Facilitating proactive citizen participation in urban planning

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ABSTRACT

This thesis researches the multifold and complex relationships between city and the citizens in matters of urban planning, and explores the ways design and especially design thinking could renew, improve and deepen those relationships. The thesis concentrates on the front-end of citizen participation processes in urban planning. It asks: how to create and cultivate possibilities for collaborative, proactive citizen-led ideation concerning urban environments in a society where urban planning processes are highly professionalized and bureaucratic.

At the moment, the participatory processes of Finnish urban planning offer platform mainly for feedback that is reactive in nature. On the part of the urban planning officials, citizens are offered very little space for envisioning and early ideation concerning their living environments. Partly as a response to the rigid and highly professionalized decision-making systems, new forms of proactive citizen participation have started to emerge in Helsinki. During the past years, different collectives and active groups of citizens have created alternative urban plans and visions. These plans and visions have acted as catalysts for a more fruitful public discussion on the systems of urban planning as well as on different urban issues Helsinki is currently facing.

This work uses the approach of constructive design research, where producing knowledge for the use of systemic development through action is central. The work comprises of theoretical parts on citizen participation in the context of urban planning, the emergence of urban activism in Helsinki and finally, on the possibilities of design approaches in facilitating more proactive, early citizen participation in urban planning. The theoretical parts are followed by a collaborative design project, where an alternative vision for an industrial city district located in Eastern Helsinki is created together with a group of citizens.

Based on the research carried out in this work it can be concluded that the Finnish urban planning is going through a change in terms of citizen participation. Citizen participation is moving towards the earlier stages of planning processes, and continues to do so in the future. One of the arguments supporting this view is the emergence of alternative plans and visions, which do not settle for complaining about the proposed plans but instead, propose alternative solutions. Design can have a crucial role in redesigning the systems and platforms for early ideation and proactive participation of the citizens in matters of urban planning. Design can help to alleviate the problems raising from the sectoral nature of decision-making and thus improve the possibilities of the citizens to participate proactively.

KEYWORDS: collaborative design, design thinking, facilitation, citizen participation, social sustainability, urban planning, urban activism
My background is in spatial design. After graduating from a spatial design programme I worked some years with residential and public interior design projects. Those projects were inspiring, yet I felt I lacked possibilities to think about the sustainable aspects of what I was doing - and what design is doing to this world. It was with these thoughts in mind that I started my studies in the Master’s Degree Programme in Creative Sustainability. Studying in the programme has challenged me to think what design is, what my role as a designer in this world could be, and what I want of my career in the future. Completing projects in multidisciplinary teams has opened up an abundance of possibilities. It has also brought up a lot of questions, and I see the thesis as a wonderful opportunity to search answers to these questions.

During my studies in the master’s programme I have strengthened my skills in working with open-ended projects – projects that deal with imagining and making the future rather than describing what already exists, or is possible within the limits we know at the moment. These projects have been mostly about how to cultivate and encourage sustainable lifestyles, systems and services together with people. While working with projects of this nature has been truly inspiring, it has also been challenging. Although designers are traditionally familiar with “building what does not exist yet”, I have realised that working at the level of systems, mindsets and services requires yet another kind of attitude and set of skills from a designer. These skills can only be achieved by doing.

I have studied at a time where design is going through a paradigm shift, a shift from the material and technological towards systems, services, people and sustainability. For example the World Design Capital year in Helsinki in 2012 and the Design Driven City project following the Design Capital year have brought design into media and public discussion (Jäkkö, 2012, 32). This has opened up a lot of opportunities for design thinking and for designers to show their skills in designing for a better future in the urbanizing world. Designers are now working with more complex issues than ever. Design thinking and designers are entering, for example, the public sector, third sector organizations and urban planning, grounds previously not so familiar to designers. These are also the fields that I am mainly interested in as a designer.

The other side of this phenomenon is that design is at times being hyped as the magical solution for everything and designers are sometimes marketed as people who can solve any given problem by themselves. The key realisation during my studies has been that being a designer in today’s world does not mean being an expert of everything. Instead, it means being able to communicate, translate and draw together information coming from different branches and experts, and turn that into something that makes sense. Being a designer is not about being a magician. Design is still a very hands on occupation, and that is what makes design different from many other actors working with the same issues. Design is always tangible for the everyday people, in one way or another, and that is why design thinking has potential within all the branches that deal with people.

According to Manzini and Statszowski, “In the face of current economic and social challenges, many agree that the relationship between people and the public sector in general and public services in particular should be radically reshaped” (Manzini and Statszowski, 2013, 1). To mitigate the various societal challenges the public sector is now facing, and to re-plan the relationship between citizens and the public sector, Manzini and Statszowski are proposing following approaches. People-centred approach is about engaging the end-users, here the citizens, in researching, developing and implementing the services. The second strategy is about people-led services, the engagement of citizens and public agencies in co-production process as the public sector is acting merely as an enabler for these services (ibid).

This thesis moves in the landscape of the two approaches mentioned above, and experiments with them in a level that is rather practical and practise-based. The venue of research and experimentation in this thesis is urban planning, or more specifically: the relationship between citizens and the city in the matters of urban planning. As the work at hand is a master’s level work, the aim is not to provide universal answers to what that relationship is or could be. Instead of giving ready answers, this work will hopefully inspire different stakeholders within modern, sectoral urban planning processes to look at their positions and roles in a new light.

Formulating the topic of this thesis has been a lengthy, iterative process. This way of working has served my learning well. During the autumn of 2014 and spring 2015, I have been constructing the work bit by bit, searching for the right questions to ask. Building the thesis topic from scratch without a commission coming from outside was a conscious decision. Having a responsibility not towards a commissioner but instead to large group of people who have given their time and passion in the collaborative project has been challenging but at the same time incredibly rewarding. One of the pros of this way of working has been that I have had wonderful opportunities to discuss with different stakeholders within the city and to reflect upon future possibilities. The learning process of this thesis has certainly helped me to create my own career path as a designer.
operates at two speeds: the hypersonic tempo of its citizens, whose everyday lives are steeped in the tools and the media of network culture, and the glacial speed of municipalities, ministries and institutions shackled to a culture of ineffective, slow-moving, heavy-handed bureaucracy.”

(Grima, 2013, 6.)
1. INTRODUCTION TO THE THESIS TOPIC

1.1. CITIZEN AND THE CITY – WHO DECIDES ON OUR CITY?

To an urban resident, city surroundings can sometimes appear ready-made and interchangeable up to a point where it is easy to feel a sense of separation from one's own living environment. Chances of affecting and modifying the common urban environments are often non-existent – building and construction are guided with strict policies and norms, the arranging activities and events is often restricted and prohibited with rigorous regulations, unauthorized graffiti is effectually cleaned away soon after they have emerged. Direct interaction with urban surroundings is at times made impossible for the citizens: in a modern, northern city, change happens mainly through the lengthy and complex planning processes. Modern urban planning processes are often perceived as painfully slow, bureaucratic and far out of reach for the ordinary people (Saad-Sulonen, 2014, 17). Still, people have the need to modify their surroundings, the need to remodel their physical environments to match their individual and collective needs and dreams.

The work at hand considers the ways the modern city, and our society at large, answers to the human needs presented above. It asks: who or what are, or could be, the agents of change in the process of making the citizens’ voices better heard in matters of urban planning? Is it possible to allow for a more colourful, strong and versatile public discussion on urban planning, and still have a processes of planning and building the city that can be called democratic?

Helsinki is an example of a city in which urban development and public discussion on urban issues are very much based on the municipal land-use planning procedures – in Finnish settings perhaps more accurately described as processes of zoning (kaavoitus). As Staffans and Väyrynen (2009, 15-17) describe, urban planning in Finland evolves around the processes of zoning, in which the municipalities have the monopoly. According to Staffans and Väyrynen, Finnish urban planning and decision-making processes connected to it are highly representative and professionalized in nature. In the context of urban planning, this often results in confusion and frustration on the part of the citizens - the zoning processes are often seen by the citizens as something too complex, massive and far out of reach to grasp.

In a democratic society, the fact that the municipalities have monopoly in land-use planning,

...
1.2. FROM APPEALS TOWARDS COLLABORATIVE ENVISIONING

The inspiration for this work came from the observation that in the 2010s, a scene of “urban planning activism” has slowly emerged in Helsinki. Various social media discussion forums and action groups have formed around different topics of urban planning and around tangible, citizen-led urbanism. The most active and skilled groups have gathered their forces and created innovative alternative plans and visions for different areas of the city. The scale of these alternative visions has varied from small scale city district ideation projects up to an alternative master plan for the whole city of Helsinki.

For the first time, the officials, decision-makers and citizens of Helsinki have experienced situations in which the public discussion on urban planning happens not only based on plan proposals produced by the City Planning Department, but is also enriched by alternative plans and visions commenting the official plan proposals (Tenkanen, 2015). What kind of stories do these alternative urban plans tell about the future direction of citizen participation in urban planning? How do they relate to current urban culture and to the worldwide trend where, according to Manzini and Statischowski, “more and more people are organizing to solve daily problems together and are collaborating with each other to live more socially cohesive and sustainable lives” (Manzini and Statischowski, 2013, 1)? My presumption is that the relationship between new urban activism and the notion presented by Statischowski and Manzini above is close.

The kind of urban initiatives and alternative plans mentioned above are still quite rare in Finland, but it appears that the pioneers are followed by others. The initiatives of the urban activist groups can be seen to represent a new kind of positive ideology that is now commonly referred to as YIMBYism – Yes In My Back Yard. Typical urban activist groups see urbanization and the growth of the cities as a positive phenomenon, and want to welcome new residents – even in their “own backyards”, meaning the districts in which they themselves live and work in. The YIMBYs and urban activists embrace urbanization. Urbanization is seen as a positive development, not as a threat. Furthermore, instead of being satisfied with complaining, the YIMBY groups actively raise discussion, seek better solutions and communicate their ideas to the City Planning Department as well as to the public via different traditional channels and social media.

In Helsinki, the flag carrier of such activism and discussion concentrating on urban planning has been the Lisää kaupunkia Helsinkiin group (‘More city to Helsinki’) (later LKH). LKH is an open discussion and action group formed in 2009, out of interest of an active citizen Mikko Särelä. According to Särelä (2015), the group was in direct contact with the City Planning Department of Helsinki for the first time in 2010, wanting to bring forward their ideas on the then topical development of Central Pasila area in Helsinki. After the Pasila project, the group has developed other alternative urban plans and suggestions that offer new perspectives and points of comparison to the plan drafts produced in the planning processes of the city.

But the significance of the LKH group is not based only on the alternative plans the group is producing. Currently the LKH Facebook group has more than 7500 members. New discussion threads on urban planning matters appear daily. According to Särelä, one of the aims of LKH is to get more people acquainted with and interested in urban planning, and that way add to the prolific public discussion on urban planning matters and decision-making (Särelä, 2015). It can be said that the LKH group has produced a generation of “urban planning nerds” – a group of people who are not professional urban planners, but who have interest in urban development and who follow the public discussion actively, and have developed great skills in participating in that discussion.

In addition to this, LKH appears to act as platform for different alternative plan spin-offs. One of those spin-offs, Pro Helsinki 2.0, is a highly detailed and ambitious alternative master plan for the whole Helsinki, made in 2014 by a collective called Urban Helsinki. Pro Helsinki 2.0 can be seen as a culmination point in the new kind of urban planning activism and proactive ideation on urban matters. This alternative plan offered a welcomed point of comparison and acted as a public conversation starter in various complex matters such as urbanization, population density, urban sprawl and how we perceive the significance of the green areas within the city. The main message of the Pro Helsinki 2.0 plan was that in order for the city of Helsinki to become more livable, sustainable and attractive businesswise, it has to become more urban: more dense, more mixed and more innovative in terms of land-use (Tenkanen, 2015).

It can be said that before the kind of alternative plans described above, executed by different informal collectives and communities of interest, public discussion on urban planning happened solely based on the plan drafts and proposals produced by the City Planning Department, and of course at times, on the opposition and appeals following the official proposals. The official plan drafts, although without doubt being a result of careful research and professional practises of planning, offer only one point of view to base the discussion on. New, alternative city plans and citizen developed neighbourhood visions are turning the table: they introduce alternative options into public discussion. With this kind of urban planning activism increasing in the future, it will be interesting to see the directions the interaction between city and the citizens concerning complex and expert-led matters such as urban planning will head.

This thesis is based on a presumption that the alternative urban plans and visions are an example of moving from NIMBY thinking towards the ideology of YIMBY – Yes In My Backyard. YIMBY attitude embraces the changes in the city and sees the city as a dynamic system, a system the citizens can have a positive effect on. It sees urbanization as a positive thing. In a larger context, YIMBYism means, hopefully, moving from complaining towards ideation, from problem-focused towards solution-focused. NIMBY-YIMBY –division is of course only one, rather limited and artificial classification for examining the current citizen activity, but
1.3. ALTERNATIVE PLANS AND VISIONS – A TOOL FOR A MORE INCLUSIVE PUBLIC DISCUSSION AND CITIZEN PARTICIPATION?

This thesis started from the following, broad and complex questions. What is it that makes urban activism and citizen discussion around urban planning topical in Helsinki? What is the relationship between proactive citizen ideation and departments in charge of planning? Are the alternative visions just a new tool that enforces the voices of those who are already talking the loudest, or is there something in the way these visions work that could possibly serve a larger public, too? In short, what I am mostly interested in is how our traditional system of representative democracy relates to and treats all kinds of emerging urban civic activity at the moment, and how it will relate to it in the future.

When observing the alternative plans and visions (more closely in chapter 4 of this work), it can be stated that they are being produced by a small number of people. These people already have excellent skills and knowledge in urban planning. They also know how to make use out of the social tools provided by the web 2.0., as do all the modern successful urban movements (eg. Jyrkäs & al, 2014, 51-57). Some of the members of the activist groups are even professionals in urban planning or architecture, or have otherwise achieved the capability of speaking the professionalized language of urban planners. But what about the people who have ideas and who are willing to get their opinion heard but do not have such skills?

On a larger scale, the aim of this thesis is to look into the ever-developing relationship of city bureaus and the citizens. More than to thoroughly analyse or redesign the participatory processes currently executed by the city bureaus (in this thesis mainly referring to the City Planning Department), this work aims to produce interesting insights coming from the outside of those processes. Is there something in the born free, citizen-led ideation concerning urban planning that could direct the discussion between the city and the citizens into a novel, more prolific direction?

1.4. THE ROLE OF DESIGN IN FACILITATING DISCUSSION ON SUSTAINABLE URBAN FUTURES

What has design to do with the phenomena introduced above? Why would a designer take on a task of researching proactive participation, urban initiatives and the complex systems they occur in?

The thesis at hand is, above all, an exploration on the possibilities of design and of designerly methods in facilitating more inclusive, fruitful and socially sustainable citizen discussion on urban planning in cities such as Helsinki. For me as a designer, this thesis is a platform for creating and testing new roles for design and designers in a stage where design as profession is quickly expanding from designing objects towards designing services and systems. This expansion on the notion and meaning of design did not emerge in a political void, but can be seen to relate for example to the need to renew our governmental and decision-making systems, the need to bring them closer to the citizens. The traditional silos that now keep the governance and proactive citizen initiatives apart from each other can be broken down (e.g. Statszowski & al., 2013, 28). According to Statsowski & al., design can play important role in enabling this change (ibid).

Furthermore, I see the role of design important in creating and promoting socially and ecologically sustainable practises of planning in the urbanizing world. This means for example enabling and supporting better citizen engagement in the issues of urban planning. Design has potential in enabling social innovation and better, deeper citizen engagement in a world that is facing a multitude of wicked problems such as climate change, absolute poverty, income inequality and drastic changes in demography. In other words, we are now living a time where we cannot take our existence and future well being on the planet for granted. Fry proposes that as we are now facing the wicked problems mentioned above, we actually have a future only by design, as design "shapes the form, operation, appearance and perceptions of the material world we occupy" (Fry, 2009, 1-3). The proposition is perhaps bold, but indispensable considering the seriousness of the problems we are now facing. Thus, the framework of sustainability, and especially the concept of social sustainability, affects the way I treat the research questions described in chapter two of this work.

The most cited definition for sustainable development is probably the one formulated in the so called Brundtland report for the United Nations in 1987. In this report, sustainable development is defined as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (WCED, 1987, 43). The report fuelled discussion on sustainability internationally, and since the 1980s, a multitude of theories and approaches on sustainability have emerged. My view on sustainability in this work is based on the traditional triple bottom line of sustainability model, developed originally by John Elkington in the beginning of 1990s, illustrated in figure 1. Since the early 1990s, numerous variations on the model have appeared, but the idea of the model is that sustainability is to comprise...
of environmental, economic and societal aspects. All of these need to be taken into account in order to create sustainable life and ways of production, planning and decision-making.

This thesis addresses mostly the social aspects of sustainability. According to MacKenzie, social sustainability can be seen as "a life-enhancing condition within communities, and a process within communities that can achieve that condition" (MacKenzie, 2004, 12). Among these features of social sustainability, according to MacKenzie, are for example equity in accessing important services such as healthcare and education, appreciation of positive aspects of different cultures, widespread political participation of the citizens, a sense of community responsibility and the presence of mechanisms that allow communities to fulfil their own needs where possible (ibid). In this thesis, my aim is to research the ways urban residents and communities could be empowered specifically in matters of planning and building. My hypothesis is that design can play an important role in this process of empowerment.
"DESIGN RESEARCH

is an activity that aims to produce knowledge useful to those who design: design knowledge that designers and non-designers (individuals, communities, institutions, companies) can use in their processes of designing and co-designing."

(Manzini, 2008, 5.)
2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS, METHODS AND STRUCTURE

The thesis comprises of a collaborative project of creating an alternative vision for a city district in Helsinki, preceded by brief theoretical parts on citizen participation, urban planning, urban activism and on the possible role of design in facilitating proactive citizen participation. In this work, alternative visions and plans are researched as an example of proactive citizen participation in urban planning and as one possible way of renewing and rejuvenating the relationship between the city and the citizens in matters of urban planning.

It is worth of stressing that the collaborative project, which will be presented in the chapter 6 of this work, is more of a method of researching the topic of proactive citizen participation, than an actual result or outcome of this work as such. The previous is to say that my approach on the subject of proactive citizen participation is inspired by a way of working that can be described as constructive design research. Constructive design research refers to a way of researching, where construction, here making an alternative plan together with a group of citizens, forms the central means of producing answers to the research questions (Koskinen, 2011, 5). The time-line of executing this thesis has taken the shape of iterative loops of learning rather than that of a chronological path leading from theoretical part towards practice. Findings from different, sometimes overlapping phases of this work have affected each other.

In this work I am looking into how design thinking and the methods used in the field of design could iterate, facilitate and support fruitful and proactive participation of the citizen on urban planning and the development of their own living areas. The thesis has been written in search for new ways for citizens not familiar with urban planning processes to collectively form and voice their visions concerning the development of their respective living areas. This work is looking into the emergence of new kind of proactive participation that tackles issues of built environment and land-use planning in Helsinki. It is asking how this kind of activism contributes, or could contribute, to a socially sustainable city, and what is or could be the role of design in promoting this contribution.

The recent emergence of different forms of proactive participation in urban planning brings up a lot of questions. Why is it that this kind of activism is emerging at the moment? Could this phenomenon signal that there is a need for change in how the city is currently hearing its residents?

How should the city, and especially its various bureaus, see its role in this changing landscape, where people want to come together in order to envision the future of their living environments?

This thesis is seeking answers to the following main question:

What kind of potential does the use of design thinking and designerly approaches have in facilitating proactive citizen participation in urban planning, and in that way bringing decision-makers and the citizens closer to each other within the complex, institutionalized processes of planning?

The topic is vast and complex and my method of working with it is open-ended and mostly practice-based. Yet it has been necessary to reduce the massive-ness of the topic and to bring it down to a more tangible level, the level of design. In this work, the research question is researched through four different research tasks:

1.) What is the state and recent development of citizen participation in urban planning in Helsinki. Based on a literature review.

2.) What kind of actions are the urban activists carrying out at the moment in Helsinki and how do they aim to affect the current systems of urban planning and decision-making. Based on interviews of activists and on literature review.

3.) What could be the role of design and designerly methods in developing the public discussion on urban planning via supporting and empowering proactive participation and citizen-led projects. Based on literature review.

4.) What could be the role of design and designerly methods in developing the public discussion on urban planning via supporting and empowering proactive participation and citizen-led projects. A constructive design research project.

As the topic is dealing with issues of urban planning and participation in Helsinki, it is closely connected to the participatory processes of the City Planning Department of Helsinki. These processes and their recent development will be illustrated shortly in chapter 3. But with choosing a more open-ended approach on the topic, the aim is to work against the sectoral nature of Finnish governing, and to hopefully provide new insights for the different city departments and third sector stakeholders on matters of urban planning and citizen participation.

There is already a great amount of research and even practical guidebooks on citizen participation in urban planning (e.g. Boyer and Hill, 2013; Bäcklund & al., 2002; Horelli, 2013; Jyrkäs & al., 2014; Saad-Sulonen, 2014). This thesis will make use of the valuable work done previously around the topic.
What differentiates this thesis from some of the work done before on new urban culture and citizen participation is that it chooses constructive design research as its key means of producing knowledge on the topic of citizen participation. It is worth of stressing, that despite of the topic that is dealing with topics of urban planning and real-estate, this is a design thesis. This means that it is moving constantly on the user-centered, human scale of the massive urban planning processes. When moving around in this landscape, I am mostly using the language, vocabulary and methods from the field of design.

The work is divided into different chapters according to the four research tasks presented above. Hence, the main research question in this thesis is analysed through four different approaches.

**CHAPTER 3** examines the current systems of Finnish urban planning and decision-making from the point of view of citizen participation, concentrating mainly on current policies in Helsinki. Policies and different stages of citizen participation provided by the city officials concerning matters of urban planning are analysed.

**CHAPTER 4** describes the emergence of the new urban culture and urban activism as a response to the rigid and bureaucratic decision-making procedures in the context of Helsinki. Some examples of citizen initiatives and events in Helsinki are presented. The emergence and effects of alternative plans and visions as one type of proactive citizen participation in Helsinki is analysed.

**CHAPTER 5** examines the potential of design thinking and of designerly methods in enabling and supporting proactive citizen participation and early ideation in urban planning. Some of the current themes emerging from the field of design that are seen relevant in facilitating proactive citizen participation in urban planning are presented.

**CHAPTER 6** presents a collaborative project, where the designer and author of this work is facilitating the creation of an alternative vision for a city district situated in eastern Helsinki. The vision is created together with a group of citizens interested in the area. The chapter elaborates on the formation, execution and the outcomes of the project, and how designerly methods were used in facilitating participation.

**CHAPTER 7** brings together the findings from the literature review, interviews and the collaborative project. The thesis topic and research questions are analysed from four different views: the view of the participants, the view of the city and its departments, the view of the potential of urban activism and proactive participation in urban planning, and the view of the potential of design and of designerly methods in facilitating prolific citizen engagement.
THE RIGHT TO THE CITY

is, therefore, far more than a right of individual access to the resources that the city embodies: it is a right to change ourselves by changing the city more after our heart’s desire. It is, moreover, a collective right rather than an individual right since changing the city inevitably depends upon the exercise of a collective power over the processes of urbanization. The freedom to make and re-make ourselves and our cities is, I want to argue, one of the most precious yet most neglected of our human rights.”

(Harvey, 2008, 23)
3. CITIZEN PARTICIPATION AND THE PROCESSES OF URBAN PLANNING

3.1. SETTING THE CONTEXT FOR THE TOPIC AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In order to set an adequate background and context for the main research question, a compact overview on theories of citizen participation as well as on the current policies of Finnish urban planning and citizen engagement concerning urban planning, observations made on the processes of informing and interaction carried out by the city bureaus in Helsinki and finally, on an interview of one of the interaction planners of the City Planning Department of Helsinki. More than to thoroughly analyse the processes of urban planning and decision-making currently conducted in Finland and in Helsinki, the meaning of this chapter is to touch upon the issues that are seen relevant in terms of enabling proactive citizen participation in urban planning.

At this point it is also crucial to bring forward the fact that the Finnish culture and practices of governing and planning are highly sectoral in nature - even more so in the larger municipalities and cities such as Helsinki (e.g. Bäcklund & al., 2002, 11). A choice made in this work for the sake of brevity is that in this chapter, participatory processes of urban planning are handled mainly from the point of view of the bureaus that are specifically in charge of urban planning – meaning for example the land-use planning, infrastructure planning and traffic planning. In Helsinki, the bureau in charge of urban planning is the City Planning Department. Yet the reality, especially when observed from the citizens’ point of view, does not always follow the divisions between different bureaus and processes of decision-making. This realization is central when looking at the subject of this thesis, and the issue will be touched upon later in the conclusions chapter.

Another choice is also made to narrow down the scope of this work. In Finland, the processes of urban planning, as well as the arranging of participatory processes concerning urban planning, are regulated by law. Yet, there is variation in policies and practices of planning and participation between different municipalities, depending for example on the size of the municipality and on the resources available. In this work I am mainly concentrating on how the processes of urban planning, and especially the citizen participation concerning urban planning, are conducted in Helsinki. As the capital of the country, and as the only city in Finland with a population exceeding 500 000, Helsinki is showing the way for the rest of the country on matters of planning and participation. Furthermore, Helsinki is also the city where majority of Finnish urban activism is taking place at the moment (e.g. Botero and Sulonen, 2013, 2).

3.2. CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING

In countries such as Finland, the processes of urban planning, and especially the decision-making procedures concerning urban planning, have slowly grown highly professionalized, regulatory and multi-layered in nature (e.g. Saad-Sulonen, 2014). Because of this development, hearing the citizens’ opinions and needs, and most of all, acting on those opinions and needs, is becoming more crucial and at the same time, more complex. How do the bureaus and the decision-makers currently face and treat the issues of citizen participation? Who is making sure, that the complex systems of decision-making and the lengthy processes of building the cities do not drift too far apart from the citizens? What are the rights of the citizens concerning the development of their own living environments?

It is perhaps justified to state that planning and building sustainable and equitable urban environments will always require a certain level of regulation. The same can be said about the skills and contributions of many kind of professional planners and urban researchers. Yet, with the highly bureaucratic systems of planning the cities, the simple fact that it is the citizens who live their lives in the cities, gets easily lost. The citizens are inhabiting the cities, making the cities alive, and thus should, without a doubt, have adequate possibilities to state their opinions on how the cities are developed.

To reach a balance between regulation and citizens’ individual and collective rights in a city is a continuous struggle. This struggle does not touch upon only the physical aspects of the cities, but much more. David Harvey discusses people’s right to the city on a level that engages not only the physical and material aspects of the city: “...the question of what kind of city we want cannot be divorced from the question of what kind of people we want to be, what kinds of social relations we seek, what relations to nature we cherish, what style of daily life we desire, what kinds of technologies we deem appropriate, what aesthetic values we hold” (Harvey, 2008, 23). According to Harvey, to “make and to remake ourselves and our cities” is one of the most precious human rights - but at the same time one of the most neglected ones (ibid).

How do we approach and treat the peoples’ right to the city at a time where the processes of planning the cities are highly regulatory and bureaucratic? How do we make sure the citizens are treated equally, and at the same time allow people to take part and voice their opinions as openly as
Some of the approaches to re-introduce those rights in a society built on representative democracy include different practices of citizen engagement and citizen participation. These two terms are quite close to each other, and in this work I am using mainly the latter term. The term citizen participation is rather ambiguous and comes with a plethora of connotations. A variety of theories and literature on citizen participation exists, and from the various approaches I have chosen some under closer scrutiny in order to build my own approach for the use of this work.

Discussion on citizen participation has probably a tradition as long and winding as that of democracy as a form of governance. In 1969, Sherry Arnstein presented a model on citizen participation, called the Ladder of Citizen Participation (Arnstein, 1969, 216-224). According to Arnstein, “citizen participation is a categorical term for citizen power”. In the Ladder of Citizen Participation model created by Arnstein, citizen participation is about redistributing the power to those who are now excluded from the political and economic decision-making processes; it is about making a conscious decision to try to include these citizens into decision making in the future (ibid). In this work, I am looking at the model especially from the point of view of urban planning, and of proactive, early citizen participation and interaction in matters of urban planning.

At the bottom of the Arnstein’s ladder (pictured in figure 2) are ‘therapy’ and ‘manipulation’ which, According to Arnstein, do not exist for the sake of actual empowerment of the citizens, but to “enable powerholders to “educate” or “cure” the participants”. In the middle part of the ladder, where ‘informing’, ‘consultation’ and ‘placation’ take place, citizens voices might be heard, but the real power to change the status quo is often lacking. At the top of the ladder of Arnstein’s, where the interaction is happening through ‘partnership’, ‘delegated power’ and ‘citizen control’, a true potential for affecting the status quo exists. With this type of participation, citizens are allowed for example to negotiate and discuss on trade-offs with the power holders. At the very top of Arnstein’s ladder, “the have-not citizens obtain the majority of decision-making seats, or full managerial power”. (Arnstein, 1969, 216-224.)

The Arnstein’s ladder presented above offers a simplified model for analysing different forms of citizen participation within modern urban planning processes. A rather common view on citizen participation in the context of Finnish urban planning appears to be that despite of the complexity of the current systems of planning, the importance and significance of the citizens’ opinions is slowly moving up the ladder – the citizens are gradually gaining more power in the complex processes of planning (e.g., Puustinen, 2006; Mattila, 2015). It can be stated that this development has been slow and not very straightforward, but nevertheless visible. The development comes concrete for example in the development of policies and laws on citizen participation within Finnish urban planning, which will be elaborated on later in this chapter.

On the most abstract level, citizen participation can be seen to refer to the interaction between citizens and the city – the city here referring to decision-makers, city officials as well as to the
systems of planning and decision-making. According to Kettunen (2002), citizen participation in municipal decision-making can be analysed from the point of view of two different variables: scale and content. The scale of participation, according to Kettunen, refers to the amount of citizens who can participate in a certain decision-making process. For example in a referendum, all the adults with voting rights can participate. Yet when choosing for example citizen committees to work within different institutions, the amount of citizens who can participate at the same time is quite limited. The content of participation, on the other hand, refers to the significance the participation actually has in municipal decision-making. (Kettunen, 2002, 20-23.)

When discussing citizen participation and the methods of allowing participation in a decision-making system based on democracy, an important question is also whose voices are truly allowed to be heard (Kettunen, 2002, 18-19). Is the right to voice opinions reserved only to those whose voices, for some reason, already reach above others? Or is the city governance knowingly aiming for a truly heterogeneous, multi-voiced public discussion and processes of participation for example on the matters of urban planning? There are no simple answers to the questions proposed above, but these questions can be viewed as tools for evaluating and developing the participatory processes of urban planning.

From our highly professionalized system of governance and planning it has followed that the size and amount of the governing bodies has grown, hence the decisions are often made far away from each other. From the citizens’ point of view, as well as from the point of view of the processes themselves, the sectoral, siloed nature of Finnish decision-making can cause a lot of problems (Bäcklund & al., 2002, 11). These problems are present especially in larger cities, in which the vastness of the governmental systems makes it at times impossible for the citizens to understand the processes of decision-making. The citizens do not necessarily know in which departments the decisions are made and how they are made. In addition to this, information sometimes travels slow between different departments and decision-making bodies, further confusing the system and narrowing down the possibilities for direct citizen participation (Bäcklund & al., 2002, 11).

During the past decades, municipalities have tried to solve some of the issues mentioned above with different participatory trials and projects. Andrews describes the local government being at times “littered with relatively short-lived initiatives that ran for a while and then closed down as funding streams dried up, key officers moved on or participants simply lost interest” (Andrews, 2006, 54). This can be very problematic when trying to achieve long-term change in how people participate and how the systems of decision-making are developed. With short-lived trials and experiments described by Andrews, people often loose their interest and trust in possibilities for participation, and to re-gain that trust can be markedly more challenging in the future (ibid). Thus, especially with the participatory projects executed by the city, it is important to think about the future directions and the ownership of the project in advance. Although the municipalities are growingly carrying out different experiments on citizen participation, it is worth of noticing that the best practices of participation do not necessarily come out of processes initiated and guided by the authorities. According to Andrews, participation “is not simply about people having the opportunity to participate, but also about possessing the skills, knowledge and confidence they need to take part” (Andrews, 2006, p. 9). The notion of providing citizens with skills and tools for participation is crucial from the point of view of this thesis, where the intersection of bureaucratic decision-making and citizen initiatives is studied. Top-down-type of participatory actions will not automatically produce the best practises, but the governing bodies have to be alert in identifying the potential that is emerging among citizens and freely formed grassroots collectives. The idea of “having the skills and tools to participate” is also very much connected to the notion of empowerment – the process of creating opportunities for the previously marginalized to gain more power in decision-making and in their own lives in general (Koskiaho, 2002, 37).

Perhaps the issue of citizen participation in urban decision-making can be viewed as a discussion that is continuously evolving and heading into new, sometimes surprising directions. Lapintie (1999, 9) goes as far as to propose a question: what if we stopped thinking that disagreements and quarrels concerning the development of the city are resolvable? Proposing this, Lapintie builds on the idea of philosopher Michael Foucault, who saw the battle for urban power as a continuous struggle, as a series of small movements and actions between the different stakeholders of the city, rather than as a process that has a beginning and an end (ibid).

It can be concluded that when discussing citizen participation in decision-making, no simple, finite or universal solutions exist. How do we then treat the complexity and the abstractness of citizen participation in practise? How do we face it within the matters of urban planning, where the processes will eventually always result in concrete changes in our common, urban environments?

3.3. CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN FINNISH URBAN PLANNING

3.3.1. THE SHORT HISTORY OF FINNISH URBAN PLANNING

To merge together the sublime ideals and ideologies of citizen participation and the practices of modern, sectoral urban planning is challenging. According to Jarenko, the theory of deliberative democracy, for example, has recently gained popularity in the field of urban planning and participation, but a gap between theory and practise often exists (Jarenko, 2013, 45). The issues of citizen participation in urban planning are also closely connected to the development in the ways the governance is arranged and cities planned, as well as to how and where the citizens live their lives. In order to analyse the current processes of planning and participation, historical perspective is needed.
In Finland, the history of the growth of cities is rather short. Urbanization in Finland has taken place quite recently, and the process is still ongoing. In 2015, approximately 70% of Finnish population lives in urban areas, meaning Finland is 10-15% behind in urbanization when compared for example to Sweden (Aro, 2015). For a long period of time before urbanization, Finland was a rural country with few larger population centres situated far away from each other. This started to change only at the very end of 19th century. Because of this change, a more systematic way of planning the population centres had to be developed.

According to Puustinen, street planning in new municipal population centers in Finland became obligatory in year 1856, when a new law on city planning was established (Puustinen, 2006, 135-146). Even with the new law, building and development of the countryside still remained largely uncontrolled by the state. According to Puustinen, the need for urban planning in Finland increased dramatically after the Second World War. There was a chronic lack of apartments especially in the cities that were now starting to grow. According to Puustinen, the lack this growth also resulted in the lack of professional urban plans and of urban planners, and due to the comparatively high quality architectural education, it was at this point that the role of architects as urban planners started to gain strength rapidly in Finland (ibid).

The first Building Act was set in the year 1959 - right before Finland started to face the first wave of urbanization, of people moving rapidly from the countryside to the new, fast-growing cities (Puustinen, 2006, 135-146). Puustinen describes that with the new Building Act, land-use planning became ruled by law to be executed by the municipalities, but at the same time guided and controlled by the state (ibid). It is worth noticing that in general, the Finnish systems of decision-making concerning urban planning remains quite the same until today, although new laws have been imposed for example on how the citizens and other stakeholders are to be heard in the processes of urban planning.

The Finnish systems of urban planning evolve around the hierarchical processes of land-use planning (in Finnish, a term kaavoitus is used), where the nationally devised plans guide the regional plans, regional plans guide the municipal plans and so forth (e.g. Lehtovuori and Maija, 2008, 38). In practise, the hierarchically arranged system of planning and decision-making results in Finnish municipalities having an unusually strong role, or in other words, a monopoly, in urban planning (e.g. Hakkola, 2008, 90). The fact that in Finland land-use planning is monopolized by the municipalities has pros, but also cons. Among the pros is without a question the fact that the municipality-monopolized planning has largely served the purposes of building the Finnish welfare state – the idea that the state should aim to take care of the welfare of its citizens equally (Staffans and Väyrynen, 2009, 15). On the other hand, one of the negative side-effects of the current heavy, strictly hierarchical decision-making system is that the processes of urban planning and decision-making take place far away from the citizens.

Urban planning is, of course, about much more than defining the most suitable land-use for each plot of land. In addition to land-use planning, in the Finnish context, urban planning can be seen to comprise of traffic planning, infrastructure planning, environment protection and historical building protection, as well as the research on all of these topics (Puustinen, 2006, 125). As this work is concentrating primarily on the interaction between the city planning officials and the citizens and not so much on the different planning processes happening within the sphere of Finnish urban planning, from here on I will be mainly referring to ‘urban planning’, meaning all the different aspects of city planning described above.

Figure 3: Hierarchies of decision-making in the Finnish urban planning (Land Use and Building Act (132/1999), 1999).
Today, the decision-making processes in Finnish urban planning are arranged hierarchically from national level to the level of municipalities. The decision-making procedures are, of course, only one aspect of urban planning, but nevertheless in the context of Finnish urban planning, an important one. The existing hierarchical decision-making processes affect greatly the citizens’ chances of participation and how citizens perceive urban planning, thus these processes are explained in short below.

On the national level, the processes of land-use planning are divided into four levels, each in a power relation to one another, as can be seen on the figure 3. On the top of the pyramid are *The National Land Use Guidelines*, enacted by the national government and monitored by The Centres for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment (ELY Centres). As the name suggests, the national guidelines are guiding the land-use nationally. The aim of the guidelines is to make sure that the issues that are of national importance will be considered in planning - both on regional and municipal level. According to the Ministry of the Environment, the guidelines are there to “promote ecologically, economically, socially and culturally sustainable development and create preconditions for a favourable living environment” (Ministry of the Environment, 2009). *Regional Land Use Plans* are on the second level, and subordinate to the national guidelines. They are drawn up by the regional councils of each region, and confirmed by the Finnish Ministry of the Environment.

On the municipal level - the level this thesis is mostly looking into - two levels of lawful urban plans exist. The more extensive and powerful of these two plans, a plan that has power over all the minor plans, is the *master plan*. Master plan is the general land-use and traffic plan covering the whole city. In Helsinki, master plan is redrawn approximately every tenth year (Helsingin kaupunkisuunnitteluvirasto, 2015a). Master plan can be complemented with *partial master plans* that only affect certain areas of the city. Partial plans are needed when there is a need to renew the land-use plans for bigger areas or districts of the city (ibid). The current master plan process of Helsinki, called the Vision 2050, started year 2012 and will go to city council vote year 2016 at the latest (Helsingin yleiskaava, 2014). Despite of its far reaching name, the Vision 2050 master plan will guide the development of the city only until 2030 – or until a new master plan is drawn up.

The more detailed *street plan* is formulated according to the objectives and guidelines set in the master plan. The purpose of the street plan is to define the land-use of particular streets and city districts more specifically. In the street plan, the quantity of the built area and the maximum height of the buildings are defined. The street plan also dictates how the streets and other infrastructure influencing the city are executed on a particular area. For a street plan to become lawful, it normally takes at least a year. (Helsingin kaupunkisuunnitteluvirasto, 2015a).

As mentioned earlier, in Finland the role of municipalities is crucial in urban planning. The arranging of decision-making and urban planning differs slightly from one municipality to another. In Helsinki, the City Planning Department is the bureau in charge of urban planning in practise. At the moment, the City Planning Department of Helsinki has 280 employees, of which approximately one third is architects, one third engineers and one third other personnel. The department is divided into four divisions: Strategic Urban Planning Division, Town Planning Division, Transportation and Traffic Planning Division and Administrative Division. The City Planning Department is politically directed by the Helsinki City Planning Board, which is lead by the deputy mayor of the city. On different matters of planning, the City Planning Department co-operates with other city bureaus such as the Public Works Department, Real Estate Department and Helsinki City Transport. (Helsingin kaupunkisuunnitteluvirasto, 2015b).

### 3.3.2. HIERARCHIES OF THE DECISION-MAKING IN FINNISH URBAN PLANNING TODAY

As can be seen from the condensed description above, the processes of decision-making concerning planning the cities in Finland are hierarchical and multi-layered. Saad-Sulonen describes the nature of the current Finnish urban planning processes as highly regulatory: the processes aim at producing the best possible city for the majority of citizens (Saad-Sulonen, 2014, 17). This regulatory nature, though arguably having served the democratic development of cities to some extent, is also taking its toll. According to Saad-Sulonen, the citizens often see urban planning processes as highly institutionalized and bureaucratic (ibid). This is alienating citizens from the processes - it is often difficult for the citizens to grasp the connections between urban development, political decision-making and everyday life. Still, these processes define the future development of city districts and neighbourhoods in a crucial way.

As will be illustrated in chapter four of this work, Helsinki is at the moment witnessing the emergence of urban movements and initiatives aimed at improving our common, urban environments and neighbourhoods. These grass-roots movements and initiatives can be seen to indicate a raised interest of the citizens towards urban environments and issues of planning. The need for better, more inclusive interaction between city and the citizens in the matters of urban planning, as in all decision-making, is evident. The emergence of this need can be seen to relate to the emergence of the new kind of civic society, basing itself on different forms of proactive participation and urban activism. Despite of the seemingly growing interest of citizens towards the development of the city, towards the common urban environments, majority of the citizens...
still appear to perceive urban planning as something that is far away from their everyday life.

Despite of the rather bureaucratic and institutionalized nature of Finnish urban planning, it can be stated that much has changed in the past decades, especially in terms of the position and appreciation of citizens in the multi-layered processes of planning. In her work on the changing roles of urban planners in Finland, Puustinen discusses the communicative turn in urban planning that we have witnessed in the 1990s and 2000s (Puustinen, 2006, 13-14). The term communicative turn refers to the change in how urban planning and the power relationships within the processes of urban planning are perceived by the planners. According to Puustinen, this paradigm shift was a result of the European and American discussion that spoke for a more communicative, collaborative and citizen-centered urban planning, and eventually this discussion started to have an effect on how citizen participation was perceived in the Finnish urban planning procedures (ibid).

According to Puustinen, the emergence of environmental issues, the depression of the 1990s, the rise of neoliberalism and globalization, and finally, the occurrence of the communicative turn in urban planning, were concretized by the new Land-use and Planning Act, set in the year 1999 (Puustinen, 2006, 15). This act brought up the importance of openness in urban decision-making. Instead of discussing citizen engagement in terms of hearing the citizens, the new act discusses the important roles of citizen participation and interaction (Tulkki and Vehmas, 2007, 8). Yet, the act says very little about the ways participatory processes are to be executed in practise. The act rules for example that in the case of plan proposals, “members of the municipality and interested parties shall be provided with an opportunity to express their opinion on the matter” (Land-use and Planning Act, Chapter 8: Section 65, 1999), but does not describe in detail how this opportunity should be created. This leaves a lot of space for interpretation for the officials arranging the platforms for participation in different municipalities.

Nevertheless, the Land-use and Planning Act can be seen as a significant step towards openness in urban planning. One of the concrete developments introduced by the new act was that before the actual planning phase, the municipalities were now obligated to execute a Participation and assessment scheme (osallistumis- ja arviointisunnitelma, OAS) according to the specific needs and scales of each planning process. According to Tulkki and Vehmas (2007, 36), the aim of the Participation and assessment scheme is to inform the numerous stakeholders on the aims and execution of the coming planning process. What was also significant about the act was that participation and hearing processes were now opened up to include not only the landowners, but everyone potentially affected by the plan (Tulkki and Vehmas, 2007, 7). Depending to the case at hand, this can mean for example the residents, companies, organizations and associations of the area - not just the landowners, as used to be the case before the Land-use and Planning Act.

Figure 4: Generalized model on decision-making and interaction processes of urban planning in Helsinki (based on Helsingin kaupunkisuunnitteluvirasto, 2015c).
3.3.4. THE PHASES OF FINNISH URBAN PLANNING AND CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN PRACTICE TODAY

An overview of a planning process, indicating the stages of interaction and citizen participation, is pictured in the figure 4. The model is based on practises of planning in Helsinki, and it shows only a generalized idea of processes, while the ways the processes are carried out depends on many factors, for example on the scale and content of each planning project. In general, five phases can be identified from a planning process. All of the stages include different types of interaction with the stakeholders, such as citizens. (Helsingin kaupunkisuunnitteluvirasto, 2015c.)

1.) Initiation phase. The initiation for a plan may come from a landowner or from different city officials. In the initiation phase, the Participation and assessment scheme is made. The scheme defines the aims and starting points for the plan, explains how the planning will proceed and how the stakeholders may participate.

Interaction: The stakeholders, including the residents of the area, get information on the planning process through the department website and occasionally through announcements in local newspapers and bulletins sent directly to stakeholders. The stakeholders may view the Participation and assessment scheme online, at the city hall or at the City Planning Department. At times, a hearing event is arranged. Stakeholders may comment the participation and assessment scheme through e-mail or at the events.

2.) Plan draft phase. The plan is formulated according to the Participation and assessment scheme. The draft illustrates the land-use on the area on a generalized level, and shows for example the quantity of area that will be built, and where the new buildings will be located.

Interaction: The draft is presented publicly online, at the city hall, at the City Planning Department and sometimes in the local library. The stakeholders may comment the draft in writing, or sometimes in events specifically arranged for this purpose.

3.) Plan proposal phase. The plan is made according to the draft. If necessary, the comments and ideas collected from the stakeholders in the previous phase are taken into account. The plan proposal consists of a detailed plan map illustrating the land-use and building arrangements on the area and of a document explaining in writing the regulations and guidelines set in the plan. The proposal is presented to the City Planning Board. If the board favours the proposal, the proposal will be presented publicly.

Expert opinions on the plan are required by the law, and they are requested at this phase. Expert opinions on the plan are required by the law, and they are requested at this phase. If the board favours the proposal, the proposal will be presented publicly. The City Planning Department formulates responses to the expert opinions and stakeholder opinions stated in the proposal phase. If the stakeholders have stated their wish to receive a response on their opinion, the response will be posted at this stage. The City Planning Board will review the plan. If the changes made at this stage to the plan are crucial, the plan will be again presented publicly. The accepted plan is presented online and at the city hall. If the stakeholders, including the residents, are not satisfied with the acceptance of the plan, they may appeal to the Administrative Court, and from thereon, to the Supreme Administrative Court.

4.) Passage of the plan. If no objection occurs from the part of the stakeholders, and the expert opinions favour the proposal, the proposal proceeds to the city board, an onwards to the city council for voting. With the plans of minor scale, the proposal can be approved by the City Planning Board.

Interaction: The City Planning Department formulates responses to the expert opinions and stakeholder opinions stated in the proposal phase. If the stakeholders have stated their wish to receive a response on their opinion, the response will be posted at this stage. The City Planning Board will review the plan. If the changes made at this stage to the plan are crucial, the plan will be again presented publicly. The accepted plan is presented online and at the city hall. If the stakeholders, including the residents, are not satisfied with the acceptance of the plan, they may appeal to the Administrative Court, and from thereon, to the Supreme Administrative Court.

5.) The plan becomes lawfully effective. If no appeals emerge against the passage of the plan during the time for appeal, the plan will become lawfully effective through the announcement published in local newspapers. The announcement can also be viewed online and at the city hall.

As seen above, space for different type of stakeholder hearing, interaction and participation is offered during each stage. The nature of the platforms, methods and tools for interaction and participation offered by the officials varies depending on the stage of the process. In the early phases of planning, the stakeholders (residents, companies, associations and others who might be affected by the plan) are informed on the coming plans via different channels, and stakeholders can voice their opinions on the coming plans by writing statements and sometimes by taking part in participatory events arranged by the officials (Tulkki and Vehmas, 2007, 18). In the later phases of planning, the plan drafts created by the officials are presented publicly, and the stakeholders get the chance to comment on them, usually by sending written feedback online or via mail or sometimes by participating in events arranged by the officials (Tulkki ja Vehmas, 2007, 18).

In the last phases of planning, where the plan is in the process of becoming legally effective, the stakeholders have also the right to appeal against the plan. According to research, 80% of appeals on proposed urban plans in Finland are done by private citizens, while the rest of the appeals are done by associations, housing companies, authorities and companies (Malin, 2008, 11).

Land-use and Planning Act from the year 1999 brought up the importance of open urban planning processes and introduced citizens as important stakeholders in the development of cities. Yet, as seen in the figure and in the description above, the current possibilities for participation are
In Helsinki, the City Planning Department has a team of three specialists in charge of ar-
hood associations on the matters of planning only if specifically requested to. (Mattila, 2014.)
case, with limited hours and during workdays. Usually the planners would visit neighbour-
ting the participatory processes were introduced. Before, the “citizen engagement” might have
activities within different planning projects. During the next years, a lot of new ways of conduc-
by outlining the participatory processes according to the new law and by standardizing the ac-
stein exponentially – the Facebook group Lisää kaupunkia Helsinkiin, with more than 7000
onth were published as open data for anyone to use. The map had gathered 4 700 users
pin their opinions on a digital map was published. Later, the opinions and comments pinned
the actual plans”. The more people engage with the participatory events and hearings, the
living environments. For many reasons, this is not always straightforward. One the reasons
is that in practise, the central aims and planning principles of the planning projects are of-
not heard by the officials (Malin, 2008, 30).

3.4. IN PRACTISE: HOW DO THE PLANNING OFFICIALS
AND CITIZENS INTERACT IN HELSINKI?

The third big change in arranging the citizen participation started with the era of internet and
especially the era of social media. According to Maija Mattila, social media has profoundly
shaken the ground of citizen participation in urban planning. The informing of the citizens
on coming urban planning projects and hearing the citizens’ opinions has changed drastically
with the new web and social media tools. When the Master Plan Vision 2050 was launched,
a web portal providing information on the master plan process and allowing the citizens to
pin their opinions on a digital map was published. Later, the opinions and comments pinned
on the map were published as open data for anyone to use. The map had gathered 4 700 users
and had 33 000 notes left by the citizens (Lintula, 2014.) At the same time the amount of
public discussion taking place outside of the sphere of the Urban Planning Office has gro-

mainly reactive in nature, as opposed to proactive. The stakeholders – meaning for example res-
dents, companies and organizations – are offered possibilities to comment the proposals produced
by the department or in later stages, to appeal against the plans. Not much space is offered for
collaborative ideation together with citizens within the decision-making and planning processes.

Research suggests that the more open the planning and decision-making processes are to pub-
ic, the less likely the stakeholders are to appeal against the proposed plans (Malin, 2008, 30).
But arranging the interaction with the citizens according to the Land-use and Planning Act
might not always be sufficient. Even in cases where interaction was arranged according to
the law, the citizens appealing against the plans sometimes experienced that their opinions were
In Helsinki, the City Planning Department has a team of three specialists in charge of ar-
ranging the interaction between citizens and the planning projects conducted by the City
Planning Department. To have such a team working only on the interaction is quite un-
common in Finland. In Helsinki, the team of interaction specialists was formulated in
the year 2001 – partly as a consequence of the new Land Use and Building Act from the
year before. According to Maija Mattila (2014), one of the interaction planners, the team
works in close contact with the planners working with the master plans and street plans.
The connection works both ways: sometimes the team approaches the planners on cer-
tain projects, and sometimes the planners approach the interaction team for help in how
to arrange the hearings and other interaction in certain planning projects (Mattila, 2014).

According to Mattila, the nature of interaction with the citizens in Helsinki has changed
drastically in the past 15 years. When the interaction team started, there were no common
policies on how the interaction and participation projects with the citizens were conducted.
Some of the planners were already doing much to allow the citizens to voice their opinions
and to participate on creating visions for their own living areas, whereas some planners did not
engage in such discussion at all. In the beginning of the 2000s, the interaction team started out
by outlining the participatory processes according to the new law and by standardizing the ac-
tivities within different planning projects. During the next years, a lot of new ways of conduc-
ting the participatory processes were introduced. Before, the “citizen engagement” might have
been for example having the plan drafts showcased in each planners office – and in the worst
case, with limited hours and during workdays. Usually the planners would visit neighbour-
hood associations on the matters of planning only if specifically requested to. (Mattila, 2014.)

In the 2000s, one of the most significant changes in how the interaction with the citizens was
arranged in Helsinki concerning the matters of urban planning was that the civil servants of
the Urban Planning Department started meeting the people in the city districts where the
planning projects were actually going to take place. Plan drafts were now presented in local
libraries and other public locations. Especially with the more extensive planning projects, the
Urban Planning Department started to arrange events outside of the office, near the loca-
tions that were to be re-planned, in order to make participation easier. According to Mattila,
another significant change, taking place towards the end of the 2000s, was the re-thinking
and re-creating the methods and techniques used for interaction. It was no longer only about
questionnaires and forms, but new kinds of methods for bringing out the opinions and ideas
were being developed. Probably the most massive project done so far in terms of citizen par-
ticipation has been the ongoing Master Plan Vision 2050 -project. Before the first master
plan draft was made, the Urban Planning Department arranged several events, presentations,
hearings, interactive workshops to allow citizens to voice their opinions. (Mattila, 2014.)
Staffans and Väyrynen (2006) draw together criticism towards the existing urban planning processes in Finland. Firstly, according to Staffans and Väyrynen, the processes are often seen too slow from the point of view of businesses who are struggling to find the right time frame in the midst of the land-use planning processes. On the other hand, the pressure to develop the current land-use planning processes comes from the increasing interest of the citizens to have a say on their living environment. Despite of the recent developments, several studies show that citizens still often feel that their voices are not being heard in the urban planning processes. (Staffans and Väyrynen, 2006, 15-16.)

Another major issue has to do with the level of knowledge the citizens possess on urban planning and decision-making procedures they entail. In addition to the citizen dissatisfaction pictured above, Kervanto Nevanlinna (2010) underlines that despite of the fact that urban planning and the building of our common urban environments are processes mainly guided through the processes of land-use planning, this fact often remains incomprehensible for the citizens, as the media tends to concentrate more on the architecture of buildings. According to Kervanto Nevanlinna, the visual language of the urban planning is demanding: it is difficult for the citizens to understand from the plans what they would or could actually mean in practice (ibid). The drafts and proposals might be presented publicly, but do the citizens understand what the plans would mean in practise? Considering these views, it seems clear that introducing basic education on urban planning and decision-making connected to it could benefit both the city and the citizens.

One of the most commonly criticized aspect of current policies of citizen participation on urban planning and decision-making seems to concern the timing of participation. Although citizen participation is to some extent steered by law, participation is actually limited only to certain phases of planning (Wallin, 2013, 24). This is also visible on the figure 3, which pictures the current processes of urban planning and points out the typical stages for citizen participation. The current timing for participation in the urban planning processes tends to result in complaints and other reactive measures on the part of the citizens, as possibilities for engagement earlier, in the ideation processes, are very limited.

In all, the top-down designed citizen participation processes can be questioned in many ways. According to Saad-Sulonen, “many attempts have been made to open up urban planning to citizen participation as a way to implement representational democracy at the municipal level” (Saad-Sulonen, 2014, 17). But what is in common with many of these attempts according to Saad-Sulonen is that they are designed from the point of view of the process-centered, institutionalized urban planning (ibid). According to Horelli and Wallin, the central problem in our institutionalized way of planning is that it does not recognize the fact that cities are actually self-organizing in nature, and thus, the potential of true co-governance is ignored (Horelli and Wallin, 2013, 12). It can be summarized that the top-down approach gives very little space for the citizens to actually have any kind of power over how their living environments are developing. Is it enough to comply with the existing rules and policies, or should we turn the whole idea of citizen engagement upside down and re-plan the power-relations between the authorities and the citizens?

An overview on the criticism seems to suggest that the bureaucratic, top-down planned forms of citizen participation described above might not fully respond to the needs and wishes of the citizens in the matters of urban planning. More importantly – it might not support the best possible ways of planning and building the future cities and neighbourhoods. The potential in civic activity and direct participation is still largely ignored and left unused. The current practices allow the citizens to comment on on-going plans, but it is debatable whether they are truly offering space for the citizens to envision and innovate on how their future living environments could be like at their best. At the moment, answers to these burning questions seem to rise from the sides of our governing system of representative democracy, in forms of all kind of civic initiatives.
“WHEN YOU WANT TO MAKE

something unusual happen in Helsinki it still takes a great deal of perseverance to wade your way through the jungle of the city’s strong bureaucracy. Knowing this, we cannot but admire the people who take the initiative. There is a new generation flourishing in Helsinki, willing to take action when they want to tackle a problem or when they want to simply have fun.”

(Hernberg, 2012c, 17.)
According to Bäcklund & al. (2002, 7-17), the theme of citizen participation in decision-making and urban planning is connected to the larger discussion on the nature of governmental power and democracy. Especially during the past decades, the discussion on citizen participation has been fuelled by many kinds of urban activist and civic initiatives that have emerged from the sides of our governmental system of representative democracy (ibid). This type of urban activism is currently spreading quickly, as more groups and communities are arranging activities around topical issues and follow the examples of the successful urban pioneers. The current urban activism appears to form a movement that keeps on accumulating and producing interesting initiatives that attract new audiences and participants.

In this thesis, this new kind of urban culture refers to "the rise of new kind of civic society and the raised interest of the citizens and urban residents towards changing their environment and things they see important" (Jyrkäs & al, 2014, 17). In Helsinki, this raised interest is something that has defined the development of urban culture during the past five years. What is it that makes these kinds of themes and activities emerge in Helsinki in the 2010s? What kind of needs and wishes of the citizens do these activities express? Is the new urban culture something that is for everyone or is it exclusive? These questions, among other activism related topics, are being thought of and researched by many.

During the past few years, Helsinkians have witnessed a flurry of citizen-led events and grassroots initiatives aimed at improving the common urban environments and the urban atmosphere. The overarching theme in all of these initiatives, events and movements seems to be changing the world by bringing people together by doing things around important topics - and most importantly, doing them in a way that gently challenges the existing policies and practices of the city. According to Boyer and Hill, this new kind of action, or "urban experimentation" as Boyer and Hill call it, can be seen as a manifestation for new ways of living and building the city together (Boyer and Hill, 2013, 13).

People see the official channels too slow and tangled for making the change, and instead of approaching the city and its numerous departments, they are increasingly choosing to make the change with their own resources and tools.

Probably the most famous and widespread example of the new urban culture born in Helsinki is Ravintolapäivä, the Restaurant Day. The idea of Restaurant Day is that four days a year, anyone can set up a restaurant for a day without going through the complicated license application processes with the authorities. The restaurants are located all around the city in places such as market squares, public parks, private gardens and peoples' homes. The Restaurant Day movement started in 2011 with 45 restaurants in 13 cities, but in the year 2014, already 1698 restaurants were set up in 35 countries (Restaurantday.org, 2015). Siivouspäivä, The Cleaning Day, is following the footsteps and the ideology of The Restaurant Day. Cleaning Day is currently happening twice a year. On the Cleaning Day, the city becomes a huge flea-market with private citizens selling second-hand clothes and household items that have become useless for them in parks, squares and other public and semi-public places (Facebook, Siivouspäivä, 2015).

Another popular form of new urban culture in Helsinki is urban gardening. According to Hernberg (2012a, 132-139), the initiators of the urban gardening boom of Helsinki were the people of an environmental NGO called Dodo. In 2009, the people of Dodo took over the old, unused railway yards in Pasila, situated in central Helsinki. According to Hernberg, the activists of Dodo wanted to show that it is indeed possible to produce high quality local vegetables in urban environments, too. After the Pasila example, a lot of similar “guerilla plantations” started to appear around Helsinki. The plantations were set up without applying permissions with the authorities. What is perhaps surprising, taken that we live in a very bureaucratic and norm-filled country, Hernberg describes that the initiatives were embraced dearly all around the city and they received a lot of positive coverage in the media. Urban farming is not only the means of producing clean vegetables. According to Hernberg (2012a, 132-139), one of the members of Dodo describes urban farming also as a means of creating new communities and of encouraging the citizens to look at the city with new eyes.

The events and ways of changing the city above are just some examples. At the moment, tens of events and initiatives like described above are changing the atmosphere of the city in a radically positive way. When visiting and participating in the events and initiatives, one can only wonder: why hasn’t anyone come up with this kind of actions before? It is quite clear that there is something about the time we currently live in that is creating the need for these initiatives. The immediate popularity of the events show that they were born out of a great need of people to come together and take over the city in a way that has happened perhaps never before.
4.2. HOW DO THE MAKERS OF THE NEW URBAN CULTURE OPERATE?

Some common features can be identified in how the creators of the new urban culture, the activist groups and collectives, tend to organize themselves and in how they operate. According to Jyrkäs & al. (2014, 35), the makers of the new urban culture are typically self-organized, proactive, independent, volunteering-based, network-like and democratic. They are built around the dream of making the urban environments more livable through creating and cultivating the sense of community and locality (ibid).

After the pioneering initiatives such as the Restaurant Day and the Cleaning Day, many urban events with similar approach have emerged in Helsinki. There is a lot in common with the original initiatives and their successors. Both Restaurant Day and Cleaning Day are run by an active group of volunteers who are in charge of engineering and enabling the events. They make the websites with maps where participants can mark their restaurants and flea-markets for the customers to find them. They negotiate with the city authorities on permissions when needed. But it is the individual participants, the chefs, the flea-market sellers and the customers, who really make these kind of events happen and flourish. The idea is more based around the idea of enabling – the organizers are creating surroundings for the participants to make the event come true.

To talk about new urban culture does not mean to say that citizen-led urban initiatives and all kinds of grassroots activities have not existed before. It is more about the fact that with new technology and modern communicative tools, the initiatives have now the potential to spread faster and achieve larger audiences and bigger impacts. As Svensson (2011) describes, “the possibility for quick reaction, easy reach of local (and global networks) has turned the Internet and mobile technology into efficient channels for social movements, citizen debates, political protest and mobilization”. It is now commonly understood that web 2.0, which is bringing up the social aspects and possibilities of the internet, is one of the main enablers of the new kind of urban culture and activism (eg. Jyrkäs & al. 2014, Botero and Saad-Sulonen, 2013). With all the social media tools and platforms, it is now easier than ever before to join like-minded forces and mobilize big groups of people to tackle topical urban issues.

It can be said that Facebook alone has turned the table of citizen participation radically, providing a platform for communication, ideation and low-budget marketing for all kinds of events and movements. All the movements described above have used Facebook successfully to achieve larger audiences. In addition to Facebook, the urban activists in Helsinki appear to make fluently use of blogs, map tools and other free social media tools such as Instagram and Twitter. Internationally, a lot of map based neighbourhood and city district platforms are emerging. Among these have been for example the Mindmixer, ShareAbouts and Chan-

geByUs, all specialized in making the cities better places through community action (Lorah, 2015). In 2015, a new Finnish platform circulating around the same issues was published. Nifty Neighbour (Nappi Naapuri) is a crowd-funded web platform to encourage community action, neighbourhood communication and planning of different grassroots community initiatives.

4.3. GOVERNANCE MEETS THE NEW URBAN CULTURE — A SYSTEMIC PERSPECTIVE

Perhaps the most significant common factor for these various events, initiatives and platforms described above is that they challenge and question the norms and practices of the city in a positive way. They are gently taking over the city, without appearing negative or too threatening towards the existing systems and practices. Their power lies in simply showing that things can be done differently and in showing how they can be done. Instead of simply opposing what exists now, the urban initiatives offer alternatives, and in doing so provide a fertile sole for the city to develop based on experience.

Pulkkinen (2014) describes how the urban grassroots movements can affect the urban systems on a very profound level by multiplying and scaling up their activities. “Urban pioneers”, as Pulkkinen calls them, typically work through arranging events and initiatives around topics they are interested in, as described above. These groups work separately but can be seen to form a larger movement aiming to affect urban culture on a systemic level. According to Pulkkinen, the actions of these groups are defined by "let’s do it -attitude" and iterative ways of doing things. They are typically trying out things, seeing what works and developing the successful practices further. The successful ideas can be then mimicked by other groups in a different setting – as has happened for example with Restaurant Day and Cleaning Day. (Pulkkinen, 2014, 71-80.)

The kind of fast-paced, agile civic activity that these urban movements and initiatives present appears to comment on the heavy decision-making systems of the cities in all sectors. This “do-it-yourself urban culture” (tee-se-itse-kaupunkikulttuuri), as Jyrkäs & al. (2014, 17) are calling it, is profoundly changing how we see the future of cities, the urban planning processes and citizen participation within these. The new urban culture is much about moving from top-down -thinking towards bottom-up -thinking, about acknowledging the importance and the potential of grassroots activities in developing the city. How these changes affect the traditional roles of urban bureaucracy in practice will most likely start showing in the next years. In the future, this can mean for example allowing and encouraging citizen-led ideation and innovation already at the early stages of decision-making and planning processes – or even before the processes have even started. In this thesis, this type of participation is referred to as proactive participation, as opposed to reactive participation.
On the systemic level, new urban culture and urban activism can also be looked at from the framework of manufacturing, making, design and consuming. Sanders and Stappers (2012, 16-17) discuss the power relations connected to the above mentioned framework, and the raised interest towards individual and collective creativity that we have witnessed in the past decade. According to Sanders and Stappers, we have lived at a time where “people are seen as customers and consumers who live in the marketplace.” It can be claimed that this way of thinking has defined the whole western world for more than seven decades. But according to Sanders and Stappers, counter-movements have now started to emerge. These movements are questioning the creator-consumer system simply by taking the reins and doing things themselves, stepping into the shoes of creators. This ideology is now becoming visible at the level of cities and urban planning, too. (Sanders and Stappers, 2012, 16-17.)

From the systemic and governmental point of view, it is important to reflect where the development of the civic society, together with the emerging appreciation of bottom-up approaches, is leading. Jyrkäs & al. (2014, 20) discuss the Big Society-model developed in Great Britain, where the society is outsourcing its traditional responsibilities to the civic society consisting of different communities and third sector actors. This trend can be seen rather suspicious and even dangerous from the point of view of welfare state. Instead of outsourcing the responsibilities, Jyrkäs & al. propose a model where, instead of taking responsibility on matters that belong to the society, the civic society is supporting and sparring the public sector to achieve better results. Similarly, Christian Bason is discussing a possible shift in our model of governing, a shift from delivery of services to the people towards enabling co-production of services with people (Bason, 2013, 5). Including an engaging citizens more in creating and developing for example public services and the city surroundings, does not have to mean outsourcing the responsibility of the society.

4.4. URBAN ACTIVISMS TACKLING THE ISSUES OF URBAN PLANNING

4.4.1. ALTERNATIVE PLANS AND VISIONS AS A FORM OF PROACTIVE PARTICIPATION

This work is mainly exploring an emerging field of new urban culture: activism that is commenting and raising discussion on urban planning and the development of our common urban environments. These actors interested in urban planning have recently produced alternative plans and visions on different areas of the city, and sometimes even on the whole city, as will be shown later. The alternative plans and visions come in forms of manifestos, alternative city plans and future scenarios. These works are usually presented to the public through different social media platforms and presentations. The aim is to raise discussion among the citizens on different urban issues. In addition to this, the activists often communicate their visions straight to the Urban Planning Department and decision-makers. This new kind of proactive participation in urban planning can be seen to have a role as challenging and sparring the work of the city and the different departments that are responsible of the built environment (Jyrkäs & al. 2014, 17).

Citizens have of course always been interested in the development of their own neighbourhoods, and have grouped together in order to improve their own surroundings. In Helsinki, the numerous city district associations and neighbourhood associations have traditionally been active in voicing their opinions on the development of their respective city districts. Yet, these associations have relatively little power in the decision-making systems based on representative democracy. According to Jarenko (2013, 54) it is worth noticing that in Finland to talk about “local decision-making” is to talk about the decision making at the municipal level. Unlike for example in Copenhagen and Stockholm, in Finland decision-making bodies do not exist in the level of neighbourhoods (ibid).

When studying some of the comments made by the district associations on urban planning matters in Helsinki, it can be stated that they are almost without exception reactive in nature, as opposed to proactive. Mostly the comments take a stand against the development proposed by the city on certain areas. These comments rarely propose alternative solutions. When looking for example at the comments made by an active district association Herttoniemi-seura on the development of the Herttoniemi district, it is worth noticing that the comments often include expressions such as “the residents are worried” and “the residents oppose” (Herttoniemi-seura, 2015). Yet, even among the district associations it seems that the comments and complaints are slowly becoming more visionary and at times they even propose alternative ideas with the help of maps, collages and illustrations.

The operational principles behind most of the new urban activist collectives seem to be somewhat different from the ones of the traditional city district associations. What appears to be typical for the new urban activism is that the driving force behind the actions is something else than “defending my own backyard”. As will be shown later through some examples, the urban activist collectives seem to base their proposals on realities that exist on the level of the city, and even globally. The alternative proposals are usually taking a stand on global issues such as urbanization, social issues and sustainability. In the proposals, these global issues are being handled with local means. Even when an alternative plan or a vision concerns only a small district within a city, the larger, global themes are usually visible.

Based on these observations, it is perhaps rightful to say, that we are currently moving slowly from the era of “not in my backyard” towards the era of “yes in my backyard” – an era where citizens want to become part of creating visions for the city, to become part of building the common future. Citizen participation appears to be moving towards the front-end of the planning process and in practise this means, amongst other things, moving from complaining towards...
collaborative ideation (Mattila, 2014). To some extent, the current alternative urban plans and visions can also be seen to represent the future of citizen participation in urban planning. The unofficial zoning plans and other city visions, produced independently by different groups, are offering interesting alternatives and points of comparison to the official plans. As such, they are capable of raising public discussion - and of raising the citizens’ interest towards urban planning issues - in a way that is quite different from the participatory processes currently arranged by the City Planning Department.

4.4.2. EXAMPLES OF ALTERNATIVE URBAN PLANS AND VISIONS IN HELSINKI

PRO HELSINKI 2.0

One of the members of the Urban Helsinki collective, Niilo Tenkanen (2015), describes the collective: “We are seven people and our professional backgrounds are in architecture, landscape architecture, urban geography and traffic planning. Some of us are students. One of us is not actually a professional in the field at all, but he is clearly a member of the ‘urban planning nerd scene’ - following actively the public discussion and he knows how urban planning works.”

According to Tenkanen (2015), the Urban Helsinki collective was born during a pre-christmas party of the Lisää kaupunkia Helsinkiin -group, where one of the group members started collecting names of people who would be interested in doing alternative master plan for Helsinki. Tenkanen explains that in the beginning there was discussion among the members on how to actually execute the Pro Helsinki 2.0 plan: should it happen collectively with the LKH-group or would there be a specific team of people in charge of the project, while the others could participate in discussion and give feedback. The latter way was eventually chosen, because the collective saw that as the most efficient way of getting the demanding project done.

The Pro Helsinki 2.0, an alternative master plan for Helsinki, was published in 2014. The alternative plan is based on an urban planning ideology that has lately become known as the new urbanism. New urbanism is about fighting against the urban sprawl, about supporting the building of dense urban cities, lively and walkable neighbourhoods, social connections, shared public spaces and sustainability (Congress for the New Urbanism, 2015). Pro Helsinki 2.0 is built around five overarching vision for Helsinki: making Helsinki into a metropolis, creating a platform for a lively street-life with block structure, moving from separate land-use towards mixed-use, developing high quality transportation with the help of networked transportation system and boulevardization and questioning the norms that currently rule the planning of our cities (Urban Helsinki, 2015).

The actual plan is presented as an easy to use website with detailed plan maps, illustrations that open up the themes and extensive and thoroughly analyzed sections of text on each theme described above. Despite of the vastness of the project, the work is very detailed and professional – and it is perhaps justified to say that the plan could not have been executed with such precision if at least majority of the members of the collective weren’t professionals or at least semi-professionals in the field of urban planning.
In 2013, the city of Helsinki announced it plans to move the majority of the functions of Koskela hospital, situated in the northern part of Helsinki, elsewhere and start the change of the street plans of the area in order to allow the building of residential houses. The Koskela hospital area had been underused already for quite awhile, and the pressure to find new functions and use for the area started to grow. Some of the active members of Lisää kaupunkia Helsinkiin were alert well before the city started the actual planning process concerning the future of the Koskela area. A group of LKH activists got together and started to ideate an alternative proposal on the future of the area. On their proposal, published in October 2013, the activists stressed the importance of density, as the greater number of residents would create better services, opportunities for the businesses and also better public transportation. The plan proposes building densely on the kerbside of the streets, thus leaving the central area as a park. It is suggesting changing the historical hospital buildings into apartments and spaces for schools, daycare centers and senior apartments. In all, the alternative plan provides housing for 3000 residents. What is markedly different from the official proposal for the area is that the alternative plan proposes allowing a smaller number of parking places – something that the city cannot currently propose because of the parking norms. (Särelä, J. 2013.)

The Koskela alternative plan was published in a blog. The plan was presented in a form of descriptive texts on the topics mentioned above and a plan draft showing the placement and the shapes of the buildings, and also which of the buildings the group proposed to be renovated and how the new buildings should be built. The visual material of the plan is simple, yet very informative, bringing up the most essential points of the plan.

The alternative Koskela plan raised discussion on the blog where it was originally published, but also in the Lisää kaupunkia Helsinkiin -Facebook group. More than 60 people, mainly members of the LKH-group, signed their name under the proposal. The proposal was then presented to the City Planning Department.

When the city was going through the evaluation stage concerning the new master plan process launched in 2012, the idea of turning the incoming motorways into boulevards was again brought up, even though it had not gained popularity during the past two master plan processes (Särelä, 2015). The idea of boulevardization raised discussion especially in the areas of Eastern Helsinki that are currently divided by the massive motorway Itäväylä. It was exactly these kind of areas that would be affected by boulevardization the most.
In 2013, some active members of the Eastern Helsinki Greens had been discussing about boulevardization and its significance to Eastern Helsinki. Eventually, the Eastern Helsinki Greens decided to order an alternative proposal and illustrations on the subject from architect Ilkka Törmä. According to Antti Möller (2015), who was one of the most active members in making the proposal, it was decided that the plans and illustrations will be made by a professional planner to whom the Eastern Helsinki Greens will pay for the work. According to Möller, this was seen as the easiest way to produce a proposal that would have credibility in the eyes of the public as well as of the City Planning Department and decision-makers (Möller, 2015.)

In May 2013, one of the activists of the Eastern Helsinki Greens arranged an open event in Herttoniemi with a name “Itäväylä puistokaduksi” (Boulevardizing the Itäväylä motorway). In the event, the architect Törmä presented his proposal and illustrations on the topic which raised a lot of discussion among the audience. Among the topics that rouse from that discussion were how the traffic would be arranged, would it be possible to lift up the metro rails to create more space or in turn moving the metro rails underground throughout Itäväylä (Itä–Helsingin Vihreät, 2013a). Some of the participants announced also their worries on the economical viability of boulevardization and how turning the motorways into boulevards would affect the cityscape at large (ibid).

4.4.3. IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE FIRST ALTERNATIVE PLANS AND VISIONS IN HELSINKI

Google search “Pro Helsinki 2.0” produces close to 900 hits. For a period of time in the winter of 2014, it seemed like the Urban Helsinki collective and the Pro Helsinki collective proposes an alternative solution. Instead of objecting the proposed plans, the Urban Helsinki collective proposed an alternative solution.

In the winter of 2014, it seemed like the Urban Helsinki collective and the Pro Helsinki collective proposes an alternative solution. According to Antti Möller (2015), who was one of the most active members in making the proposal, it was decided that the plans and illustrations will be made by a professional planner to whom the Urban Helsinki collective will pay for the work. According to Möller, this was seen as the easiest way to produce a proposal that would have credibility in the eyes of the public as well as of the City Planning Department and decision-makers (Möller, 2015.)

Another reason behind the popularity of the Urban Helsinki proposal is the emergence of new urbanism ideology within the public discussion on urban planning in Finland. Tenkanen sees that the ideology of new urbanism had slowly started to gain popularity and interest among media and among the citizens during the 2010s, and Pro Helsinki 2.0 offered a welcomed practical basis for re-establishing an revitalizing such discussion (Tenkanen, 2015). According to Tenkanen, the Pro Helsinki 2.0—project was not aimed only at the planners and decision-makers but also to the public: the aim was from the beginning to raise discussion on the positive effects of urbanization and of dense city structure (ibid). It can be said that partly as the result of the Pro Helsinki 2.0 plan, this kind of public discussion did most certainly take place in Helsinki during the year 2014.

It can be stated that the Koskela alternative plan did not go unnoticed either. Särelä (2015) sees that the in this case, the presence of the alternative plan helped to fuel discussion within the City Planning Department, and partly as a result of that discussion, the Koskelanka area is going to be built more densely than originally planned by the officials. In addition to this, Särelä thinks that the alternative plan inspired the City Planning Department to present not one but multiple proposals for the public to discuss on. Instead of proposing only one option, the City Planning Department decided eventually to present four different options from which one would be chosen to be developed further. (Särelä, 2015).

According to Mikko Särelä and Niilo Tenkanen, the communication with the City Planning Department has been easygoing and prolific in nature (Särelä, 2015 and Tenkanen, 2015). The department has shown a genuine interest towards the projects carried out by the active citizens and collectives. With the Pro Helsinki 2.0 plan, the interaction between the collective and the City Planning Department was exceptionally extensive: the planners seemed to be genuinely interested in what the collective was going to propose and how. According to Tenkanen (2015), during the process the collective met with the city planners both formally and informally and at the end of the project, the collective got to present their plan to the whole master plan unit of the City Planning Department. According to Tenkanen (2015), the planners of the department valued the fresh take on new urbanism that the collective had chosen with the alternative plan.

According to Särelä, one of the biggest impacts of active citizen discussion and proactive envisioning is that with the current master plan, the city is again proposing the boulevardization of the incoming motorways of Helsinki. The officials attempted to propose boulevardization in Helsinki already during the master plan proposals of the year 1992 and the year 2002, but during those two processes, the idea of boulevardization was repeatedly turned down by the public and eventually by the decision-makers. With the current master plan process Vision 2050, the situation was different. Because of the citizen-led ideation and initiatives, public discussion on boulevardization had been going on already for a couple of years without the City Planning Department having to take actively part in it. The citizens of Helsinki had slowly become used to the idea of boulevardization, and now saw it as a way to create attractive and dense urban environments. (Särelä, 2015.)
Based on the findings described shortly above, it can be concluded that even though the amount of alternative plans and visions produced by different collectives and groups is rather small for the time being, the fact that these plans and visions have started to emerge is interesting and should be taken into account when planning the participatory measures of urban planning in the future. As citizen participation appears to be moving towards the front-end of urban planning processes (e.g. Mattila, 2014 and Puustinen, 2006) these initiatives can offer valuable clues and insights on proactive citizen participation in the matters of urban planning and decision-making. Through the work of the collectives and urban activists, it is already becoming visible what kind of approaches, methods and tools might work and what kind of skills are needed when participating proactively.

Is it possible to spread some of the positive spirit and the Yes In My Backyard -approaches of these urban initiatives, and to encourage more citizens to take part in voicing their opinions on how the city should be developed? How can this be done? Can design facilitate such proactive participation, and thus help balance the power relations within our complex and hierarchical systems of urban planning? These questions will be reflected on in the next chapter.
DESIGN CAN ASK

"what now?" and "what next?"
Design can disturb current narratives.
Design can rupture the present with counter-narratives.

(Fuad-Luke, 2013, 21.)
5. Redirecting Citizen Participation in Urban Planning Through Design

5.1. Design Thinking and the Wicked Urban Problems

During the 2000s, design thinking has emerged in public discussion frequently. Design thinking is often discussed not only in connection to the field of design, but also in connection to the fields of business, services and so on. But what is design thinking? How could it be harnessed into solving urban problems and most of all, into creating possibilities for better and earlier citizen engagement in urban planning and decision-making?

The meaning of both design and design thinking are continuously changing and expanding, but according to Lee, they are both terms that “are associated with how individuals interact with their environment, create change and develop consciousness in others” (Lee, 2012). Hence, both design and design thinking, in the broadest sense, are very much about the relationship between the material world and human beings. As mentioned before, design thinking is not used only in creating objects or products – design thinking methodology is being successfully applied in for example the development of businesses and services (eg. Lee, 2012). Because of their holistic, systemic nature, design thinking methodologies possess a lot of potential in terms of urban planning processes and citizen participation.

One way to analyse what design thinking is, is simply to think about how designers think. Cross discusses the strategic approaches that talented professional designers seem to take on to when solving design problems (2011, 73-78). In other words, Cross is explaining how designers think and how they see the world. According to Cross, talented designers tend to take a very broad, systemic approach on design problems at hand, thus allowing both surprising questions and answers to emerge. Secondly, according to Cross, designers tend to frame the problem “in a distinctive and sometimes rather personal way”, meaning that at this stage, designer’s own personality, artistic qualities and intuition are often at play. Thirdly, designers tend to design based on the “first principles” – meaning they are trying to identify design principals at the most fundamental level possible and try to find solutions based on those principles. (Cross, 2011, 73-78.)

Especially during the 1960s, design researchers attempted to put design and design thinking into mathematical charts and detailed process descriptions (Koskinen, 2011, 15). This happened with very little success. The true essence of design seems to flee this kind of linearity, detailed descriptions and definitions. One of the reasons for this is perhaps the presence of intuition in design thinking and through that, the presence of the designer as an individual within each design project. This can be as one of the factors that differentiates design from engineering at the most substantial level. In design, the presence of intuition and personal and collective creativity are acknowledged and embraced. Cross goes so far as to say that “the concept of ‘intuition’ is a convenient, shorthand word for what really happens in design thinking” (Cross, 2011, 10). I would argue that this intuition, and the presence of the designer or planner in a way that can be very personal and empathic, is perhaps something that is not yet so common within the field of urban planning, although the field is currently changing and expanding quickly into more communicative and user-centered directions.

Another topical take on design thinking and problem solving was published already in 1970s, by designers Rittel and Webber. They proposed a theory on wicked problems, a theory on social and open system problems that has value now perhaps more than ever before. Rittel and Webber stated, that most of the problems planners an designers are facing are wicked problems, whereas traditional science has specialized in solving problems that Rittel and Webber call tame. What differentiates wicked problems from the tame, limited ones is that according to Rittel An Webber, wicked problems are never finally resolved but at their best, are “only re-solved – over and over again”. Tame problems, such as solving a mathematical equation, can be finitely solved. Wicked problems, on the other hand, appear in open systems, which often means that the traditional, scientific approaches will not solve them. (Rittel and Webber, 1973.)

1. Wicked problems have no stopping rule.
2. Solutions to wicked problems are not true-or-false, but good or bad.
3. There is no immediate and no ultimate test of a solution to a wicked problem.
4. Every solution to a wicked problem is a “one-shot operation”; because there is no opportunity to learn by trial and error, every attempt counts significantly.
5. Wicked problems do not have an enumerable (or an exhaustively describable) set of potential solutions, nor is there a well-described set of permissible operations that may be incorporated into the plan.
6. Every wicked problem is essentially unique.
7. Every wicked problem can be considered to be a symptom of another problem.
8. The existence of a discrepancy representing a wicked problem can be explained in numerous ways.
9. The choice of explanation determines the nature of the problem’s resolution.
10. The social planner has no right to be wrong (i.e., planners are liable for the consequences of the actions they generate).

(Rittel and Webber, 1973.)
When observing the ten definitions on wicked problems above, it can be concluded that each of them lines up well with urban issues we are currently facing. In the context of Helsinki, this means for example the issues on the ownership of the city, power relations between different user-groups in the city, the use of public space, social-economical inequality between people and different areas in the city, crime prevention, the issues of complementary building and so on. Traditionally, urban planners have approached these problems with the tools of urban planners and in Finland, especially the tools architects and engineers typically possess. This has resulted in satisfactory results for the most parts, but I am arguing that there is space for a more systemic and holistic approach. Design thinking can be one way of embedding these approaches to urban planning and participatory practices connected to it.

As Buchanan illustrates, “design problems are “indeterminate” and “wicked” because design has no special subject matter of its own apart from what a designer conceives it to be” (Buchanan, 1992). This lack of subject matter, and at the same time the lack of certain boundaries and norms, can be seen to differentiate design from fields such as urban planning as it is seen in the traditional sense, and as it is presented in the chapter three of this work. This characteristic of design is something that makes design and the use of designerly methods interesting in the field of urban planning and citizen participation. According to Fry, the traditional disciplinary thinking, where disciplines exist in their silos according to traditional divisions of knowledge and skills, is exclusory in nature, hence it has very little potential in solving complex, systemic problems (Fry, 2009, 55). To solve this, Fry proposes framing design as a redirective practise, a practise that has the capability to facilitate the exchange of knowledge between different disciplines and stakeholders (ibid).

5.2. DESIGN – CONJOINING URBAN PLANNING WITH PROACTIVE CITIZEN PARTICIPATION?

The field of urban planning in Finland is slowly becoming more user-centered, communicative and collaborative in nature. As pictured in chapters three and four of this work, the thinking in urban planning seems to be slowly opening up to bottom-up approaches and activist initiatives, too. Despite of the decision-making system remaining heavy and multi-layered, it can be said that especially in Helsinki, citizens’ opinions, ideas and worries concerning their living and working environments are definitely being better heard today than they were twenty years ago. Things are changing slowly but steadily.

Stating the previous, is there still a need for design and designers to look into urban planning and citizen participation issues concerning the development of urban environments? Why is it that designers today seem to be so keen on engaging themselves with urban planning challenges? Is there a particular reason to further introduce the field of urban planning with design thinking and designerly ways of thinking and doing? What could we achieve by merging the traditions of urban planning and the user-centered worldview of design? These questions are highly topical and it can be said that answers are currently in the making – a lot of experimenting with design and urban planning is taking place all over the world, and in Finland, too.

Design Driven City, a project following the World Design Capital year of Helsinki in 2012, offers some viewpoints on how design thinking and designerly ways of thinking and doing could benefit urban planning and help give strength to citizens’ voices in urban decision-making systems that have so far been perceived quite inflexible and not that citizen-centered. The Design Driven City statements stress the fact that understanding users and human behaviour is the starting point in all design activities. No matter what kind of design activities we are working with, design is always about looking things from the level of the user. On the scale of urban planning, users are for example the citizens and different groups and communities consisting of the citizens. The Design Driven City statements also emphasize the fact that design is always solution-oriented in nature. Instead of asking “why do we have this problem”, design typically concentrates on asking “how might we solve it”. As urbanization is proceeding and as the systems of cities are growing more complex, new kind of holistic, solution-focused way of thinking and working is needed. This is where design thinking might have potential in providing the tools needed. (Design Driven City, 2014).

Service design, too, is definitely one of buzzwords of today. But what is service design? Within the context of public services, the Design Driven City project (2014) statement defines service design simply as being about “shaping better services through design methods”. These methods are always defined and developed case by case, but as the Design Driven City statements present, the methods usually include approaches such as “observation, visualization, creation, prototyping and testing” (ibid). What is most significant about service design is that it always puts the user and the service journey of the user into the center, and looks at all the processes through the eyes of the user. In 2000s, service design has quickly gained popularity not only among businesses but also amongst the public sector. High quality services do not only answer the peoples’ needs better. Service design can also be the key for producing the services with less costs. Service design approaches and tools are perhaps not yet that commonly used among urban planning processes, but they definitely have a lot of potential. After all, cities can also be looked at as a way of producing services to its users – including the citizens.

As mentioned earlier, planning cities is not only about planning the physical world around us. It is also very much about the social aspects of our lives, about planning how we live our lives and how we thrive. When planning cities, having the technical skills to put together a plan is not enough. The ideas of “social design” and “design for human needs” are not of course new. Margolin and Margolin (2002, 25–26) present a social model of design based on practices learned from social workers. Margolin and Margolin refer to a six-step problem-solving
process of social work, including "engagement, assessment, planning, implementation, evaluation, and termination". According to Margolin and Margolin, all of the steps are happening in collaboration with the client system and with other professionals needed in each case. The approach is systemic in nature: most importantly, "social workers assess the transaction that occurs between their client system (a person, family, group, organization, or community) and the domains within the environment with which the client system interacts." The social model of design can be seen to bear potential in terms of urban planning, too, especially in mitigating and improving the transaction described by Margolin and Margolin, happening between citizens and the city.

As presented in chapter four of this work, there are currently a lot of interesting civic initiatives, events and movements being born on the grassroots level of our cities. One of the reasons for me to get inspired to make this thesis was all the buzzing that is happening on the sides of the official urban planning processes conducted by the city. As a person looking at the situation from the point of view of design and systems, I see this buzzing as a great opportunity for the urban planning sector to renew itself and to reconsider its position in relation to the citizens. The question that should be now asked is: will the city continue to see its role as the maker and ruler of urban life or rather as a body enabling the citizens to make their cities and build their lives in it?

5.3. DESIGN AS A WAY OF PRODUCING KNOWLEDGE AND OF MAKING SENSE

The research approach of this work at hand is inspired by constructive design research. Constructive design research refers to "design research in which construction – be it product, system, space, or media – takes center place and becomes the key means in constructing knowledge" (Koskinen, 2011, 5). This method is quite close to those that are in other fields referred to as practice-based research and action research. It is about learning by doing, but most importantly, it is about putting the learnings together in a comprehensible form for others to use in the future.

This thesis started from a single observation: that for some reason, citizens are now starting to produce alternative, civic-led city plans and visions. When beginning with this thesis, I did not know exactly what kind of questions I would be asking nor what kind of answers would emerge. The next chapter of this work is presenting a project which becomes the main venue of researching the questions asked in the earlier chapters of the work. During this project, the phenomenon and the stakeholders of proactive citizen participation are not being studied simply as customers or users, but as active makers and producers of the city. In this process, design and the designer will become actively involved with construction of information through being an active, subjective part of the process. This is one of the things that are typical in the modern design research approaches that derive from the long tradition of user-centered design. The aim of this approach is to produce new and useful, practice-based knowledge to all stakeholders, may they be the planners of the City Planning Office or grassroots groups who are currently planning to do something in order to voice their opinion on the city.

In general, design research can be looked at as a way of producing new and valuable knowledge on practice and best policies. According to Manzini, "design research is an activity that aims to produce knowledge useful to those who design: knowledge that designers and non-designers (individuals, communities, institutions, companies) can use in their processes of designing and co-designing" (Manzini, 2008). In other words, design research aims to produce practical information that helps to create and renew – in other words to design – systems, services or products. Knowledge produced by design research is not aimed only for those practising design as a profession in the traditional sense, but for those who are dealing with any kind of development of processes and systems. In terms of urban planning and participation, I believe that design research activities have the potential to produce knowledge for example on best practices of interaction between city and the citizens.

In the midst of the paradigm shift in design, answers to what design is or what it should be, can also be found from the past. In 1989, Krippendorff proposed that design is about making sense: “The etymology of design goes back to the Latin de + signare and design means making something, distinguishing it by a sign, giving it significance, designating its relation to other things, owners, users, or gods. Based on this original meaning, one could say: design is making sense (of things)” (Krippendorff, 1989, 9-39). In terms of objects, Krippendorff explains, this means that the products “are to be understandable or meaningful to someone”. In the modern world, this view from almost thirty years ago provides a deeply philosophical frame for thinking about the very existence of design. In the world of complex systems and siloed decision-making, this capability of making sense of things and of systems is needed perhaps more than ever. The power of design in this is that design and designers are born to move swiftly between the material world and the socio-economical world, and it is exactly this skill that is needed at the moment.

5.4. DESIGN AND THE FUZZY FRONT-END OF URBAN PLANNING

As perhaps already becomes visible above, to discuss "typical design process" is challenging, as the design processes have been changing radically in the past decade when we have been moving away from the world of material towards the world of systems and services. At times it appears that to talk about design and the design processes is to talk about change. Design itself is changing continuously, and design is very much about dealing with and enabling systemic change (Soini, 2015, 19).
In the field of urban planning, behaviour and aspirations of people are studied rigorously. Urban planners aim to figure out what the residents wish from their surroundings, and to make long term plans based on that as well as on numerous other factors. Perhaps still less popular a view in the context of urban planning is the role of citizens as subjects and active stakeholders rather as objects of study. The Land Use and Planning Act from the year 1999 enforced for example the citizens rights to get information on ongoing plans and to voice opinions on the proposed plans (Land Use and Planning Act, 1999, Chapter 8). Yet, the significance of the early stage collaborative design and envisioning together with citizens is not discussed.

In western cities, the environment is often ready-made up to a point where the citizen might have a sense of uselessness in terms of not being able to affect how the common urban environments develop. In a society where the systems of planning are professionalized and bureaucratic, citizens have to familiarize themselves with the complex processes in order to try to achieve change in the common environments. Urban activism can be seen as one outcome of this complexity and detachment. Frustrated and confused with the slow and incomprehensible processes of urban planning and decision-making connected to it, people are starting to feel the need to act from outside of the bureaucratic systems. How do we react to these needs and actions? Do we see them as threats to the existing systems, or as possibilities? Do we try to suppress them, or do we decide to support and facilitate them, or eventually even incorporate them in the existing systems of decision-making and planning?

To provide answers to the questions asked above, skills and knowledge on collaborative design and facilitation are needed. The idea of designer as a facilitator has been discussed at length in design research during the past years. Designers are trained to move fluently between the world of ideas and concepts and the world of materiality and actions. The tradition of user-centered design is long, and the mind of a user is always in the core of the work, even for the most commercial design work. It is not such a long step from the world of interpreting and understanding what the user needs and wants into the world of helping the users to create their own visions. In my opinion, this is the area with the most future potential in design, and especially in terms of urban planning.

According to Botero, two movements from the past decades precede the current trend of collaborative design (Botero, 2013, 12-13). According to Botero, User Centered Design has helped in gathering and making use of the information gathered in situations where the users are using the product or service. Participatory Design movement, on the other hand, deriving from workplace development, served for the good of legitimating practice as a way of producing valuable knowledge, and emphasized the role of users further in doing that (ibid).
The role of the users (in the context of cities, the role of citizens) is becoming more important and valued. This opening up of design processes that used to belong only to professional planners and designers, can be seen as being one of the mega trends of the 2000s in design, and it is still growing in importance as we are facing wicked problems that cannot be solved by individual designers. The role of the designer can be seen to change slowly from the role of a all-ruling creator towards that of an enabler. According to Vaajakallio, the creativity of designers is no longer put only into creating new products but more towards enabling different stakeholders to take part in design processes (Vaajakallio, 2012, 13). This can be referred to as facilitation. According to Soini (2006), the role of facilitator is to enable collaboration, creativity and innovation.

In practice, this kind of action is taking shape of workshops, online platforms, events and all kinds of collaborative design efforts created separately according to the needs of each design project. Soini (2015) discusses facilitating with collaborative design. Her work concerns resident oriented housing development. According to her findings, the main activities in this facilitation are producing the stakeholders occasions to participate in envisioning, supporting emphatic encounters between residents and the construction professionals, producing material for reflection between users’ everyday-life and society and finally, concretizing the visions with the help of visualizations (Soini, 2015, 195). This framework can help to perceive how design could facilitate similar collaborative ideation on the matters of urban planning.

To help the users – or the citizens – to come up with tools and language needed to create their own visions is eventually about redistribution of power, about empowering people. Von Hippel talks about democratizing innovation (von Hippel, 2005, 2-23). According to him, innovation is currently democratizing because information and the tools of production are now more easily available to people. On the other hand, this is not true for all. Von Hippel identifies lead-users, people who are ahead of the market, and possess greater abilities and interest in using the information and tools than others (ibid). My take on this democratization is that collaborative design and facilitation should be about helping more people to use the information and tools that are already available. The issue is highly typical in the field of urban planning, where the city is increasingly facing situations where the citizens are demanding for more interaction and possibilities to voice their opinions.

5.6. THE POTENTIAL OF DESIGNERLY METHODS AND TOOLS IN THE CONTEXT OF URBAN PLANNING AND CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

In her article on a project handling the relationship between citizen initiatives and invited participation in urban planning, Jenny Stenberg (2012) explains that the most efficient ways of supporting a fruitful dialogue between planners and inhabitants tend to be different three-dimensional models, perspective drawings and photo montages. According to Stenberg, the technical drawings such as floor plans and sections turned out to be pointless, as majority of participants did not understand them (Stenberg, 2012, 3–4). Most of the designers working with facilitation and with collaborative, multidisciplinary teams are presumably familiar with this phenomenon. The language of planning is often highly professionalized. In order to speak that language, particular skills are needed. But the access to those skills is often limited only to professionals of planning.

In terms of urban planning, the phenomenon presented above is interesting and important. Does one need to understand the language of urban planning in order to voice a justified opinion? Based on the literature review and interviews presented so far in this work, my answer to this question is simply “yes”. It is very difficult, or even impossible, to voice opinions on matters that are difficult to understand thoroughly. The language of urban planning and decision-making, especially when it comes down to actual planning documents such as maps and technical drawings, is very professionalized and difficult. This is making the interaction between citizens and the city harder than perhaps is needed.

As making sense and bringing together stakeholders from different worlds and backgrounds is central to design, design has potential to mitigate the problem described above. One of the strengths of design is that design tends to use multiple channels for communication. When discussing design, and especially collaborative design, many of us might start thinking about different interactive tools and methods developed in the field of design. These tools and methods tend to combine and to make use of multiple “languages” simultaneously. Co-design workshops, prototyping, drawing, design probes, mindmaps, stakeholder maps, service journey maps and affinity diagrams are just some of the methods of producing understanding and knowledge in a designerly way. Why do designers work with this kind of methods?

According to Sanders and Stappers, there are fundamental differences between 1.) what people say and think, 2.) what people do and use, and finally, 3.) what people know, feel and dream (Sanders and Stappers, 2012, 66-70). Acknowledging these differences is essential in design, as pictured in Figure 6. Certain type of information can be gathered and knowledge created through traditional methods such as interviews and questionnaires. While this kind of information is valuable to some extent, it only reveals what people say. The middle level is about what people do and use. On this level, the methods of producing information can include for example observing how people act. According to Sanders and Stappers, the deepest level of knowledge is tacit, hidden in nature. It is about what people know, feel and dream. Acknowledging the existence of the deeper layers of knowledge, and developing methods to access them, is central to design. (Sanders and Stappers, 2012, 66-70.)
Testing, prototyping and making play essential role in design, especially in collaborative design. Prototypes are not only made to test how the final product might work, but have other roles in design processes. Sanders and Stappers discuss prototypes as “vehicles for observation, reflection, interpretation, discussion and expression” (Sanders and Stappers, 2014, 6). In collaborative design processes, the acts of making and prototyping often serve the purpose of adding more layers to the discussion. These acts can serve the purposes of connecting and familiarizing the participants with the worlds of ideas and materials, whereas working only by discussing the process is connected mainly to the linear and immaterial world of sentences and words. According to Cross (2011, 12) designers rarely work based solely on internal processes. Cross pictures the importance of external representations such as sketching, drawing and modelling. This way of working is creating a dialogue typical for design, aimed at solving effectively the design problems at hand (Cross, 2011, 12).

5.7. DESIGN ACTIVISM AS A WAY OF CREATING SPACE FOR PROACTIVE CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

Fuad-Luke defines design activism as “design thinking, imagination and practice applied knowingly or unknowingly to create counter-narrative aimed at generating and balancing positive social, institutional, environmental and/or economic change” (Fuad-Luke, 2007, 27). The notion of counter-narrative proposed by Fuad-Luke offers a prolific starting point for discussing and analysing new urban activism and the potential it might possess. As seen in chapter four of this work, urban activists are currently creating the counter-narratives at an increasing speed. In doing so, the activists are positively challenging the existing realities, structures and policies of the city. What is, or could be, the role of design and designers in facilitating the production of these collaborative counter-narratives, and at the same time also narrowing down the gap between citizens and the city, is researched through practice in the next chapter.

To some, the term ‘activism’ might bear negative connotations. Activism is often seen to be about opposing the current realities, about protesting against the existing systems and protocols. As opposed to this, the power of design activism is not in the act of opposing as such but rather as Ann Thorpe (2014) describes it, in “generating positive alternatives to the status quo”. Design activism is simply about introducing design thinking to activism, and vice versa. According to Thorpe (2014), a lot of design activism is about trying to define and understand the problem in an empathetic way rather than about working towards a preconceived, traditional design solution. The collaborative project presented in the next chapter is to be looked at from a similar angle. The problem at hand is approached with an open mind, with no ready or preconceived solutions in mind. Rather, the process itself is expected to produce novel solutions and answers to questions posed in this work.
SITE: INDUSTRIAL AREAS OF HERTTONIEMI AND ROIHUPELTO, HELSINKI

Industrial areas of Herttoniemi and Roihupelto are located next to each other in the Eastern parts of Helsinki. The areas are separated by the regional road 170 leading from Helsinki to Loviisa. In Helsinki, this part of the road is called Itäväylä (Eastern motorway). Itäväylä is a motorway-like main road consisting of four to six lanes that are used both by private and public transportation. Metro line runs on the side of Itäväylä, from the center of Helsinki to Eastern districts of Mellunmäki and Vuosaari. Two metro stations, Herttoniemi and Siilitie, are located right next to the industrial areas.

The size of Herttoniemi industrial area is 0.88 km². According to statistics from the year 2014, the area has approximately 415 residents and 5076 workplaces (Helsinki alueittain 2014, 2015). The businesses consist mainly of car stores, car repair shops and rental storages. Roihupelto industrial area, located on the northern side of Itäväylä, is 0.83 km² in size and according to statistics, has approximately 19 residents and 3243 workplaces (Helsinki alueittain 2014, 2015). Business activity in Roihupelto consists largely of small and medium-sized industrial enterprises. Due to changes in economy and ways of production, the number of empty and underused commercial property on both areas is rather high. Catella Property estimates that the amount of empty office space is 26.2% (100 000 m²) on the Herttoniemi side alone (Hernberg, 2013).

The current master plan prohibits building residential housing on the industrial areas of Herttoniemi and Roihupelto, apart from the southern parts of the Herttoniemi industrial area, where new street plans have been made during the past decade in order to allow residential buildings in addition to commercial space. However, the recent master plan draft Vision 2050 suggests developing the areas strictly for commercial and industrial purposes, thus following the idea of single-use zoning instead of mixed-use development.

WE MUST ALSO

regenerate the physical, social, and cultural quality of places, and the physical, social, and cultural quality of the planet as a whole. All this can be imagined as a great co-creation phenomenon, where different individuals and communities interact in a vast process of social learning and innovation. This process generates, and is itself regenerated by, new design knowledge.”

(Manzini, 2008, 8.)
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Photo on the next page: Industrial areas of Herttoniemi and Roihupelto, located in eastern Helsinki.
6. EXPLORING THE POTENTIAL OF PROACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN PRACTISE

6.1. THE COLLABORATIVE ENVISIONING PROCESS UNFOLDED

This chapter elaborates on a collaborative envisioning process, where a group of citizens creates an alternative urban vision for the industrial areas of Herttoniemi and Reilupelto, located in Eastern Helsinki. As will be explained later in this chapter, the alternative envisioning process was triggered by the plans of the city of Helsinki to develop these areas for industrial uses only, thus following the ideology of single-use zoning. The core idea of the collaborative envisioning project presented in this work is to bring local residents, as well as other citizens interested in the areas, together to explore and develop alternative futures for the areas.

The collaborative envisioning project presented in this chapter can be examined and divided into different stages by comparing it to Fuad-Luke’s model called the “Idealized schematic for the co-design process” (Fuad-Luke, 2013, 149), pictured in figure 7. This model divides the process and actions taken during a collaborative design process into four different phases which are 1.) Initiation and planning – collective catalysing, 2.) Informed participatory design – collective understanding and exploring, 3.) Participatory design with design team – collective designing and deciding and 4.) Doing and learning – collective actioning (Fuad-Luke, 2013, 149).

All of the phases mentioned in the figure 7 can be identified from the collaborative envisioning project presented in this work (pictured in figure 8.). In this chapter, the process of collaborative envisioning is presented with themes and phases loosely based on Fuad-Luke’s schematic. The model provides a viable tool for analysing collaborative urban activist initiatives such as the one described in this work, and can help in finding suitable methods and ways of working in each stage.

Figure 7. Idealized schematic for the co-design process. Fuad-Luke, 2013.
When compared to the previous, theoretical parts of this work, in this part of the work the research approach is more practice-based and through that, largely open-ended. This is to say that the concrete format of the outcome of the envisioning process was largely unknown in the beginning of the work, and this ambiguity remained until quite late in the process. Although the alternative envisioning project at hand was inspired by the alternative plans and visions presented in the chapter four of this work, the starting points of this particular project are quite different from the projects presented earlier. In this project, the primary aim is to raise interest of local residents towards the site and towards urban planning in general, despite of the level of knowledge the residents might possess on urban planning and decision-making processes before the project. Instead of the format or the outcome, the emphasis was on openness and through that, in collaboration and learning. The decision to keep the process as open ended as possible, and thus allowing the participants themselves to shape the project, was a conscious decision made early on in the process. This allowed the researching of the nature of “fuzzy front-end” (e.g. Sanders and Stappers, 2012) in the context of urban planning and citizen participation.

In other words, the collaborative envisioning process was carried out in order to create practice-based knowledge on 1.) how do people participate proactively, 2.) who are the people that are willing to participate and why, 3.) what kind of knowledge, skills and interests relevant to urban planning and envisioning do they possess, 4.) how do the collaborative, proactive envisioning processes formulate, 5.) what kind of potential can be identified in such processes in terms of improving the policies and practises of citizen participation in urban planning, and finally, 6.) what kind of roles and potential could designers and the use of designerly methods and approaches have in developing and facilitating such processes.

6.2. PHASE 1: COLLECTIVE CATALYSING

**GOALS:**
- Identify problems, possibilities and stakeholders.
- Bring stakeholders together to discuss the current situation and future prospects.
- Define preliminary goals for the collaborative project.

**ACTIONS AND METHODS:**
- Discussions with city officials (urban planners and interaction planners), urban activists and political association members on the current master plan draft and how it affects the site.
- Planning and arranging an open-for-all participatory event together with the key actors.
**TIMEFRAME:**
December 2014 – February 2015 (12 weeks)

**STAKEHOLDERS:**
Active members of the Eastern Helsinki Greens—association, local residents and other citizens interested in the site, urban activists, urban planners and interaction planners of the City Planning Department.

### 6.2.1. ORIGINS OF THE PROJECT

The collaborative envisioning project presented here was born from a mixture of my personal involvement with citizens and urban activists interested in urban planning, and of my interest in the case as a designer researching proactive citizen participation. I saw the case as an interesting opportunity to research proactive citizen participation in urban planning, as well as to test new roles for design in projects like the one presented here. The setting, that includes both my personal interest on the case and my interest in the case as a designer and thesis maker, creates a combination both interesting and challenging.

The collaborative envisioning project was fuelled by the discussions I had with some politically active citizens and urban activists, consisting mainly of members of a local political association, the Eastern Helsinki Greens, in the autumn of 2014. The association has approximately 130 members and it is part of the umbrella organization Helsinki Greens. As any local political association, the Eastern Helsinki Greens has many ways of advancing its agenda. The association is communicating actively with the Helsinki city council, city board, different committees and the national parliament on local matters. It is also arranging events around different topical green themes in East Helsinki. (Itä-Helsingin vihreät, 2013b.)

The project presented in this work began as one of the initiatives of the Eastern Helsinki Greens, but it was soon decided among the active participants of the association that the project should become open for all interested parties. The Eastern Helsinki Greens wished that the project would bring together people from different backgrounds, despite of their political orientation. As I had stated a personal motivation towards the topic, and as my willingness to use the project for my research was met with a very positive attitude, I soon took charge of making the project go forward.
Industrial area of Herttoniemi.
Industrial area of Roihupelto.
In the autumn 2014, some of the members of the Eastern Helsinki Greens started to discuss about the state and the future of the industrial areas of Herttoniemi and Roihupelto, located in central parts of Eastern Helsinki. What brought up these areas into discussion among the association’s active members was the Helsinki master plan proposal 2050, and the political discussion proceeding this proposal. The master plan proposal suggests that the industrial areas of Herttoniemi and Roihupelto were going to remain strictly for industrial and business use only, as has been the case so far.

This proposal on the future of the areas made by the city raised worries and questions among some members of the Eastern Helsinki Greens. The common view among the active members seemed to be that these industrial areas are underdeveloped and in their part, hinder the positive development of the whole Eastern Helsinki – area that is often seen as the underdeveloped outskirts of the capital. The previous master plan that prohibits for example building residential and mixed-use buildings and of introducing grocery stores, offices and greenery in order to meet the growing demands of housing development. How was the city going to address these problems in the areas of Herttoniemi and Roihupelto?

The issues presented above are not new in urban political discussion concerning the eastern parts of Helsinki. The areas that have the biggest numbers of immigrants in Helsinki are currently found from districts situated in the Eastern and North-Eastern parts of the city. As is quite often the case, these areas consist largely of small-income households and they also have a greater proportion of rental apartments compared to other areas of the city (Vilkama, 2012). According to research, these areas are avoided by the native Finnish home buyers and tenants (ibid). This type of accumulative development is slowly adding to the social and economical segregation between different areas of the city. In the case presented in this work, the activists saw that the city should address this problem not only on paper, but also in the development plans of the districts.

When the industrial areas of Herttoniemi and Roihupelto were built in the 1960s and 1970s, they were still on the outskirts of the city. Although the city has grown since, these areas are left mostly in their original use. According to Hernberg, it is quite uncommon for a capital such as Helsinki to have so much spatial reserve near the city – reserve referring to harbours, shipyards and industrial areas that are partly in their original use, partly abandoned, partly under construction or planning (Hernberg, 2012b, 28-35). In the master plan scheme of Helsinki, the need to maintain this particular area only for industrial and office use is explained as the only choice, mainly because of the current nature of the use: “There are many enterprises in Helsinki which cannot be located in the middle of residential areas because of the nature of their operations or their logistical needs. Such enterprises include ones that cannot be situated in a mixed urban structure because of accessibility requirements or because their production processes would cause great inconvenience to people.” (City Planning Department, 2015, 14). Questioning these points in a positive way by developing alternative solutions became the main theme of the project.

The few activists from Eastern Helsinki were not alone with the questioning described above. Experienced urban activists Särelä and Tenkanen were amongst urban activists who first brought up the issues of the proposed master plan for the areas of Herttoniemi and Roihupelto in social media. Särelä (2014) proposes developing a new district center in the Herttoniemi industrial area instead of just developing the current functions of the area. According to Särelä, mixed-use development benefits the local businesses, as they will receive customers from the employees in the daytime and from the residents in the evenings and night-time (Särelä, 2014). In his blog post, Tenkanen (2014) discusses the master plan proposal and how the idea of allowing these “grey zones” affects eastern Helsinki, and is accusing the master plan proposal for “freezing the positive development of the eastern parts of the city” (Tenkanen, 2014).

A lot of similar criticism appeared on the discussion group Lisää kaupunkia Helsinkiin. Much of this criticism seemed to bring up the issue of chronic lack of apartments in Helsinki. The fact that is underlining the contradictions of the current master plan scheme on these areas is that while there is a chronic lack of land reserved for housing development, the amount of empty office space in Helsinki keeps on growing. According to statistics, Herttoniemi seems to be one of the least effective areas in Helsinki in terms of the amount of office space that is actually in use: according to Catella Property, the amount of empty and undersused office space in the area is 26.2%, reaching almost 100 000 square meters (Hernberg, 2013).

The current master plan draft proposes developing the areas only for industrial and business purposes (indicated on the map with colour grey). Helsinki yleisharja, 2014.
Encouraged and driven by the issues and contradictions described above, we started to cultivate the idea of preparing a citizen-driven, alternative envisioning process for the industrial areas of Herttoniemi and Roishupelo. The initial ideation to start the project took place at the end of the year 2014, together with some of the active members of the Eastern Helsinki Greens. From the beginning it was clear to us that despite the Eastern Helsinki Greens is a political association, the aim would be to open up the process for everyone interested in ideating for a more livable and sustainable future for the area. The role of the Eastern Helsinki Greens would be mainly to kickstart and initiate the process.

As the core idea was to make the process open for everyone who might be interested in the future of these areas, the first step was to consider how to bring these people together to discuss about the current situation and how to have an affect on it. In order to do this, an open discussion evening was arranged to bring together citizens, urban activists and city officials from the City Planning Department. To our great surprise, the department greeted our invitation to participate in the event with a positive attitude. Two of the planners, one working with the current master plan and the other in charge of the industrial areas of Herttoniemi and Roishupelo, agreed to come and elaborate on the future directions of planning on the areas. In addition to this, one of the interaction planners of the department would participate.

Much effort was put into planning the event as approachable as possible. After considering between different options, it was decided among couple of the activists that the event was going to be held in a pub&bistro right next to the Herttoniemi metro station, which is located next to the industrial area of Herttoniemi. This place was chosen in order to create an informal and relaxed atmosphere, where fruitful dialogue could take place between the citizens, city officials and activists. To advertise the event, a Facebook event was created, and information on the event shared through different local organizations on social media. Posters advertising the event were put up in libraries and grocery stores around the areas of Herttoniemi and Itäkeskus. On the Facebook event page, more than 40 people listed themselves as participants.

Approximately 30 people took part in the event. The evening started out with coffee and doughnuts that were served to us on the house, as the bistro wanted to show their support on the project that aimed to make the nearby areas more lively. The event started with short presentations held by the planners from the City Planning Office, and an urban activist representing the Urban Helsinki collective. While the presentations started, the customers sitting at the back, who just happened to arrive at the bistro at the time of the event, wanted to hear what the event and the maps on the screens were about. A microphone and a sound system was arranged on the run with the help of the friendly bistro owners, and after that the whole bistro, seating more than hundred people, was able to participate into the discussion.

The planners of the department presented the Vision 2050 master plan and the process of putting it into action, from where the presentation moved on to handle the Herttoniemi and Roishupelo areas more specifically. The planners elaborated on the ongoing and future plans for the area, and explained to the audience why it is important to have areas reserved only for industrial purposes within the city. After the presentation, the public was encouraged to ask questions from the planners. The questions presented handled mostly the current state of these areas: many participants were amazed how underused, loosely built, unattractive and forbidding the areas have remained year after year, while at the same time the city is planning to cut down forests and destroy parks nearby to make more space for apartments.

Furthermore, it seemed like a lot of general anxiety experienced towards the city officials was channelled through the discussion. A lot of the questions asked and opinions outed had very little or nothing to do with the development of the industrial areas. Instead, some participants seemed to experience the event as a place to voice their over all negativity towards the decision-making system in urban planning, and how they felt their voices are continuously going unheard in the processes. According to Tulkki and Vehmas (2007, 9), this is typical: a lot of needs for participation that do not actually have to do with current processes of urban planning, are currently channelled into the participatory processes of urban planning.

After the presentation and discussions with the City Planning Office, Niilo Tenkanen from the Urban Helsinki Collective presented the alternative master plan Helsinki 2.0. and the process of making it, and what kind of publicity and response it had received. The ambitious alternative plan produced by the collective proposes an idea of a more urban, condensed and sustainable Helsinki. After the presentation, the audience got to ask questions and discuss freely on the differences of the official plans and the alternative plans. As the issue of condensing the city structure with complimentary building was topical in the Western Herttoniemi district, that issue was brought up in discussions. Some participants saw that building with denser, mixed structure to the industrial areas could save the local greenery from building.

At the end of the event, a contact form was handed out in order to reach people who were willing to participate in developing an alternative vision for the Herttoniemi and Roishupelo industrial areas. Out of approximately 30 people, 10 people were willing to participate into further development and discussion. The contact form also included questions on preferred platform for discussion and keeping in contact. Out of 10 participants who returned the form, 9 were willing to use Facebook as a platform for discussion. The remaining one was willing to use e-mail for getting the information on how we would proceed.
GOALS:
- Establish a community for the purpose of envisioning an alternative future for the site.
- Deepen the participants’ knowledge about the site to inspire visions.
- Develop specific themes and areas to focus on.

ACTIONS AND METHODS:
- Using social media to bring people together and to ideate collaboratively.
- Collecting user’s experiences, opinions and questions with a digital map tool.
- Workshop 1: Analysing the data with P.O.I.N.T.-analysis and creating an affinity diagram.
- Workshop 2: A planning walk.

TIMEFRAME:
- February 2015 – April 2015 (9 weeks)

STAKEHOLDERS:
- Local residents and other citizens interested in the site.

6.3. PHASE 2: COLLECTIVE EXPLORING AND UNDERSTANDING

After the event, a Facebook group was created for further discussion, sharing and cultivating of ideas. To include also the people not active in Facebook, I decided early on to put the emphasis on meeting face to face, meaning for example having the first planning meeting or a workshop as soon as possible. But as the great majority (only one person was not willing or able to use Facebook) saw Facebook as the easiest platform for discussion, this platform was chosen. The discussion that had already started on the Facebook event page, now continued in the Facebook group. The amount of group members soon grew to more than 40 people, topping 45 at the end of the project.

To inspire discussion, I offered some references on mixed-use development of previous industrial sites from around the world. The members of the group commented on those posts, and also raised discussion by posting their own ideas and questions on the group wall. It was clear that the most active members of the group had been following the de-

The collaborative envisioning process was kickstarted with an open event held in a local bar & bistro. The four officials from the City Planning Department presented the latest plan proposals and projects in the area and one of the urban activists from the Urban Helsinki collective presented their alternative visions. The short presentations were followed by a lively discussion.
velopment and urban planning issues in Helsinki with a close eye, even though none of the members were professional planners or designers. While being content for the active members’ participation, I was also slightly worried: is there really enough space for the ones not so active or knowledgeable to comment and bring up their ideas and questions? How should I encourage them to participate, to bring up their own experiences and ideas?

It was challenging to decide on how to take the discussion on to a more prolific level and how to get more members engaged. How to accumulate knowledge on the area, as all kind of data would easily disappear into the Facebook feed? With these questions in mind, I started to ideate on a platform that would allow attaching comments, questions, ideas, concerns as well as photos from the area anonymously straight on to a digital map. The idea of collecting user data through different internet-based, social applications is not new. Kahila and Kyttä (2006) present the softGIS methodology, where residents can produce localised “soft” data – data on how the residents experience for example a certain city or city district. Nowadays the softGIS -approaches are used to some extent in larger urban planning processes in Finland, one recent example being the Vision 2050, master plan project of Helsinki.

As developing a platform for collecting soft data was not the central aim of the project, I was looking for existing solutions and compared free of charge tools such as NearHood, Instagram and Google Maps. Based on the easy to use interface that could be used with different devices, I chose to create the platform with Google Maps. To encourage group members to use the map, I started out by picking some of the comments from the Facebook group wall, and pinned them on to the map. Slowly, other comments started to emerge on the map. The nature of the comments varied from questions to local knowledge on history and use of certain buildings.

6.3.2. ANALYSING THE “HARD” AND “SOFT” DATA AND CREATING THE CENTRAL THEMES

After some weeks of discussions and benchmarking done on the Facebook group and of gathering insights, questions and ideas with the Google Map tool, it was time to gather together to analyse the “hard” as well as the “soft” data we had collectively collected so far. The first workshop was held in March. The aim of this workshop was to bring the people together face to face to bring together different kind of insights based on the current master plan proposal, the alternative master plan proposal Pro Helsinki 2.0, and references of similar areas from all over the world that we had shared and discussed in advance on Facebook. This information was combined with the insights gathered from the discussion threads of our Facebook group and with the Google Maps tool. The idea of the first workshop was to create central themes to base our work on.

Unfortunately, only two of the group members turned up to the workshop, which meant some rearrangements had to be made on how to carry out the workshop. Despite of the small number of participants, the workshop turned out to be fruitful and inspiring. We began by going shortly through what we had learned from different sources in the past weeks. To analyse the hard and soft data we had gathered and to make some kind of stepping points towards the ideation phase, a method called the P.O.I.N.T. analysis was used. In this exercise, each participant takes 30 minutes to write down the problems, opportunities, insights, needs and themes concerning the issue at hand on separate sticky notes. After writing everything down, the notes are pinned on to a wall while each participant describes what they wrote down and why. The aim of this exercise was to encourage participants to ideate freely and to temporarily forget about how they perceive the processes of urban planning, so they would not be restricted in terms of what kind of ideas to propose or what type of questions to ask.

With all of the P.O.I.N.T.s on the wall, we began clustering the notes into separate groups based on similarity. An affinity diagram was formed. In our affinity diagram we had nine different themes that we would then name together with the participants. These themes were 1.) Functions of the area (Toiminnot alueella), 2.) The development of Eastern Helsinki (Itä-Helsingin kehitys), 3.) Traffic (Liikenne), 4.) Experimenting and innovation (Kokeellisuus ja innovatiivisuus), 5.) Land ownership (Maanomistus), 6.) The need for apartments (Asuntojen tarve), 7.) “Sector of bandits” (Rosvosektori), 8.) Tolerance and the pros of mixed-use development (Sekoittumisen edut ja sieto), and 9.) “The green sector” (Vihersektori). All of the themes presented one possible issue to concentrate on in the coming envisioning process. After the workshop, the analysis and the affinity diagram were drawn together, polished and posted to the Facebook-group for the members who could not make it to the workshop, to comment on.

The participants added their questions, comments and ideas on the Google Map.
In the first workshop, the participants used the P.O.I.N.T.-analysis to create an affinity diagram on the district.
After the first workshop it was time to step back a little and re-analyse the approaches taken so far. By now it was clear to me that more first-hand information and experiences on the area were definitely needed – otherwise the ideation process would turn out empty and detached. For this purpose, an open planning walk on the area was planned and arranged. Planning walks are used to some extent in official planning processes to introduce the planners better with the residents and the residents with the coming planning processes on the site. Planning walks are valuable in mapping out the special qualities of the site, for considering the general aims of the planning process and for evaluating the impacts of the coming planning processes (Tulkki and Vehmas, 2007, 73).

Ten participants took part in the walk. With the walk, I wanted not only to introduce the people with the area better and to get into the core of its existence, but also to gather data, questions and ideas for further development. In order to do this, a simple package for gathering this kind of info during the walk was made. The package included a simple A4 map of the area showing the end and starting points of the five kilometre walk, a pen and a set of sticky notes to write the questions, ideas and insights on. After the walk, when closing up the session, each participant would remove their sticky notes and gather them on to a larger map, while explaining what they wrote down and why. In addition to gathering data with writing notes, the participants were encouraged to take photos with their phones and cameras on places they felt interesting during the walk. At the end, all of the data gathered during the walk, including the notes and the photos, would be added to the Google Map created earlier. This would allow us to use all the data later on in planning meetings and in Facebook-discussions.

In the beginning it was difficult to start the conversation amongst the participants, but as the walk proceeded, more discussion emerged. The topics that appeared to raise discussion were the seemingly great amount of empty office and industrial spaces and the quietness of the area in the afternoon. Some participants discussed how the main road Itäväylä is shattering the area in to two separate pieces, making walking and biking between the areas unpleasant. Also a view according to which the area was not planned from the point of view of human scale but from the point of view of cars came up. Similarly to the opening night, not a single person who lives or works in the area showed up, even though the event had been advertised with posters around the area. Although people showed interest in the future of the area and most of the participants interested in the project seemed to live close by, they had visited and experienced the area surprisingly little. One of the participants on the walk described her feelings in the beginning of the walk: “I don’t walk here alone, especially at nights, because it feels unsafe, it is so empty. There is a short cut through the area to a grocery store nearby, but still I am almost always taking the longer route to avoid walking through Roihupelto.” In other words, the people living nearby seemed to have very little
or no contact with the areas before but were still very keen to take part in their development.

At the end of walk we gathered into a pub nearby to discuss the findings. All the participants got to attach their notes on the larger map and to elaborate on their questions, ideas and concerns. A lot of notes appeared on the map and discussion was lively. The comments handled mostly the low density of the area and the extravagant use of land. One of the commentators noted, that having the car stores in a central area with excellent public transportation is not justified any more, as they take a lot of space and provide employment only for a small number of people. Another commentator brought up a more efficient land-use example from Kallio, another district in Helsinki: there the car stores and repair shops are located on the street level, while the apartments are situated above the commercial space.

After the planning walk, the data gathered on the walk was added to the Google Map application. This data included all of the notes the participants had taken during the walk and the photographs from the walk. The Facebook group members now got another chance to comment on the notes, which made it possible also for the ones who could not make it to the walk to have their say. With the help of the Google Map tool, we were starting to now have a picture of the whole area, of its challenges and future possibilities.
6.4. PHASE 3: COLLECTIVE DESIGNING AND DECIDING

**GOALS:**
Create concepts collectively in order to present an alternative future for the site.

**ACTIONS AND METHODS:**
Workshop 3: Collaborative ideation. Formulating solutions based on the themes defined earlier in the process.

**TIMEFRAME:**
May 2015 (3 weeks)

**STAKEHOLDERS:**
Local residents and other citizens interested in the site.

6.4.1. CO-CREATING THE CONCEPTS

After the discussion online using Facebook and the Google Map application, it was time to gather together again to take the project one step further. So far we had researched the area online, looked into the various plan drafts and other material online, looked for references from abroad, discussed both online and in workshops, executed a planning walk on the site, drawn together different themes based on our analysis on the data we had gathered together. Now it was time for us to start turning the themes into concepts we could then market to planners, to local decision-makers and to public. Prior to the workshop, I proposed three main themes to be chosen as the topics of the workshop, all based on our previous work.

The themes proposed were 1.) Innovation, experimentation and temporary uses, 2.) How to support mixed-use development in the area, e.g. how to mix commercial activity and living and 3.) The traffic arrangements of the area in the future.

Out of these, the participants chose to concentrate on theme 1. and 2.

In the workshop, we gathered first around the large map of the area to have snacks and discuss on what had done so far. After the opening discussion, the eight participants divided in to two groups based on which one they saw more interesting. Both groups were equipped with an A1
size paper map and a set of material for visualizing and testing their ideas in 3D. This material included for example play dough, textiles, sticky notes and small pieces of wood. In the beginning of the workshop and also during it, I kept reminding people to not only discuss about what they thought, but to actually build it in one way or another. As many of the participants did not have previous experience in this way of working, a lot of encouragement was needed.

Group 1, whose topic was to develop and concretise our ideas on innovation, experimentation and temporary uses, started their discussion by thinking about the current situation and what we had seen on our planning walk. The group discussed about the various possibilities of introducing the area with totally new kind of land-use. They brought up again the potential of the area for collecting solar power – the area is situated in a large valley and the existing buildings have a lot of flat roofs where the panels could be places safely and efficiently. Part of this energy could go into warming communal greenhouses, which could be created on the rooftops and between the existing buildings. The group used sticky notes and play dough to show how their ideas could be executed.

Group 2 concentrated on the mixed-use development on the area. The group was proposing for example building high-rise buildings to accommodate as much residents as possible in the area, while having the street level floors occupied by all kinds of commercial activity. The group also identified and marked points on the map where the new kind of mixed-use development could start spreading from. The group proposed to condensing the present commercial activities with more efficient land-use, which would in turn create space for building apartments.

At the end of the workshop, we all gathered together, and both of the groups presented their work to others. A lot of discussion emerged and the team appeared to be excited about the project - we had clearly managed to formulate themes that would be very relevant in developing the areas. Discussions were also had on the format of the presentation. How would we present the work and our ideas to the public? At the end it was decided that the most efficient way for us to get our message forward was to put it into a manifesto - a proposal on how the areas should develop in the future. The manifesto would not comment so much on specific issues such as where and how the routes or buildings should be positioned on the area, but would bring up solutions on certain issues that could be then taken into account in the official planning processes. The aim of the manifesto would be to bring up the future of these areas into public discussion, and to show to decision-makers and planners, that viable alternatives for developing the industrial areas exist.

Photos on the next two pages:
In the third workshop, the participants made their ideas concerning the chosen themes tangible with the help of maps, sticky notes and prototyping materials such as modelling clay and wood.
6.5. PHASE 4: COLLECTIVE ACTIONING AND LEARNING

**GOALS:**
Decide how and where to present the concepts.
Learn from feedback.

**ACTIONS AND METHODS:**
Writing the manifesto collaboratively on Google Docs.
Creating visualizations.
Publishing and promoting the manifesto.

**TIMEFRAME:**
June 2015 – July 2015 (6 weeks)

**STAKEHOLDERS:**
Local residents and other citizens interested in the site,
local decision-makers, planners of the City Planning Department.

6.5.1 CREATING THE MANIFESTO

After the workshop, I gathered together all the material the groups had produced during the workshops, and picked up six main themes that emerged from the material. I wrote these together into a draft on Google Docs, and shared the draft on the Facebook group encouraging the members to comment and to modify the draft freely. Comments and additions emerged on the document, but the six themes stayed the same. The six themes of the manifesto are presented shortly in English on the next page. The original manifesto is created in Finnish and can be found from the appendix.
1. MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT AND DENSE BUILDING ARE THE FUTURE – IN HERTTONIEMI AND ROIHUPELTO, TOO.

One of the best qualities of Herttoniemi and Roihupelto today is the excellent public transportation on the area. The metro line is running through the area and in the future the connections will be further improved by the new rail connection Jokeri 2. Considering the location and the quality of public transportation on the area, it can be stated that the areas are currently not dense enough. So far, the city has argued for keeping the areas only for industrial purposes in order to add to the number of workplaces in Helsinki area and to create more opportunities for businesses. But the statistics show that the demand for the type of functions and buildings that currently exist on the site is decreasing. This has resulted in the area being underused and partly abandoned. To change this, we propose developing the area from the point of view of mixed-use. The ground floors of the buildings can be reserved for businesses, as the upper floors are created for residential use. Instead of hindering the business development on the area, mixed-use development creates new possibilities for businesses.

2. THE NEW VOCATIONAL SCHOOL AND THE POSSIBILITIES OF STUDENT APARTMENTS

In the near future, a new campus with 2000 vocational school students will be built in Roihupelto. Student apartments are not included into the current plan proposal. Yet, there is a chronic lack of small, affordable rental apartments in Helsinki. These kind of apartments could be included to the current campus plans by developing mixed-use buildings. This type of mixed functions would serve the purpose of creating a new, flourishing city district to an area that is at the moment abandoned and underused. Residential building would also create novel opportunities for different types of businesses on the area.

3. THE DISTRICT OF EXPERIMENTAL BUILDING AND INNOVATION

At the moment, the industrial areas of Herttoniemi and Roihupelto lack identity and character. The previous functions are slowly disappearing from the area and plots and buildings are left empty or underused. The area lacks historical layers and attractions, which adds to the slow degradation of the area. On the other hand, this can be seen as a great possibility for the area. New functions and new kind of urban forms of life could be created, tested and prototyped more freely on the area. The site would be suitable for high-rise building and experimental designs combining business and residential uses. The site would be suitable for example testing and creating urban solar power plants. Currently the site has a great amount of buildings with flat roofs, which will enable testing the future prospects of green roofs and rooftop gardening on urban areas. This kind of pioneering activities and prototyping could produce valuable, practise-based knowledge on future development of cities.

4. ROIHUPELTO – THE EASTERN HUB OF URBAN CULTURE

Due to changes in nature of businesses in the capital area, a lot of the old office and industrial buildings are left unused especially on the Roihupelto side. During the past few years, artists and artisans have found the possibilities of the abandoned spaces on the area, and have occupied some of the empty buildings and set up their workspaces there. The presence of artist and artisans does not at the moment show outside of those buildings, and the potential of making the area more attractive for example through art is largely left unused. Furthermore, there is still a lot of unused, industrial space left empty. We are proposing developing alternative, new uses for these spaces: they could be occupied for example by bands, skateboarders, urban gardeners and street artists. Eastern Helsinki lacks this kind of space for urban cultures, and because of the excellent transportation and the nature of the existing buildings on the area, these kind of functions would fit into area perfectly.

5. THE DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT OF TEMPORARY USES CREATES THE NEW CITY

In Helsinki, the Kalasatama area is an excellent example on how different temporary uses can build identity and increase interest towards new city districts. The processes of land-use planning are slow, and in some cases it takes years for the building processes to commence. Some plots can be left unused for years while the processes of planning are taking place. We are proposing different types of temporary uses for the empty and underused plots on the industrial areas of Herttoniemi and Roihupelto. The temporary uses can take shape of container buildings, pop-ups and urban gardening. Urban gardening is gaining popularity in Helsinki, and gardening plots are a commodity which some citizens are queueing for years. The areas of Herttoniemi and Roihupelto has excellent public transportation connections and a lot of unused space suitable for temporary gardens. While introducing the area to new users, temporary gardening could also landscape the currently empty and degraded plots on the area.

6. CREATING A NEW, INTERESTING CITY DISTRICT

According to the latest master plan draft of Helsinki, the motorways leading to the centre will be gradually turned into boulevards to create more space for residential buildings and businesses. The boulevardization of Itäväylä, which is passing through the areas of Herttoniemi and Roihupelto, will eventually change the atmosphere of the areas radically. At the moment, these areas lack character and are visited by the citizens only if necessary. The areas are planned and built mainly from the point of view of private cars, which has resulted as an unpleasant environment for the pedestrians and cyclists. Bringing these user groups into the center of planning in the future is a central step in creating a more lively and attractive area – both citizen and business wise. We hope that in the future the area will not be just a place for quick pit stop at a car repair store, but a place for living, creating new businesses and thriving.
It was decided among the participants that the themes would be accompanied with illustrative visualizations where needed. At this point it seemed that my task as a designer and facilitator of the project would be mainly to transcribe the text into a short and effective manifesto text, and to make the visualizations and the layout of the manifesto.

However, it turned out that two of the participants were willing and able to participate into making the visualizations. One of the participants had skills in 3D-modelling, and he was willing to devote his time in to making models of the student campus and the idea of a mixed-use building. Another participant was a skilled cartoon artist, and she wanted to participate by drawing human figures to make the visualizations more lively and attractive.
6.5.2. THE RECEPTION, FEEDBACK AND FUTURE PROSPECTS OF THE MANIFESTO

The 16 page manifesto was published online on 22nd of June 2015. The participants were sharing the manifesto online through their own channels, and it was also published as a post on different Facebook-groups that handle urban planning and urban activism. The manifesto was sent to the planners of the City Planning Department who are in charge of planning the Herttoniemi and Roihupelto areas. In addition to this, the manifesto was sent to local media.

The moment for publication was not the best possible, as the summer holidays for both the officials and local decision-makers were approaching. But within the first week, the manifesto had been downloaded 360 times. After publishing the project on the wall of Lisää kaupunkia Helsinkiin – group, we received an invitation from one of the active group members to come and present the project in one of their meetings. The Finnish Environment Institute asked us to compose a post on the institute’s blog to elaborate on the process and outcomes of the project, as this type of collaborative envisioning on urban areas is not yet common, but is seen to gain popularity.

As many urban activists were asking whether an open event to present the work would be arranged later, arrangements for making such event after the holiday season were commenced. In all, many of the participants showed their interest in continuing the work in one form or another. During the process we also learned that the Urban Helsinki collective is preparing to put together an alternative plan concerning the future of the industrial areas. After the collaborative project, some of the participants of our project joined their forces with Urban Helsinki collective in order to share experiences and learnings.
WE CLAIM

that the transformation of urban space is not the result of urban planning processes as such, but rather is the complex outcome of contingent fluctuations of external and internal pressures in the city, including the self-organisations of different groups and networks. Therefore, it is necessary to encourage the involvement of local actors – citizens, politicians, administrators, entrepreneurs and their networks – in the co-production of viable solutions for everyday life.”

(Horelli and Wallin, 2013, 13.)
7. CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE PERSPECTIVES

7.1. DRAWING TOGETHER THE LEARNINGS AND EXPERIENCES

In this work I have used both theoretical and practise-based approaches in order to search answers mainly to the following question:

What kind of potential does the use of design thinking and designerly approaches have in facilitating proactive citizen participation in urban planning, and in that way bringing decision-makers and the citizens closer to each other within the complex, institutionalized processes of planning?

The research question will be handled in this chapter from four different aspects. First, the participants views and experiences of the collaborative envisioning process presented in this work are analysed. Second part analyses the potential and significance of proactive participation, such as alternative plans and visions, in urban planning and citizen participation. Third part elaborates on the future roles of design and of designers in supporting and facilitating proactive citizen participation in urban planning. In the final part, the changing role of the city in terms of citizen participation in urban planning is analysed.

7.2. PARTICIPANTS' PERSPECTIVE ON THE PROCESS OF COLLABORATIVE ENVISIONING

During the collaborative project presented in the previous chapter, several discussions were had both online and face to face with the participants on how they experienced the process and what they thought about the final result of the process. In addition to these informal discussions, a small anonymous online survey was carried out concerning the experiences of the participants on the project. 12 of the participants took this survey, answering multiple choice questions as well as elaborating on their experiences freely with their own words.

The answers of the survey show that the respondents felt that their level of knowledge on urban planning had grown during the project. Seven of the respondents felt that the project raised their interest towards urban planning in general, while the rest reported being highly interested in urban planning already before the project. Ten respondents reported being interested in taking part into such ideation in the future, while two were unsure whether they would participate. One of the participants described that it was interesting to make an alternative plan with people coming outside of the so called "urban planning nerd scene". As described earlier in chapter four, the activism around urban planning in Helsinki is for the time being happening based on a rather small group of devoted people. One of the aims of the project presented in this work was to open up the possibilities of participation outside of those circles.

Over all, the participants reported being satisfied and content with the way their opinions were heard during the process. The experience of participating was described as inspiring and creative. According to one respondent, it was difficult to make time to participate in the workshops, but at the same time he felt that participating online was not enough. Yet, in the survey as well as in the informal discussions, many of the participants expressed their satisfaction for having multiple channels for participation, both online and offline.

In the survey, the participants were also asked to choose the methods they felt contributed to their learning on urban planning and on the area the most. Of all the methods used during the project, the planning walk was chosen as the most efficient in terms of increasing understanding (8 respondents). Almost as popular was studying the maps together with other participants (7 respondents). Also having discussions face to face with the participants was listed high (6 participants). For example the Google Map tool did not gain that much popularity among the users, nor did the use of three dimensional material in prototyping and presenting the ideas. The answers are quite interesting. Unlike expected, the participants seemed to feel that the informal discussions around the maps and plans were supporting their learning better than for example the processes of making models and using the interactive map. This finding would offer an interesting starting point for further research.

Some questions were also posed in the survey in order to find out whether the participants had been in contact with the officials on urban planning matters. According to the survey, seven of the respondents had submitted their opinions or complaints in different planning matters to the City Planning Department. Ten of the respondents had taken part in hearings or other type of participatory events arranged by the department. The views of the respondents towards these events varied. The respondents towards these events seemed to feel that the informal discussions around the maps and plans were supporting their learning better than for example the processes of making models and using the interactive map. This finding would offer an interesting starting point for further research.

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One the most interesting aspects of the project was the different skills the individuals brought into the group, and how those skills define both the execution and the outcomes of the project. This is something that cannot be controlled or designed beforehand, and it is mostly this feature that makes these type of projects special and worth of studying. In the future, more attention should be paid into the existing skills of the participants and in figuring out how those skills could be put into use in the project. In the project presented in this work, the participants’ ages, backgrounds and experiences varied largely. For a facilitator, this poses a challenge: how to include everyone into the process and how to help every participant live up to their potential. Yet this variety is something that made the project bloom. During the
project, a lot of useful and relevant skills emerged among the participants. One of the participants was a skilled cartoonist, one a construction planner, one had direct contacts with local decision-makers. All of these skills, among many others, were put into use in the project.

Based on the survey and the informal discussions we had during the project with the participants, it can be concluded that the subject of alternative plans and of proactive citizen participation in general is worth of further research. It appears that from the point of view of participants, the potential of generating alternative plans and visions is not only in producing the actual alternative for current plans, but also in collaborative learning on urban planning matters. As stated in this work before, Finnish urban planning is complex and professionalized, making it challenging for the citizens to voice their opinions. Small scale collaborative projects such as presented in this work have the potential to increase the level of knowledge of the citizens concerning urban planning and decision-making processes.

7.3. ON THE POTENTIAL OF URBAN ACTIVISM AND ALTERNATIVE VISIONS AS FORMS OF PROACTIVE PARTICIPATION

In this work, alternative urban visions and plans are researched as forms of proactive citizen participation in urban planning. The literature review, interviews and the practice-based, constructive design research project conducted in this work support the presumption, that alternative plans and visions have qualities and potential very different from what the official urban planning processes at the moment possess. When discussing the future direction of citizen participation in urban planning, the potential of alternative plans and visions produced by the citizens should be taken into account. The three main conclusions made on the potential of alternative plans and visions during this work are presented next.

1. Alternative plans and visions have the potential to revitalize and spark up the public discussion on urban planning in a way that differs radically from the official planning processes.

The interaction between citizens and the city concerning the matters of urban planning can be viewed as a discussion that is continuously developing. This is to say that this interaction is “never ready” or “well enough”, but instead keeps on evolving according to ideologies, political climate and trends. The very nature of discussion is that at least two different voices are audible, and have potential in terms of affecting the direction of the discussion. It can be debated, whether this is always the case in urban planning. As pictured in chapter three of this work, Finnish urban planning processes are still highly complex, multi-layered, sectoral and professionalized in nature (e.g. Saad-Sulonen 2014, Bäcklund & al. 2002, Staffans and Väyrynen 2006). This makes it rather hard for the citizens to participate into that discussion. Alternative plans and visions have the potential to change this situation in their part. I am claiming that the key in this change is how the citizen-led grassroots visions are received and handled by the city. Will the officials see them as just another form of feedback that means more work for the planners? Or will the enthusiasm of the activists and the potential of these plans be harnessed to produce better and more inclusive urban environments? In addition to having the potential to change how the city sees citizen participation within matters of urban planning, alternative plans have already proven to possess the capability of raising citizen interest and of producing citizen discussion on urban planning. The fact that the citizens see these alternative plans approachable and interesting should not be overlooked by the officials.

2. Alternative plans and visions have the potential to raise and highlight issues in urban planning in a way that differs significantly from the urban plans produced by the City Planning Department.

Alternative plans are not connected with the official urban planning procedures. Alternative plans do not always have to stick with the existing solutions. From this it follows that they do not need to be about retrofitting, but have the potential to challenge the ways planning processes are carried out at the moment. Unlike official plans, alternative plans are free of the constraints that follow the existence of current norms concerning planning and building of the cities.

The kind of freedom described above gives alternative plans the potential to challenge the norms that at the moment regulate planning and building in Finland. For example the Urban Helsinki 2.0 plan challenged bravely the norms that currently guide urban planning in Helsinki. These include for example norms concerning street planning, the levels of noise and the amount of parking places (Urban Helsinki, 2014). Freedom from these norms allowed the collective to visualize a truly alternative future, a future that is not only about improving the existing solutions with mediocre results, but about re-planning the way we plan our cities.

In addition to this, alternative plans and visions are free from the political guidance that regulates the official planning procedures. Expressed with parliamentary terms, alternative plans and visions can be described as being the voice of the opposition. This opposition is creating alternative narratives and in doing so, questions the current political forces of urban planning in a healthy way.

3. Alternative plans and visions have potential in educating citizens in matters of urban planning, and in empowering the citizens concerning the development of their own neighbourhoods.

As the old saying suggests, knowledge is power. The collaborative, alternative planning project pictured in this thesis can be described as a collective learning experience. The process served the purpose of learning about urban planning by doing. Based on the previous findings, I am
claiming that the process of creating the alternative plan acted as a tool for empowering the participants, considering how they see their roles in developing their own living environments.

While getting acquainted with the area where the planning process took place, the participants started to see the area in a new light. During the planning walk, people living in the neighbouring districts started to pay attention to how the fact that the area is partly abandoned and underused affects their daily lives. Instead of using the shortcuts leading through the area, they had for years rather chosen the longer route to avoid going through the area, as it was experienced scary and unpleasant. The process of collaborative planning was filled with observations like the one previously described.

People participating in the process had varying levels of knowledge on urban planning and municipal decision-making concerning it. As the planning process advanced, different questions and dilemmas concerning urban planning and decision-making kept on emerging. During the process, the participants acquainted themselves collectively on those matters. As a facilitator of the process, I tried to look for the best sources of information to support the participants to find answers and solutions in different situations. During the process, the participants were faced with questions such as what is the meaning and significance of the master plan and where to get information on the current planning processes of the city. When deciding on where, how and to whom to present the alternative vision to, the participants got to identify the gatekeepers of decision-making on urban planning.

7.4. ON THE POSSIBLE ROLES OF DESIGN AND OF DESIGNERS IN FACILITATING PROACTIVE CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN URBAN PLANNING

The collaborative project presented in this work illustrates the fact that the role of design and of design thinking in matters of urban planning are something that are currently being researched and experimented on. The field is not yet established. For a designer as myself, with no professional background in the field of urban planning as it is currently perceived, to facilitate a project that is mainly about urban planning felt challenging especially in the beginning of the process. In addition to the interviews and meetings with urban planning professionals, I had some discussions off the record with people from the field of urban planning. Whenever my background came up in discussions with the professional urban planning professionals, I had some discussions off the record with people from the field of urban planning beginning of the process. 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there any possibilities to turn this empty building into something more useful and interesting”.

As Buchanan (1992) describes, design has no special subject matter. I believe that the heterogeneity of the ideas produced in the collaborative project of this work became possible because the participants were not restricted in terms of responsibilities of different city departments or professional fields. As a designer I would like to be part of creating systems of decision-making and planning that function effectively - regardless of the level of knowledge of the citizens concerning the responsibilities of different city departments. The potential of design in removing the silos that now exist between different decision-making bodies of the city is worth of further research. This potential has been pronounced time after time, but now it is time to make that potential reality. Perhaps the only way to make the change happen is through different experiments and practise-based learning. Experimenting with open mind is needed. As Botero suggests, we should perhaps strive away from the role-based accounts on collaborative projects which tend to suggest normative roles for designers, and instead figure out what the new roles are in practise (Botero, 2013, 14).

Considering the setting, and especially my personal role in kickstarting the collaborative project, some of my concerns have had to do with objectivity and professionalism. How to be personally involved as well as professional in terms of design, both at the same time? Towards the end of the project I started to realize that this an oxymoron of a kind - unlike for example natural sciences, design is rarely objective in nature. This comes clear in various conclusions of design researchers. Cross (2011) talks about the significance of intuition in design thinking. In a way, designer is never objective in her work, although it sometimes might seem like it, or is made to seem like it. As Fry describes, “design gives material form and directionality to the ideological embodiment of particular politics” (Fry, 2011, 6). This is to say that there are always some kind of ideologies and values behind design actions, and the case at hand makes no exception to this. Instead of ignoring the existence of ideologies and values, they should be expressed clearly to all stakeholders. Only putting those ideologies and values out in the open makes it possible for the other stakeholders to questions them.

The collaborative project presented in this work differed immensely from all of the projects I have done so far as a designer. Among the the major differences were the lack of customer and the lack of commission. This affected the process and my role as a designer greatly. As a designer and facilitator, I felt that instead of the usual scenario of having responsibility towards a customer, I had the sense of responsibility to a large group of participants in the project. These participants devoted themselves to the project in order to change things they saw important. The lack of the typical designer-customer -relationship also made the process markedly more unpredictable. The project developed based on action, discussion and collective creation. For me as designer this meant tolerating a great deal of uncertainty – in the beginning I did not know how committed the participants would be nor what the actual result of this process was going to be like. Tolerating this uncertainty turned out to be an eye-opening learning experience.

To conclude, I support the view of Fry of design as a redirective practise, practise that is “futuring” - creating new, systemic solutions that branch out from traditional disciplines (Fry, 2009, 55-56). This is valuable, because wicked problems reach out through different disciplines, which means they cannot usually be solved with the tools and methods emerging from a single discipline. Citizen participation in a society where planning is based on complex, hierarchical and bureaucratic decision-making systems is an issue that requires multidisciplinary approach. Based on the research conducted in this work, I would suggest that the skills of designers familiar with multidisciplinary teamwork, collaborative envisioning and facilitation will come in useful.

7.5. ON THE CHANGING ROLE OF THE CITY – FROM CREATING NORMS TO ENABLING PARTICIPATION AND ACTION

Urban activist and planning geographer Timo Hämäläinen describes urban activism as the “fourth sector”, a sector that is still largely new to governmental organizations and the city (Hämäläinen, 2015). According to Hämäläinen, deepening the relationship between government and urban activist initiatives might be one of the keys to solve the issue we are now facing in urban planning in the context of Finland. Based on the research and experimentation carried out in this thesis, I agree with this idea. Urban activism and different type of proactive initiatives will not solve all the urban issues, but they certainly have potential in many aspects, as described earlier in this work.

But in order to this potential to materialize, the city needs to reconsider and redesign its role in relation to citizens. As pictured in chapters three and four of this thesis, the relationship between city and the citizens evolves continuously. The aim of this work has been to research the current state and the future directions of that relationship concerning urban planning and decision-making. During this work, ideas on issues that could be further researched and developed especially from the part of the city emerged. These issues are mainly connected to the possibilities of enabling and supporting citizen participation in early stages of urban planning processes, and on how to support and cultivate proactive participation instead of reactive participation.

One of the issues that kept coming up during this work was the siloed, sectoral nature of decision-making concerning the development of urban environments. In Helsinki alone, there are more than 30 public bureaus and institutions. Out of these, approximately ten bureaus can be seen to be connected with the issues of built environment, in one way or another. Based on the collaborative design project carried out in this work, it appears that citizens do not always see the difference between institutions such as The City...
Planning Department, Public Works Department and Real Estate Department. The bureaus are collaborating actively, but this is not visible to citizens. Based on the findings of this work, it might be worth of looking into possibilities of having an interaction specialist working between the bureaus, especially from the point of view of citizen participation.

Another observation made during the process of this thesis is that at the moment, the city does not do much to encourage activism and proactive participation concerning urban planning. One simple example of this concerns the availability of maps. To obtain for example the large paper maps that would be to scale, turned out to be difficult and expensive. The city of Helsinki has a very high quality online map service providing information on coming and ongoing urban plans. But the paper maps are still needed. During the collaborative design process presented in this work, the A1-sized paper maps turned out to be irreplaceable time after time: the participants felt that working with the paper maps helped to understand the area and its specialities better than the electrical maps did. One possibility for the city could be to build online presence concerning urban activism: to build and offer “activism packages” including possibilities of ordering free maps that are to scale, and other topical information on urban planning projects on certain areas of the city. This kind of online action would have the potential to support citizens’ understanding on urban planning and perhaps also in encouraging Yes in My Backyard-type of participation.

Another option to look into could be to establish regular, communal meetings with the City Planning Department and urban activists. The City Planning Department is organizing interaction and events concerning different planning projects, but the nature of the activist platform could be more future oriented. These events could take place regularly and offer a platform for free discussion and interaction between active citizens and the city in urban planning matters. In these events, the planners of the city could also suggest particular destinations for alternative plans.

In Helsinki, the interest of citizens in the matters of urban planning is seemingly growing. This interest shows in the growing number of discussion forums on the topic, as well as on the growing urban activism movements. Yet, the complicated systems of planning and decision-making seem to effectively prevent them from taking actively part in public discussion on urban planning, not to mention taking part in the actual planning processes. Based on this study, I am claiming that in the context of Finland, and of Helsinki, the citizens are still largely lacking knowledge and understanding on issues and processes of urban planning. Much has been done to include different stakeholders, including citizens, to decision-making and planning of urban areas. But have we done enough?

At times it appears as if both the decision-makers and the city officials have given up on trying to familiarize the citizens with the systems and policies of urban planning – as if they were something that are impossible for the citizens to understand.

With a nation that is quickly urbanizing, this should not be the case. In order to include the citizens more with the planning of their common environments, citizens need to understand the systems of planning better. Understanding how planning and decision-making concerning our common environments function, and to have possibilities to have a say on those processes, should be basic citizen rights. Multidisciplinary approaches, such as ones presented in this work, may in their part provide help in promoting and actualizing these rights.
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**ONLINE**


PRESENTATIONS


Photographs and illustrations by the author unless otherwise mentioned.
APPENDIX 1.

The Manifesto / alternative vision for the industrial areas of Herttoniemi and Roihupelto
HERTTONIEMEN YRITYSALUE JA ROIHUPELON TEOLLISUUSALUE - ELÄ VÄÄ KAUPUNKIA VÄLJOUT OMAA TA?

Helsingin kaupunkisuunnitteluviraston laatiman tuoreen yleiskaavaluonnoksen (Visio 2050) mukaan Herttoniemen yritysaluetta sekä Roihupellon teollisuusaluetta olisiin säilyttämässä pääpiirteittäin elävästä, tiivisestä ja toiminnoiltaan sekoittuneesta kaupungistosta. Visio 2050 nimittää päämäärän, että kaupunki on kehitettävä tarpeettomasti ja etenkin laatualueillakin, jotta kaupunkialueita ei saa jätä eri olosuhteissa tai kehitysasteissa.

Kun Herttoniemen yritysalue ja Roihupellon teollisuusalue aikoinaan rakennettiin, ovat alueet sijainneet kaupungin laitamilla ja palvelleet käytössään kaupunkilaisia hyvin. Vuosikymmenien aikana kaupunki on kasvanut ja alueet ovat kasvanut ympäristönsä ja ympäristöihinsä. Alueet ovat muuttuneet ja tämä on vaikuttanut niiden käyttötarkoituksiin. Tässä yhteydessä on kysyntää, mitä tulevat alueiden tulevat käyttötarkoitetut olisivat ja miten ne yhdistävät kaupungin elämän ja viestintä.


Alueiden tulevat käyttötarkoitetut olivat keskustelussa ja ideoimisessä myös yhteistyössä alueen elävästä ja tiivisestä tulevasta käyttötilanteesta. Keskinäiset alueet olivat keskustelussa ja ideoimisessä myös yhteistyössä alueen elävästä ja tiivisestä tulevasta käyttötilanteesta.
1. TOIMINTOJEN SEKOITTUMINEN JA TIIVI KAU PUNKI OVAT TULEVAISUUTTA
- MYÖS HERTTONIEMESSÄ JA ROIHUPELLOSSA


2. UUSI AMMATTIOPPILAITOS SEKÄ OPISKELIJA-ASUMISEN MAHDOLLISUUDET


Opiskelijakampuksen sijoittuminen alueelle olisi tervetullut pirstysruske, joka voisi pikkukiltaa muuntaa koko alueen luonn-netta elävampaan ja avoinneampaan suuntaan.
Arvokasta rakennusmatka säästyy kun hallitavaltaan yhden mättävän on pihain ymparille. Hallien katot hyötyy käyttöön esim. aurinkopaneeleille tai kaupunkiviljelylaitoksille.

Opistorakennus arvoisensa näköinen. Tehokkuutta saadaan rakentamalla rohkasti ylöspäin.

Katujen varsilla on asuntoja. Tässä ehdotuksessa on yli tuhannelle opiskelijalle. Katutasossa on kivijalkaliikkeitä jotka palvelevat opiston lisäksi alueen nykyisissä toimijoissa.

3. KOKEELISEN RAKENTAMISEN JA INNOVAATIOIDEN KAUPUNGINOSA?

Herttoniemen yritysalue sekä Roshupelo ovat alueita, joissa historiallisesti merkittävien rakennusten ja suojeltavan luonnnon määrä on lähess olennaton. Alueet ovat nykyisellään melko piirteettömiä, henkilöautoliikenteen kannustavia lapikuulu-alueita, joihin pysähdytään korkein takaa asioimaan ja poistetaan mahdollisimman nopeasti. Tämän nykytilanteen pitäisi mielestäni mahdollistaa sen, että alueen käyttötarkoitusta voitaisiin miettiä uudelleen puoltaa pöydältä - nykyistä käyttötarkoituksa uorohtamatta.


4. ROIHUPELLOSTA KAUPUNKIKULTTUURIN ITÄINEN KESKITTYMÄ


Samalla kun alueella säilyy myös nykysenkaltaista yrittämiästä, voisi Roihupellon keskiosaa kehittää Itä-Helsingin omana kaupunkilaislahteenä, joka elävittäisi kolon aluetta. Roihupellon tyttöjen toimintatason ovat houkuttelevat paikalla elävän taitelijayhteisön; alueella on jo nyt yli 70 taitelijan tytötilat. Taitelijoiden lasinolo alueella oksi hyvä saada näkyväksi myös rakennusten ulkopuolelle esimerkiksi erilaisten tilojen ja ympäristöaloitteoisten kuten vaikkapa seinä- ja katumaalauksien muodossa. Alueen yrittäjiä voisi kannustaa tarjoamaan työhöihin, ja niitä muohunkin kuitenkin perinteiseen yritystoimintaan.

5. VÄLIAIKASTEN KÄYTTÖMUOTOJEN KEHITTÄMINEN JA TUKEMINEN LUOTO UUTTA KAUPUNKIA


6. LÄPIKULKUALUEISTA UUDEksi, KINNOSTAVAKSI KAUNEGNOSSAKSI

Kuva: Johanna Laukkanen ja Heta Happonen

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LÄHTEET

Helsingin kaupunkisuunnitteluvirasto, 23.4.2015. Piirtoilun ja uran ajoon suunnitelman suunnittelu ja tehtävät.
Havainnekuva: www.yleiskaava.fi

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Suuremmat havainnekuvat saatavilla suorakulma-yhteyshenkilöstä.

Harttaniemen jyrkkäalue ja Rohukylän teknillinen keskus ry vm Facebookissa:
https://www.facebook.com/groups/578729922388759/
Kysely Herttoniemen yritysalueen ja Roihupellan tulevaisuuden ideointiin osallistuneille

Tämä kysely on suunnattu kaikille jotka ovat keväällä 2015 osallistuneet Herttoniemen yritysalueen ja Roihupellan teollisuusalueen vaihtoehtoisen tulevaisuuden visiointiin avoimessa yleisölaisuudessa, työpajoissa, kaavakävelyllä tai Facebook-ryhmässä. Vastauksia hyödynnetään Aalto-yliopiston Creative Sustainability -maisteriohjelmaan valmistuvassa opinnäytteessä.

Syntymävuotesi:

Sukupuoli:

- Nainen
- Mies
- En halua vastata

Missa osallistuit ideointiin?

- Avoimessa keskusteluilaisuudessa Treffipubissa
- Facebookin ideointiryhmässä kevään 2015 aikana
- Työpajoissa
- Kaavakävelyllä

Muu:

Misä osallistit ideointiin?

Voit valita useamman vaihtoehdon.

- Avoimessa keskusteluilaisuudessa
- Facebookin ideointiryhmässä
- Työpajoissa
- Kaavakävelyllä

Muu:

Mitkä ideoinnissa käytetyistä menetelmissä mielestäsi lisäsivät eniten ymmärrystäsi koskien kaupunkisuunnittelua ja suunniteltavaa aluetta?

Voit valita useamman vaihtoehdon.

- Kaavakävely
- Karttojen tutkiminen
- Keskustelut Facebook-ryhmässä
- Ideoiden liittäminen kartalle tarraalappujen avulla
- Keskustelut kasvokkain ryhmällä saamatta

Yhdessä laaditun alueen Google Maps -karttanen tutustuminen

- Ideoiden esittäminen kolmiulotteisesti erilaisten työpajamateriaalien avulla

Muu:

Miten ideointiprojektin osallistuminen on vaikuttanut suhtautumiseesi kaupunkisuunnittelun sekä siihen liittyvään päätöksentekoon?

- Ei mitenkään, kaupunkisuunnittelun on kiinnostanut minua paljon ennen tätä projektia.
- Ei mitenkään, kaupunkisuunnittelun on kiinnostaa minua yhä melko vähän.
- Ideointiin osallistuminen on saanut minun kiinnostumaan kaupunkisuunnittelusta enemmän kuin ennen.
- Ideointiin osallistumisen vuoksi olen vähemmän kiinnostunut kaupunkisuunnittelusta ennen.

Muu:

Kuinka kuvailisit tietotasoni koskien kaupunkisuunnittelua ja kaavoitusta ennen tätä ideointiprojektia?

Tietotasoni oli heikko.

-1
-2
-3
-4
-5

Tietotasoni on hyvin korkea.

Kuinka kuvailisit tietotasoni koskien kaupunkisuunnittelua ja kaavoitusta tämän ideointiprojektin jälkeen?

Tietotasoni on heikko.

-1
-2
-3
-4
-5

Tietotasoni on hyvin korkea.

Oletko tämän ideointiprojektin jälkeen halukas osallistumaan vastaavaan tulevaisuudessakin?

- Kyllä olen
- En ole

Muu:


Miten koit ideointiprojektiin osallistumisen? Kerro vapaasti omin sanoin.

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Oletko koskaan lähettänyt mielipidettäsi tai tehnyt muistutusta tai valitusta kaupunkisuunnitteluviraston kohdalla koskien kaavustoa, esimerkiksi alueesi asemakaavaa, osayleiskaavaa tai yleiskaavaa?

☐ Kyllä olen
☐ En ole

Kuvaile halutessasi kaavoittajalle toimittamaasi mielipidettä, muistutusta tai valitusta.

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Oletko osallistunut kaavoittajan (kaupunkisuunnitteluviraston) järjestämän, kotikaupunkisi tai asuinalueettasi koskeviin kuulemis- tai ideointitilaisuuksiin?

☐ Kyllä olen
☐ En ole

Miten koit kaavoittajan järjestämän kuulemis- tai ideointitilaisuuteen osallistumisen? Kerro vapaasti omin sanoin.

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Kirjoita vapaamuotoisesti palautetta ja kehitysehdotuksia!

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