary Europe: cooperation between private capital and public power, a key location to generate economic growth, and the claim to increase jobs and global status. In my Discussion, I will elaborate on how these features were at work in Tampere. In the next subsection I define place making as a concept used in urban development and why it is fitting to use in the case of the Deck Arena.

2.2 *Place making strategies*

In urban studies, the term “place making” (also spelled place-making or placemaking), is a widely used term with varied contextual definitions. Researchers, such as Gato et al. (2022) and Wingren (2013), note that place making can be approached from two general perspectives: 1) that of all the users and stakeholders who interact with the place or 2) that of the key actors with power to strategically plan the place. In this thesis I am focusing on the latter approach, as I analyse the growth coalition’s top-down oriented place making strategies. Any mention of “key actors” in this thesis will refer to the actors who are financially involved in the building of the Deck Arena.

For either perspective, the research agrees that at the core of place making is a way to attach meaning to a place (Dupre, 2019; Gato et al., 2022; Richards and Duif, 2019; Wingren, 2013). In her paper on the history of the term, Dupre (2019) finds that this can be done through, for example, “policies, capital investment to generate economic growth and promote cultural tourism”, “narrative constructions”, “discourses and, more recently, virtuality and creativity” (p. 111). I call these ways of *doing* place making the ‘strategies’.

Similarly to Dupre’s (2019) finding, Gato et al. (2022), highlight the definition of Richards and Duif (2019), who assign three essential elements to place making, namely, resources, meanings and creativity. Working altogether, their elements mean that the different resources available for the place and the emotions and meanings connected to the place are packaged in a creative way to create meaningful stories that give the place its character.

The definition of Richards and Duif (2019) neatly summarises how Dupre’s (2019) examples of ways to attach meaning to places – which I call strategies – play out in practice: the strategies are the way resources and emotional connections are packaged together to create meaning. Meanings can appear in many forms, but in this thesis, I find that the term ‘perception’ best captures the meanings that I analyse. This is because the meanings are top-down oriented in nature, and therefore reflect not a synergy between a wide range of actors, but rather the agenda of the key actors in the growth coalition.

For the growth coalition, place making strategies can be seen as a tool to make their development project more meaningful in its locality. In their book

Richards and Duif (2019) see place making as a relevant concept to such “self-promotion and competitive transformation of small towns” because it can be used to make local identities stronger. (Gato et al., 2022, p. 1505). In the case of Tampere, the city is aiming to grow into a bigger actor in the global competition for tourists and atmospheres, or a “world-city” in Mboumoua’s (2017, p. 323) words, and this is the context the Deck Arena project sits in.

In this light, place making can be seen as an appropriate concept to be applied with growth machine theory, because through place making, we can view the growth coalition’s legitimising discourse as a way to tie their project to the local place and the local place to the project. By drawing on the meaning creation and locality elements of place making, in this thesis I define place making strategies as the ways to create meaningful perceptions about places. With it, I will analyse what strategies were used by the growth coalition behind the Deck Arena in its early days to create their vision of it.

3 DATA AND METHODS

3.1 *Data*

As stated in my introduction, my two research questions are: 1) How is the vision of the Deck Arena motivated and 2) What place making strategies are revealed at tension points arising from this vision? To answer these questions, I chose to analyse, as my primary data, feedback given to the zone proposal for the arena and responses to those feedbacks, which were compiled into one document together. This compilation document is publicly available at Tampere's City Archive, along with all the other official documents used in this thesis related to the Deck Arena. All the documents exist originally in Finnish, so I have done my own translations of all the quotations I use in my analysis.

The compilation of feedback can be loosely called "Attachment 9, 24.1.2011 feedback and responses" in relation to the arena project zone proposal number 8366. The compilation is comprised of those comments and questions given during a public information event on November 9th, 2010, held to invite public participation, but it also includes feedback sent to the City of Tampere by individuals, authorities, and a housing company until December 2010. As secondary data, I'm using official investigations ordered by the developer NCC from consultancy firms on the economic impacts and traffic impacts. These help to contextualise the feedback and given responses.

The feedback compilation was done by the consultancy firm WSP Finland, for NCC Development Oy and the City of Tampere. Although it was WSP who primarily compiled and responded to the feedback, I find there to be an indication that NCC and the City were also taking an active part to respond to the feedback. In the third feedback compilation called "Attachment 11, 5.4.2011" to zone proposal 8366 (outside the scope of this thesis) it is specified that WSP drafted the responses in collaboration with NCC and the City of Tampere. In light of this,

I find that it indicates that in the Attachment 9 compilation I focus on, published only four months earlier to Attachment 11, the responses have also been drafted in collaboration between the three actors. NCC and the City of Tampere were the two financially responsible key actors leading the project forward in 2010 and 2011, so I find that it is their voices and interests who are represented in the Attachment 9 compilation responses. I refer to them as the key actors throughout my data analysis and discussion.

The Attachment 9 compilation offers a diverse range of support, opposition, and suggestions for the project, but to answer my research questions most effectively, I chose to focus on the opposing feedback. More specifically, I looked for feedback that presented a challenge to the growth coalition's vision of the arena project, because in these instances the key actors were required to either defend the vision or make a change, in order to respond to the presented challenge. By analysing the responses of the key actors to challenges, I highlight those place-making strategies revealed in in tension points that are used to legitimize the vision of the Deck Arena.

3.2 Method

To determine what qualifies as a challenge, I used Flyvbjerg's, Landman's and Schram's (2016) work on analyzing tension points in social science research. They have applied this analysis method to a variety of research projects, including urban mega projects (see Flyvbjerg, 2012). The authors outline a path of problematizing power relations by identifying dubious practices by key actors, which are based on contestable knowledge and may lead to conflicts (Flyvbjerg et al., 2016). The points at which a power relation appears as problematic they call a tension point. I applied this path to identify tension points in the ideas of how the arena project will impact Tampere, since this translates to visions of the project.

In the Attachment 9 compilation, I shifted through the total 230 pairs of feedback and responses to categorize every pair as either a "yes challenge", "no challenge" or "unsure". The "yes challenge" pairs were the tension points I would use for my data analysis. I determined the "yes challenge" feedbacks by first

identifying whether a feedback was concerned with how the project would impact Tampere generally. If the answer was yes, I secondly identified if the response undermined the feedback and created a tension point because of a dubious response. After this, I went back to the “unsure” categories for a more thorough look using the same method and categorized them again into “yes challenge” and “no challenge”.

Table 1. Breakdown of all feedback pairs in compilation “Attachment 9, 24.1.2011 feedback and responses”.

Data category	Amount
Total feedback & response pairs	230
Total “no challenge” pairs	201
Total “yes challenge” pairs	29

The “no challenge” category consisted mainly of feedback in favour of the plans, very detailed suggestions, lack of any comment, and infrastructural and safety notes. All the feedback concerning the possible tramline going in front of the arena and those concerning the housing company As Oy Sorinhade, which sits right next to the arena, I also labelled “no”. These were excluded simply because they covered such specific impacts that would have needed themed sections of their own to discuss. This would have made the thesis too long and exceeded the scope, so I decided to leave them out and focus only on more general impacts on the city, such as effect on cityscape and traffic congestion.

From my data set of “yes challenge” pairs with tension points I found three clearly reoccurring themes and sorted each pair of feedback and its response into one of the themes. The themes are:

1. Appearance and Design: tension in the idea of what the impact of the arena’s appearance will be on the Tampere cityscape.
2. Transportation and Connectivity: tension in the idea of to what extent the arena will impact traffic flows and how it will connect the different sides of town.
3. Economic Viability: tension in the idea of how economically profitable and sustainable the project is.

Table 2 below showcases which feedback and response pairs fit under which theme. The feedback codes represent one pair of feedback and its response. They are the same codes as used in the Attachment 9 document to label every feedback pair. The analysis draws on many of the feedback pairs as examples, but those pairs which are not mentioned, are represented by the used examples.

Table 2. Total challenge pairs with tension points used for analysis.

Data sample themes	Amount of challenge pairs	Feedback codes
Appearance and Design theme	18	6.1; 6.2; 10.3; 17.1; 21.2; 3.1; 3.2; 3.3; 6; 7.1; 7.2; 7.3; 11.3; 13.2; 14.13; 16.1; 16.2; L4,1
Transport and Connectivity theme	7	17.3; 22.5; 16.2; 11.4; 16.5; L3.7; L15.16
Economic Viability theme	4	9.9; 9.10; 13.1; 14.1;

4 ANALYSIS

4.1 *Case Deck Arena*

Before diving into my analysis, I contextualize the data with a brief overview of the nature and twists of the arena project. The Tampere Deck Arena began to realize at the turn of 2008 to 2009. The City of Tampere had had vague hopes of a new ice hockey stadium for some time before, but the hopes morphed into a real project only when the developer NCC Property Development Oy and influential businessman and former Tampere city council member Rikard Bjurström suggested the location on top of the railway to The City (Malinen, 2020). The early years moved fast, as the plan was to have the arena completed in time for the 2013 Ice Hockey World Championships (Deloitte Oy, 2010).

In February 2009 Tampereen keskusareena Oy was established as a company to spearhead the plans, led by Bjurström himself until 2014 (Leino, 2014; Malinen, 2020). In April 2010 the City called for participants to a participation committee to comment on the new zone proposal for the arena project (Leino, 2014). There were two public information events held in 2010, one in May and one in November (Saarikoski, 2011). Both were held at Tampere University. Although on paper this sounds like much public participation in a short time, Leino (2014) has written in depth about how the whole process, but especially the two public information events, were very performative in nature. She shows that specifically the second event had a power imbalance scripted into it, since it was mainly a fast-paced information dump from project leaders on to the listening participants.

Leino (2014) continues her analysis of the performative politics by dissecting the role of Studio Libeskind in the project. In June 2010 it was made public information in the print copy of Aamulehti 24.6.2010 that the world-famous

architect Daniel Libeskind would join the project, and in early November, before the second public information event, Libeskind's designs were first publicized in the print copy of *Aamulehti* on 4.11.2010. Not only did Libeskind's involvement make the vision more concrete in appearance but, as Leino (2014) writes, his international status as a star architect gave the project new symbolic value that the developer NCC along with other project leaders used to raise the project above the level of everyday political debate.

The arena never started construction in time for 2013, and between 2010 and 2016 the original partners, NCC and Bjurström as CEO of Tampereen keskusareena Oy couldn't find the sufficient funds to realize the project. But throughout the project years, from the start to the end, the arena was endorsed as a way to increase Tampere's attractiveness (in Finnish: *vetovoima*) and competitive advantage. (Högmander and Sainio, 2010; Leino, 2014; Pesonen, 2017). Despite the substantial economic benefits the arena project was expected to bring, even the new developer SRV who was chosen in 2016 to replace NCC, was not willing to risk construction without multiple exceptionality measures granted to them by the City.

In the spring of 2016, *Aamulehti* publicized a secret agreement where the City sold the deck land to SRV at ridiculously low prices of 200 000 euros for the southern towers' plots, and 300 000 euros for the northern towers' plots (Taponen and Koponen, 2016). This was extremely exceptional, because it made the price of one floorspace square meter in the southern towers 9,09 euros, whereas more normally the price would have been in the hundreds of euros, as it was 875 euros per floorspace square meter in Tampere's Ranta-Tampella developments at the time (Taponen and Koponen, 2016).

In the fall of 2016, SRV applied for a change to the previously accepted zone proposal, so that they could build more residential apartments and higher towers than the original zoning allowed ("Taustatietoa hankkeesta - SRV.fi," n.d.). The extra apartments replaced much of the office spaces originally planned to bring in most of the jobs to the deck area. Swyngedouw. et al. (2002) have written how it is common for large-scale urban development projects to make use of, and justify, exceptionality measures, since the project is elevated on to an exceptional status above other development. In Tampere this was done through the involvement of Libeskind and sheer scale of the project in a creative location.

In May 2017, the final investors and costs were made public in Aamulehti (Pesonen, 2017). In 2018 construction finally began (Mansikkamäki, 2018). The case of the Deck Arena is marked by much excitement about its value and meaning to Tampere, yet behind the scenes there lies a questionable basis for this. With this setting in mind, I turn to the meat of my thesis, the data analysis, to dissect the tension points arising from the early visions publicized in 2010 and identify the place making strategies revealed at them.

4.2 Data Analysis

4.2.1 Appearance and design

The “Appearance and design” theme had most of the tension points, with the main reoccurring one being that the tower houses envisioned next to the arena are too tall and massive for the scale of Tampere, and they will ruin the cityscape and feel of the city. For example:

Feedback 6.2: The tower buildings do not fit the industrial character of Tampere and they will go out of style fast. Response: Groups of towers have been built in Tampere before. (WSP Finland Oy, 2011, p. 1)

Feedback 17.1: Considers the dimensions of the towers to be inconsiderate of the rest of the environment. Response: The dimensions of the towers are in contrast with the dimensions of the vicinity. However, Tampere has considerably large industrial buildings in the city center as well as previous groups of residential towers. (WSP Finland Oy, 2011, p. 1)

Feedback 3.2: The high towers do not fit the existing housing and building stock. The scale of the new buildings should blend in next to the central railway station and the orthodox church. Response: It has been attempted to take the orthodox church into account by opening plaza like spaces facing the church in between the buildings. There will be at least 150m of space between the train station and the nearest tower, so the tower will not be attached to the train station or in its immediate vicinity. This solution has been evaluated in the architecture committee, participation committee and cityscape committee. (WSP Finland Oy, 2011, p. 3)

Feedback 7.1: The building mass, especially around the deck arena, is way too big for the city center of Tampere. Response: The size of the arena has not been changed from the initial plan. Due to the industrial heritage of Tampere, there are large masses in the city center, for example the Finlayson factory. This solution has been evaluated in the architecture committee, participation committee and cityscape committee. (WSP Finland Oy, 2011, p. 3)

To these feedbacks, the key actors answered that tall or large buildings have been built in Tampere before - including the old industrial ones and newer residential ones - using this as reason enough to build more tall buildings. The tension here arises from conflicting narratives of Tampere's identity. The feedback givers consider Tampere a city of lower and smaller scales, whereas the key actors present a new identity of large scales through the reference to tall towers and large masses.

The key actors make it apparent that there was never an alternative option considered for the mass and appearance of the arena project. The response to Feedback L4.1 says, "The scale of the zone proposal presented in the participation and evaluation plan (OAS) has been the basis for the scale and *this has not been changed during the progress of the plans*" (WSP Finland Oy, 2011, p. 9, emphasis added). Since the key actors are not willing to discuss how suitable their vision is for Tampere, it implies that it is such an integral part of the vision that they do not want to lose it.

The place making strategy that emerges is a narrative of Tampere as a city of tall buildings. This narrative casts a new or alternative identity for Tampere and within that identity, legitimizes building more large-scale development. The key actors seem to have interpreted mentions of scale and mass in terms of tower length, as for example Feedback 13.2 said "Tampere can't compete with world metropolises with buildings of significant dimensions," and the response was simply "Noted. The purpose of the zone proposal is not to compete with the height of towers." (WSP Finland Oy, 2011, p. 6).

This feedback goes to show that, with the reference to world metropolises, the length and mass of the designs represent the idea of a large global city. But the key actors choose to interpret "significant dimensions" as "height of towers", so that their argument that Tampere is befitting of the identity of a big international city – through the symbolism of tall towers – stays consistent. It is no wonder then, that the key actors are unwilling to change the appearance to something that might decrease internationality and increase locality, which is what the feedback givers advocate for in asking for a scale that is more appropriate for Tampere's identity.

They also state as part of many responses that the design of the towers has been evaluated by the architecture committee, participation committee and the

cityscape committee, placing these as authority figures that know better than an average citizen, therefore undermining the power of the feedbacks. The question of what is a more authentic identity for a city is very subjective. Still, it is problematic that the key actors refused to even participate in a discussion of what kind of design is more true to the identity of Tampere. Undoubtedly because they were attempting to rush the plans in time for 2013.

There is a general case to be made that large modern architecture is not true to the soul of Tampere. It is shown in the words of the response givers, such as in Feedback 11.3, “The cityscape can’t withstand the proposed project to be built in the area,” and in Feedback 16.1, “The gigantic mass of the buildings is in stark contrast with the existing building stock and the overall scale of Tampere” (WSP Finland Oy, 2011, pp. 6, 7). And in a recent Aamulehti piece, unrelated to the Deck Arena, a local man born and raised in Tampere showing the city around to tourists states that, “I would present Tampere as authentic Tampere. No skyscrapers or metros... I would serve fish dishes in restaurants, in houses as low as possible.” (Kunnas, 2023). I found this quote interesting, since it was said after the deck arena was built and shows that it is still not considered befitting to the identity of Tampere. So, the narrative of Tampere as a city of tall towers and its symbolism of a large global city is contestable even as a subjective topic.

4.2.2 Transport and Connectivity

The tension points in the “Transport and Connectivity” theme were more diverse in nature. The main points arose from visions of traffic flows. Feedback 10.2 and 11.4 argue that the amount of traffic will be a harmful burden and that there isn’t enough parking for the increased number of private cars:

Feedback 10.2: the traffic and obstacles to visibility will significantly harm the Orthodox church, Sorinahde Oy and other nearby housing. Response: The impacts on traffic have been evaluated in the zone proposal. Destia has drawn a report on the impacts of traffic. Traffic on Vuolteenkatu has been expected to rise from the current 15 200 vehicles to 17 600 vehicles by 2023. The report found that the arena project has no significant impact to traffic but traffic will increase in any case due to growth. The obstacles to visibility affect those buildings which will be built in front of, such as As Oy Sorinahde. But we have evaluated that the impact will not be significant because it will be possible to leave 10-15 m of free space between the eastern wall. (WSP Finland Oy, 2011, p. 5)

Feedback 11.4: the organization of traffic along with the arena will overburden the city transit unnecessarily. Response: The impacts on traffic have been evaluated in the zone proposal. Destia has drawn a report on the impacts of traffic. Traffic on Vuolteenkatu has been expected to rise from the current 15 200 vehicles to 17 600 vehicles by 2023. The report found that the arena project has no significant impact to traffic but traffic will increase in any case due to growth. (WSP Finland Oy, 2011, p. 6)

In response, the key actors cite the findings of the traffic investigation report done by consultancy firm Destia (2010), which says that traffic will not significantly be worsened due to the arena project, but it will increase regardless, even without the arena (WSP Finland Oy, 2011). The tension arises from the differing ideas of how the arena would contribute to traffic amounts due to growth in both residents and tourists. In their responses, the key actors are blatantly advancing a narrative of the inevitability of growth as a place making strategy, and in so doing, minimizing the possible impacts of the arena. If the arena does not significantly worsen traffic, then clearly it has minimal impact.

In Feedback 17.3 and 16.5 the key actors draw on the possibilities offered by the location and zoning process:

Feedback 17.3: Concern that the arena will not improve city connectivity because the connections haven't been investigated properly, but they have only been presented in theory. Response: zone proposal makes new connections possible compared to current railway yard. (WSP Finland Oy, 2011, p. 2)

Feedback 16.5: The plan means traffic chaos: the amount of parking spaces is insufficient since most people will come by private car. Response: Destia has drawn a report on the impacts of traffic. The report says traffic won't be significantly worse and it will happen outside rush hour. Also the location enables efficient use of public transport. (WSP Finland Oy, 2011, p. 7)

In 17.3, by stating that new connections are made possible by the zone proposal, they distance the substance of the feedback – how city connectivity would improve - and reframe it as a matter of form, in this case as technicalities of the legal zoning process. The tension is caused by the different frames the feedback and response exist in, and the fact that a response in the language of technical form avoids answering the substance in the feedback.

Similarly in Feedback 16.5, the response states that the “location enables” better public transport use, meaning it makes it possible. It is the zone that enables the location, so the location here is presented as a technical feature of the zone proposal. Zoning is tied to its location, and that location has been chosen

strategically for this project but presenting it as a zoning feature makes the location seem like a choice of the technical process. So, in Feedback 16.5 the subject matter of traffic congestion concerns is also framed as what the technical process makes possible to do about them. But a technical response cannot include ideas, values or judgements which would be needed to answer the substance of the feedback.

In both cases the reframing of the feedback into a technical framework removes accountability from the key actors if the possibilities are not used in the end, since citing the possibility of something as a solution does not guarantee its implementation. The place making strategy is therefore technicalizing feedback, meaning that the legal zoning process is presented as an authority on matters instead of the people behind the project. This sidelines the fact that key actors are making decisions in the process. Similar technicalizing also happened in Feedbacks 22.5 and L3.7.

4.2.3 Economic viability

The economic viability of the project raised surprisingly little interest from feedback givers even though the City was set to be a financial partner and therefore invest public funds into the project. Feedback 9.9. raises a key question of who is this project for?

*Feedback 9.9: Concern for who will be all the buyers and renters for the apartments and office spaces. Response: The zoning enables multiple differing functions according to business cycles: apartments, accommodation spaces, **business**, and office spaces. The zone proposal is not concerned with selling of the apartments etc. The permitted range makes it possible to accommodate for the market situation. (WSP Finland Oy, 2011, p. 5)*

In the same way as in the previous section, the response technicalizes the feedback by bringing forward the process of zoning and what the process enables. The use of the spaces, whether residential, hotel accommodation, or commercial is flexible in the zone proposal and can be accommodated with the market situation when they are taken into use. It is problematic because it avoids the real question since it offers every possibility for who could use the spaces and

at the same time no answer at all as to who the users will be. The same strategy is used in Feedback 9.10:

Feedback 9.10: Would building the deck be the responsibility of The City if the zone proposal didn't include the arena, significant for leisure activities tourism and cityscape, anymore? The problems with the project should be considered seriously. Response: This [question] will be determined by the contracts to be made. The zone proposal does not deal with splitting of the costs or determine the stages of implementation. (WSP Finland Oy, 2011, p. 5)

The fact that the key actors draw on what information concerns the zone proposal and what does not, means that they are avoiding answering the substance of the feedback by drawing on the limits of the technical process. Both feedbacks deal with very key, political questions, but the responses do their best to remove responsibility from any key actors who are in positions of power to answer these questions. This is at the heart of the tension in these feedback pairs, and it is obviously problematic that the key actors are not willing to engage in a discussion about who they envision this project for and what are the contingency plans to deal with the risk.

In 13.1 and 14.1 the feedback givers show suspicion towards the overall economic viability of the project and there are some contradictory statements regarding considerations of the costs:

13.1: Concern for the costs to the City of Tampere from all the zone proposals in the plans [currently]. An investigation should be delivered to the City Council. Response: The zone proposal will need to be accepted by the City Council. This proposal can only consider the costs and content for this project. (WSP Finland Oy, 2011, p. 6)

14.1: Is the execution of the rendered image economically realistic? Response: The estimated costs of the construction are not known exactly. For example, the amount of gross floor area has been used to attempt to make the project realistic. (WSP Finland Oy, 2011, p. 6)

In 13.1, it is said that the proposal can consider costs for this project, yet in 14.1, it is admitted outright that the estimated costs are not known yet. Not only is it left unclear whether there are any cost estimates at this point, but the ones that exist in Aamulehti pieces at the time and in the City Council's knowledge, are omitted from feedback responses. The same tension is present here as in

Feedback 9.9. and 9.10, but in addition it makes plain the very different interests that ordinary residents and the coalition have in the project.

The investigation ordered by the key actors on the economic impacts of the project by consultancy firm Deloitte (2010), makes the developer's interest apparent. It outlines the positive ways the project will impact Tampere and the value added that every euro spent can give back. The report calculated the value added of the project for key years, such as 119 million euros for Tampere in 2018 and 108 million euros for all of Finland (Deloitte Oy, 2010). Cost estimates of building are not included in the report.

The positive effects of the project are most heavily concerned with the number of jobs the arena project will bring with it, both during construction and after. For example, for 2018 it was estimated that the office buildings on the deck will enable over 1500 jobs, the arena would create some 150 jobs and the hotel 55 jobs (Deloitte Oy, 2010). This is considered important because of the increased amount of money it can bring to circulate in the economy. Only one negative impact of the whole project is mentioned in the report, and it relates to the design of traffic flows during its construction.

The belief in the importance – and success – of value-added calculations shows that this is what the key actors want others to perceive as relevant to the arena project. The absence of cost estimates speaks of their unimportance to the key actors. The place making strategy which emerges is, in Dupre's (2019) words, "capital investment to generate economic growth" (p. 111), because the developers approach the meaningfulness of the arena project through its economic growth potential. With their responses to Feedback 13.1 and 14.1 the key actors convey place making strategy when their responses are considered together with Deloitte's (2010) report.

5 DISCUSSION

In my analysis above, I have dissected the data for answers to the research questions presented in my introduction, 1) "How is the vision of the Deck Arena motivated?" and 2) "What place making strategies are revealed at tension points arising from this vision?" In this section, I will elaborate on the data analysis in relation to the features of the growth machine theory and place making.

Dupre's (2019) paper on the history of place making showed that it is a way to attach meanings to places, and I defined place making strategies as the ways to create meaningful perceptions about places. Since the four place making strategies that I have identified in my analysis are intentionally imposed by the key actors, they reflect how the actors wanted the arena project to be perceived so that they could realize the project in their vision. The vision of the coalition is therefore different from what kind of perceptions they wanted to foster. The four place making strategies will be discussed in the following order, 1) technicalizing feedback, 2) the narrative of inevitable growth, 3) capital investment to generate growth, and 4) the narrative of Tampere as a city of tall buildings. The growth machine theory provides a frame to understand why these strategies emerged and what it exposed of the key actors' motivations.

The vision of the Deck Arena stems from the interests of the growth coalition members. As per Molotch's (1976) theory, private developers and public power need each other to realize development projects on the scale of the Deck Arena. Similar to the accounts of Anselmi and Vicari (2020) of Milan and Mboumoua's (2017) of London, in Tampere the City could not have funded the deck or arena without investment from private sector firms, and the developer NCC could not have won the lottery for more central infill development without the City's interest to rezone the plot for a deck.

The interests met in the location of the central deck. In the articles of Anselmi and Vicari (2020) and Mboumoua (2017), the location, or *locations* connected by public transport, played a central role in making the development

projects successful. In Tampere, the importance of the location is encapsulated in a quote by Rikard Bjurström when he told local newspaper Aamulehti on 1.9.2020, “I said if we build it there, I’m on board to lead the project” after hearing the suggestion for the location back in 2008. This reflects the trust he had in the potential of the project to succeed in its location. It was also hailed by the coalition as favorable because of the accessibility by public transport, especially of trains, and as a way to unite the two sides of the city center, historically divided by the railway (Deloitte Oy, 2010; WSP Finland Oy, 2011).

The argument for economic growth spurred by location was not explicit in the economic impact evaluation report by Deloitte (2010), but the emphasis of the vicinity to the train station implies an expectation that visitors outside of Tampere will be important for the arena, i.e. tourists, as well as business travelers. Tourism generates much economic growth, and as Dupre (2019) has shown, tourism can have a major influence on urban development projects. The Deck Arena is also next to the Tulli Business Park, the Technopolis business center, as well as two shopping centers, and as the cases of Milan and London exemplify, the vicinity of business districts to development is thought to improve their growth potential.

With such motivations for the location, it could have been packaged as a physical resource that makes the project a meaningful economic growth generator, and so, for example, economically viable. However, as the data analysis shows, the location was not employed as a place making strategy. Rather, it was framed as a feature of the zoning process in the place making strategy of technicalizing feedback in the Transport and Connectivity theme. This first place making strategy, technicalizing, functions to remove power from the feedback giver because it means that the technical zoning process is framed as the decision-making authority on matters, and it is harder to argue with such an institutional process than with people on a subject matter. This occurred in both the Transport and Connectivity theme in Feedbacks 16.5, 17.3, 22.5, and L3.7 and Economic Viability theme in Feedbacks 9.9, 9.10, and 13.1.

The removal of power from feedback givers increases the power of the key actors to shape the vision of the Deck Arena on their own terms. In terms of place making, technicalization as a strategy is a way for the key actors to define what is meaningful about this project and what is not. In the case of location, within a technical framework it does not bear the marks of a strategic choice by the key

actors to increase their gains by increasing the real estate value of the project, and therefore not applying this meaning on to the Deck Arena. With technicalization, the project can be made to seem free of values and interests, which can also be called depoliticization.

But no project is free of values and interests. Using their interests as place making strategies for the Deck Arena, such as framing the location as a booster of the project's growth potential, would not make it a meaningful project to the public, since these interests do not necessarily translate to the benefit of most Tampere residents. Even the case of the City's interests is twofold, because on one hand, their interests are - or should be - the interests of the residents. On the other hand, the rewards of public investments may not be distributed evenly under entrepreneurial urban governance, as David Harvey notes in his classic 1989 paper.

The Deck Arena is part of the entrepreneurial public real estate policy of the City of Tampere, as they bought into the arena and the deck as partial owners and expect to make returns on this investment in the years to come, as Stara Media wrote in 2022 (Piironen, 2022). The point of entrepreneurial public policy, is to make profits, as Hyötyläinen and Haila (2018) state, and these do not guarantee a social purpose for the projects. This can also be called neoliberal urban policy according to Hyötyläinen and Haila (2018), or neoliberal urbanism, according to Peck (2014), who identified the seeds of neoliberal elements in Harvey's (1989) description of entrepreneurial governance. The variations of neoliberal or entrepreneurial terms all point to the fact that the Deck Arena is a manifestation of neoliberal urban governance, characterised by public-private partnerships, commodifying places and locations and engaging in inter-urban competition (Harvey, 1989; Peck, 2014).

Harvey (1989) notes that entrepreneurial urban governance tends to create place focused development that works to give the whole city or region a fresh image and "a seemingly beneficial shadow" while not necessarily benefitting any other region than where the development is located (p. 8). The features of the Deck Arena case fit this description very well. An example of this is in the economic impact evaluation by Deloitte Oy (2010) where it mentions that it is likely that the arena will "improve city image" yet it is also to be expected that real estate prices near the Deck Arena will increase while others in further areas will

decrease (p. 22). Such real estate market development makes regions more unequal with each other and tells a story of the arena only benefitting the center of the city.

The key actors and other coalition members such as Aamulehti, benefit from the income and business opportunities provided by this project. But residents of Tampere living outside the city center do not necessarily reap any rewards, other than a new consumer destination that feeds the pockets of the coalition members. It is therefore understandable from the key actors' point of view that they attempt to sideline these kinds of consequences of the project through technicalizing the location and economic viability, as opposed to framing these as their choices based on specific values and interests. But such depoliticization is at the root of the problematic nature of technicalization as a place making strategy since it neutralises impacts of the Deck Arena.

However, technicalization was not the only place making strategy used to depoliticize the project to sideline the interests of the coalition. The second strategy, the narrative of inevitable growth, in relation to traffic congestion concerns in the Transport and Connectivity theme, is perfectly in line with Troutman's (2004) finding that growth coalitions overlook negative impacts of development, therefore making it appear more favourable as a neutral agent in city dynamics. The meaning that this strategy attributes to the Deck Arena is that it will harness the benefits of the oncoming growth and it will not negatively impact Tampere because traffic will increase anyway. Yet this strategy is in opposition to the motivating idea behind the arena, that it will generate growth in Tampere. Such a contradiction goes to show that when the negative impacts of growth generation might be brought to light, the key actors work to distract attention away from them.

The third place making strategy of capital investment to generate growth, that I identified in the Economic Viability theme, works in the same neutralising vein. The coalition states as a response to Feedback 14.1 that the estimated costs of construction are not known, yet in the Deloitte (2010) report, it is clear that the estimated returns on investment are known, such as how many jobs the project would bring the City. But as Molotch (1976) and Mboumoua (2017) write, job creation due to growth development is an arbitrary strategy to validate growth. When only the estimated rewards of investment on growth - such as jobs at

beginning stages of the planning - are presented in plans and the burdens overlooked – such as how much would be invested up front to create said jobs - the investment of the city to generate growth is framed as value-free. The Deck Arena is highlighted as meaningful to Tampere by bringing positive impacts with it.

In contrast to the technicalization of feedback in the themes of Transport and Connectivity and Economic Viability, tension points in the Appearance and Design theme are not reframed as technicalities. Instead, the fourth place making strategy, the narrative of Tampere as a city of tall buildings, creates meaning by placing the Deck Arena designs as part of a historical continuum of tower construction in Tampere, and by extension large-scale development that is representative of large global cities. Previous research (see for example Laine, 2006) has shown that Tampere does have a tradition of ambitious urban development, but as said in my data analysis, the feedback givers seem to feel that the issue is what the designs symbolize, since they contradict with the identity of Tampere as a globally small industrial city (for further reading on the topic of Tampere's identity, see Heinaro, 2023).

The place making strategy by the key actors needed to validate a new big-city identity for Tampere, since the designs of Libeskind and his reputation brought a global symbolism to the project as Leino (2014) has written. Aamulehti, as part of the coalition, wrote multiple pieces about the architect himself (see for example Paasonen, 2019; Paasonen and Högmander, 2017), as well as the look of the rendered images by Studio Libeskind (see for example Korkki, 2010; Paasonen and Högmander, 2017), promoting a welcoming atmosphere for the world-class designs. One notable early piece titled "WTC towers to Tampere?" compared Tampere to New York, since Libeskind's Deck Arena vision held uncanny resemblance to his World Trade Center master plan (Vainio, 2010). This comparison by Aamulehti enforced the idea that Tampere could be among the ranks of the likes of New York. In this context the narrative of Tampere as a city of tall buildings asserts that since Tampere already has large-scale urban development, the Deck Arena is a justified new addition to the fabric of a growing global city.

The element of international value was something identified by Anselmi and Vicari (2020) and Mboumoua (2017) as key in legitimizing growth development,

since it was deemed a necessary inter-urban competitive advantage for successful growth generation. Now, the case of Tampere's Deck Arena also shows that the coalition chose to draw on the international significance of the development to validate its legitimacy, much like the creation of jobs has worked as a given legitimating factor so far. The importance of a development project's global relevance in a 21st century growth machine, particularly in Europe but possibly elsewhere as well, is an intriguing topic on its own for further research. The important role it played for the growth coalitions identified in this thesis points to the fact that it might be a feature of the contemporary growth machine thesis.

The global design of the Deck Arena in a very central location embodies its vision that it is a city status boosting growth generator by attracting people and capital. But the four place making strategies which were revealed in the tension points arising from the feedback do not explicitly express this vision. Instead, they do three things: 1) draw attention to the positive or neutral impacts that the arena project casts on Tampere, 2) frame it as suitable for a new identity of Tampere, and 3) draw attention away from any negative impacts and costs. These functions together paint the arena project as value-free, in the terms of Troutman (2004), and such a public perception makes it easier for the key actors to legitimize and realize the project.

But to be able to assert such a harmless perception, the key actors used their own position of power to their advantage in problematic ways. They undermined feedback by refusing to engage in discussions and by removing feedback givers power at tension points. This begs the question of why tension points could not have been resolved in less problematic ways. If our urban spaces are developed with unequal, and problematic power relations, the inequality will be reflected in our cities. It is important to scrutinize on whose terms the development is happening and question who wins and who loses, to try to avoid unequal development. Flyvbjerg et al. (2016) also stress this as an important question in their research on tension points.

In the case of the Deck Arena, the coalition members are the direct beneficiaries of the Deck Arena's impacts, and it remains to be seen how Tampere distributes those benefits to all its residents, specifically in terms of places. The Deloitte (2010) report's indication of unequal distribution of benefits ought to be taken seriously by the City to counter unequal regional development

in Tampere due to neoliberal urban governance. From the perspective of place making research, the next interesting question in the development of the Deck Arena is what kind of bottom-up place making will take place around it. What meanings and experiences will users of the deck space and Tampere residents come to attach to it, despite its original vision? Results from such research could help create development that meets the interests of local residents as well as create more equal urban spaces.

6 CONCLUSION

The story of the Deck Arena is still unfolding as the second phase of development remains unbuilt and residents of Tampere are getting used to its presence in the cityscape. Its story is intricately tied to the story of a growing Tampere, as Molotch's (1976) "city as a growth machine" theory contends. The members of the growth coalition, mainly the City of Tampere and NCC Oy, envisioned the Deck Arena as a growth generating and status boosting development in Tampere, motivated by the benefits that that growth would bring them: more residents, more business and leisure tourism and more investment and income.

The motivations that initiated the Deck Arena project have been shaped by global trends which advance neoliberal urbanism. The globally significant architectural designs in their grandeur came to symbolize the vision, and in conjunction with contemporary growth machine literature, suggest that global relevance of urban development projects is an important way to for growth coalitions to legitimize their projects today.

But the vision caused tensions between Tampere residents and the key actors of the coalition, since some residents saw the vision to do more harm than good for Tampere. By analyzing the tension points and their problematic power relations, four place making strategies were revealed: 1) technicalizing feedback, 2) the narrative of inevitable growth, 3) capital investment to generate growth, and 4) the narrative of Tampere as a city of tall buildings. These place making strategies reflect the value-free meaning the key actors of the coalition wanted the arena project to be perceived with, in order to legitimize it.

But the value-free perception created by the place making strategies is based on a problematic use of power by the key actors of the coalition, and the neoliberal character of the project risks it creating unequal spatial development. To avoid such development in Tampere, the City needs to actively distribute resources fairly in all regions of the city so that Tampere can enjoy the conceived benefits of the Deck Arena.

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