

# Co-creating knowledge with citizens in urban infill areas

## Examples from Tampere

30.03.2023 // Helena Leino, associate professor in environmental policy,  
Tampere university



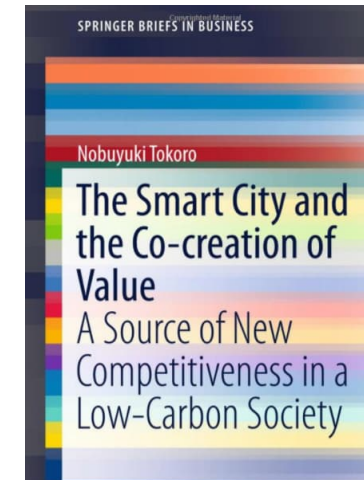
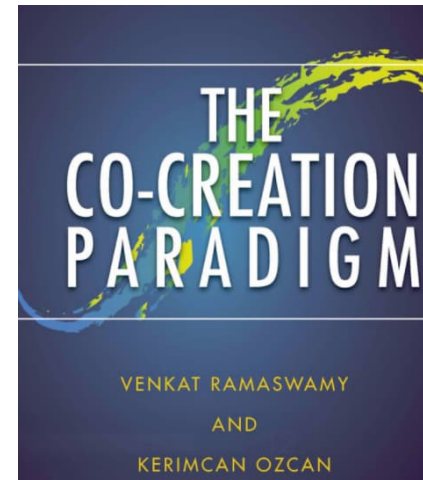
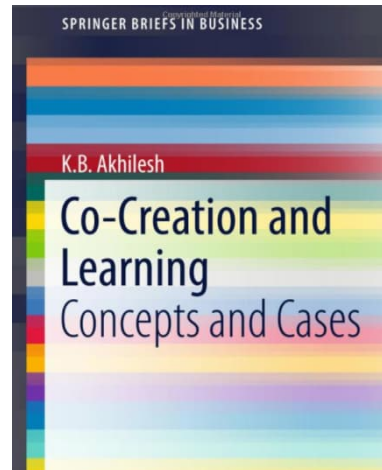
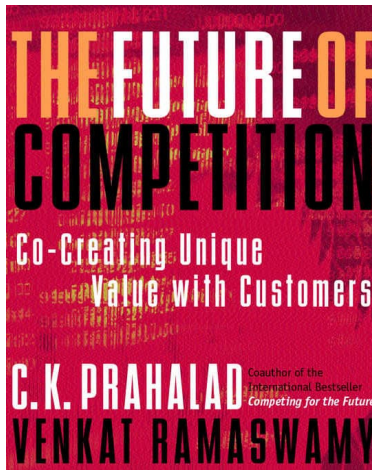
# ISSUES

- Densification of urban areas set new challenges for citizen participation
- The need of re-thinking the meaning and role of participation
- What does this mean in terms of knowledge production, transparency and policy implementation?

# PARTICIPATION FROM THE VIEWPOINT OF CO-CREATION

- How should we understand and implement the idea of co-creation in planning?
- The potential and the limits of co-creative participatory practices?

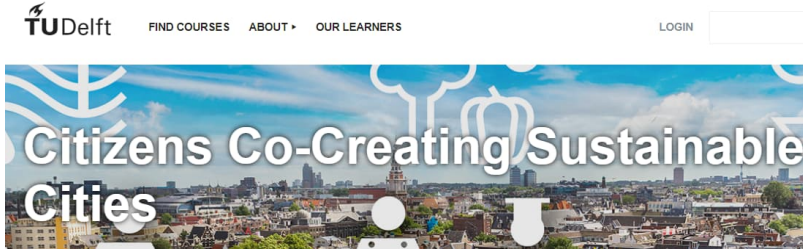
# THE CONCEPT OF CO-CREATION



*“Co-creation is not a one off event, like a referendum in which the community decides what should be done. [...] Nor is co-creation just a question of formal consultation in which professionals give users a chance to voice their views on a limited number of alternatives. It is a more creative and interactive process which challenges the views of all parties and seeks to combine professional and local expertise in new ways.” Cottam & Leadbeater (2004)*



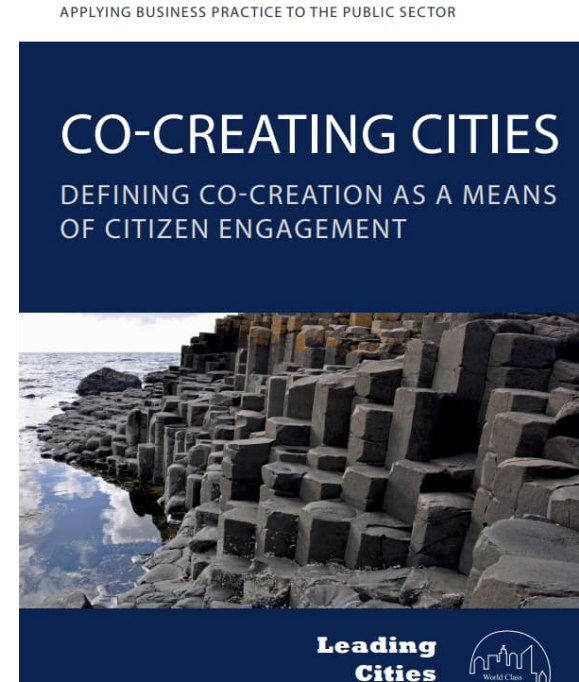
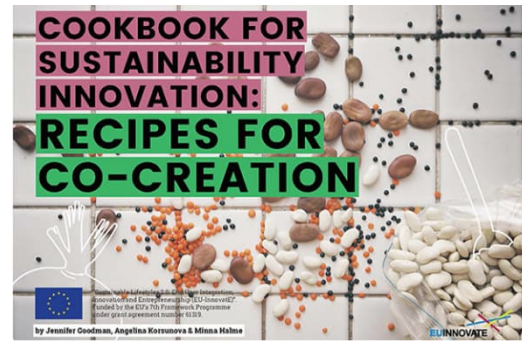
# CO-CREATION IS THE NEW BLACK?



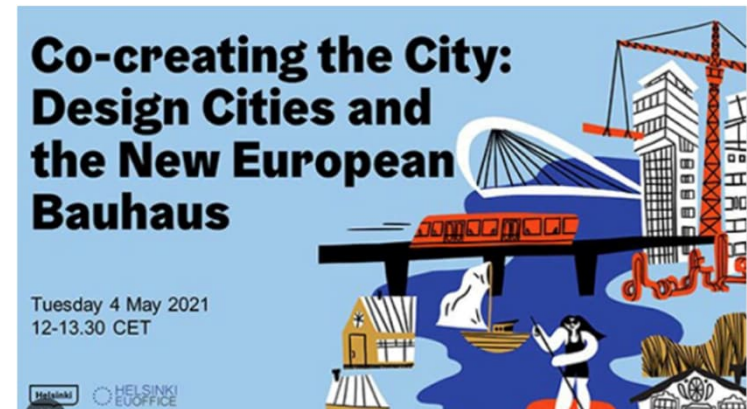
HORIZONS PLACEMAKING December 2, 2015

### Can “co-creation” help cities find a new way to solve their problems?

By [Duncan Jefferies](#)



**GO CO-CREATE WITH US!**



*“For a forward-looking city, co-creation as an innovative tool seems to be a key issue. Co-creation has become an essential concept for anyone interested in new technologies and collaborative lifestyles. First reserved to the business sphere, the concept of co-creation and co-creative practices have increased drastically, and now apply to many other sectors, including urban planning.” Duvernet & Knieling 2013*



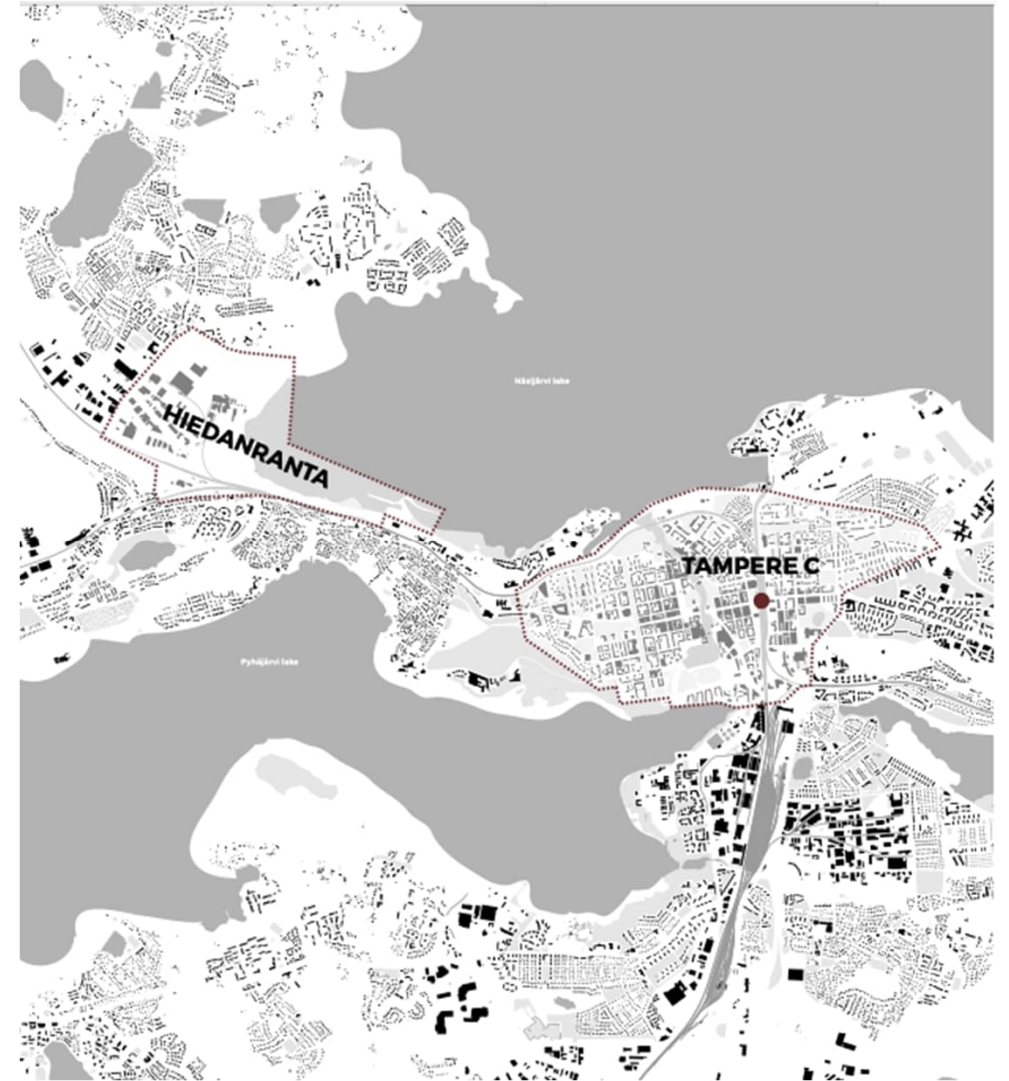
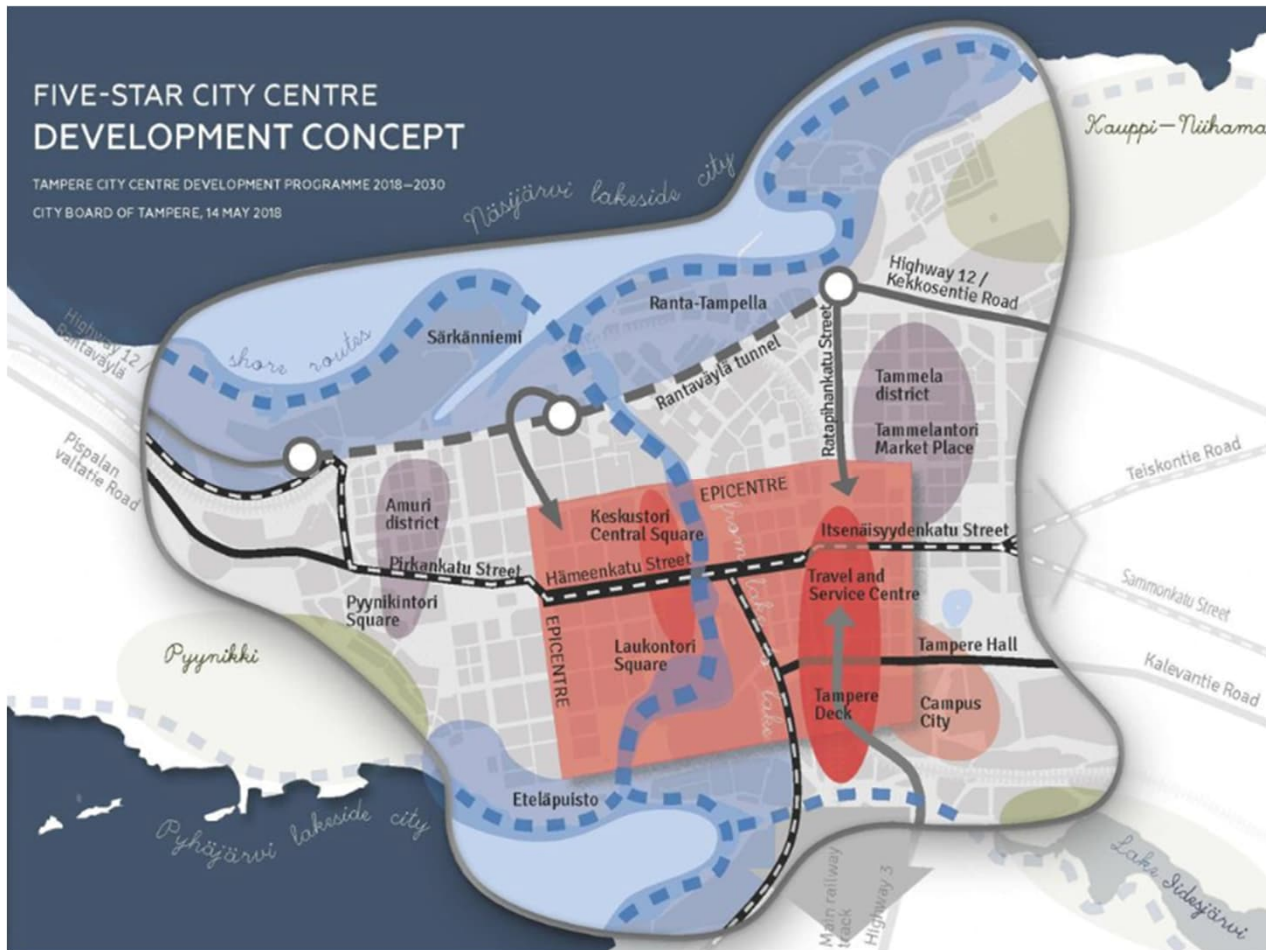
# FAST GROWING TAMPERE



The urban landscape in Tampere in 2030. The shores have been renovated for recreational purposes. The city has extended onto the railway tracks and public routes. Infill development has taken place in various districts. The vision is for a star City Centre 2018-2030. New construction is marked in yellow. Details are for further planning. Image: Vision for the city model by the City of Tampere, 2018. Design by MY Architects Ltd, 2018.



# TWO EXAMPLES: TAMMELA & HIEDANRANTA





# Facts from Tammela area, Tampere

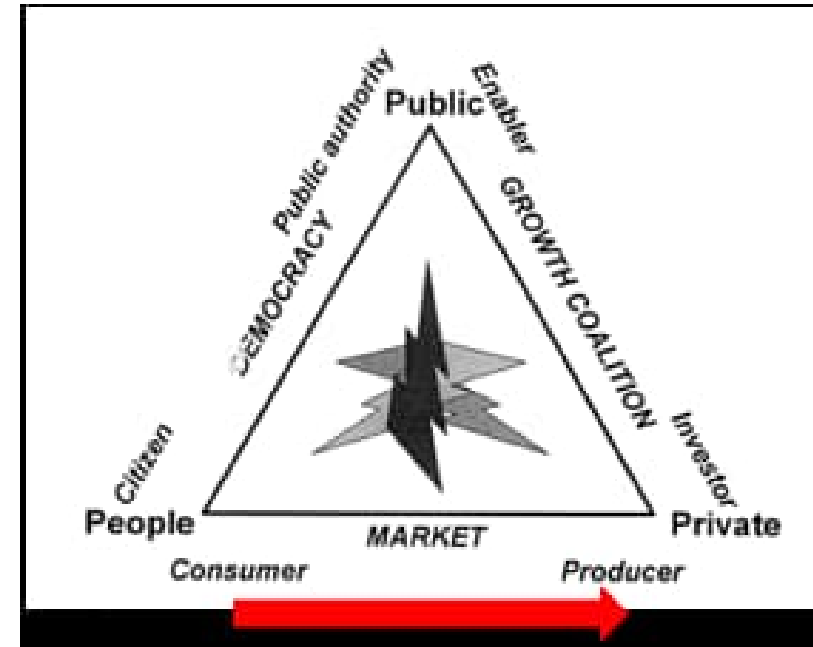
An aerial photograph of the Tammela area in Tampere, Finland. The image shows a dense residential area with numerous multi-story apartment buildings, mostly in shades of white and light brown. There are several green spaces and parks interspersed among the buildings. The overall layout is a mix of high-rise and mid-rise structures, with some older, lower-rise buildings visible in the foreground. The sky is clear and blue, and the overall scene is well-lit, suggesting a bright day.

- ✓ 6340 inhabitants, potential for 4000 more
- ✓ Housing companies own the land
- ✓ Houses built on 1960's and 70's need major reconstruction, money from infill?
- ✓ Process ongoing since 2012

# CHANGING ROLE OF HOUSING COMPANIES

Housing companies: from People-corner towards Private-corner towards Private-corner (from consumers to producers)

New situation creates institutional ambiguity (Hajer 2003) as cities don't have "operation manual" for these cases. The housing companies have a tradition to take care of their own house, not to act as developers.



Public-Private-People Partnership (4P)

Luhmann (1990) – Mäntysalo (2000) – Rajaniemi (2006) – Kuronen (2011)





Plenty of unused space owned by the inhabitants.  
The discussions about the possibility to sell the land dried out very soon.

*"We are not giving our building site away for some idiot planner who wants to fulfill his/her fantasies"*

# CO-CREATION AS A WAY OF PRODUCING KNOWLEDGE WITH RESIDENTS ON URBAN INFILL

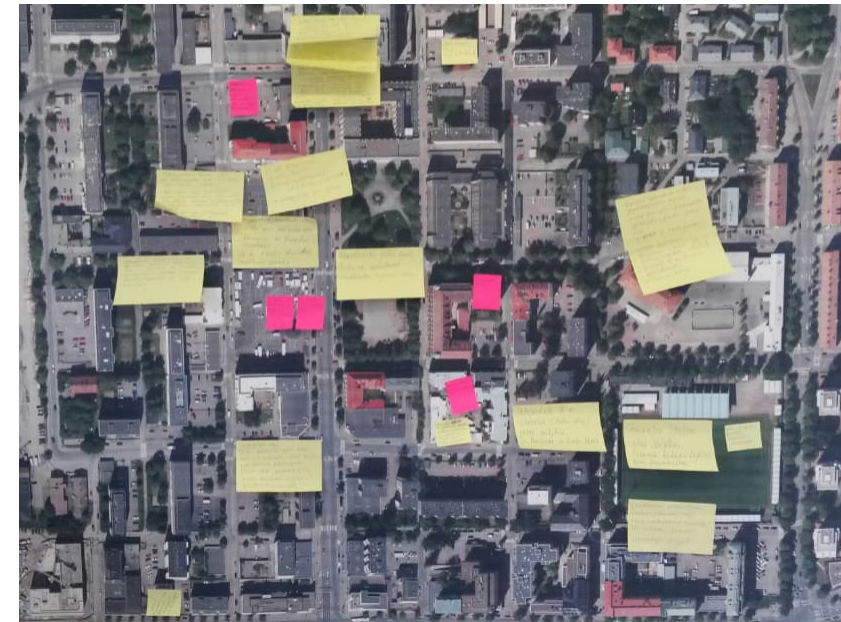
- Interviews with housing companies showed 1) information needs and 2) participatory needs
- In collaboration with city of Tampere, we decided to address this by bringing an office container to the Tammelantori market square for 10 days in September 2014
- We were there daily 9-15 listening to people
- The event had thematic programme and experts from the city were available to address specific questions





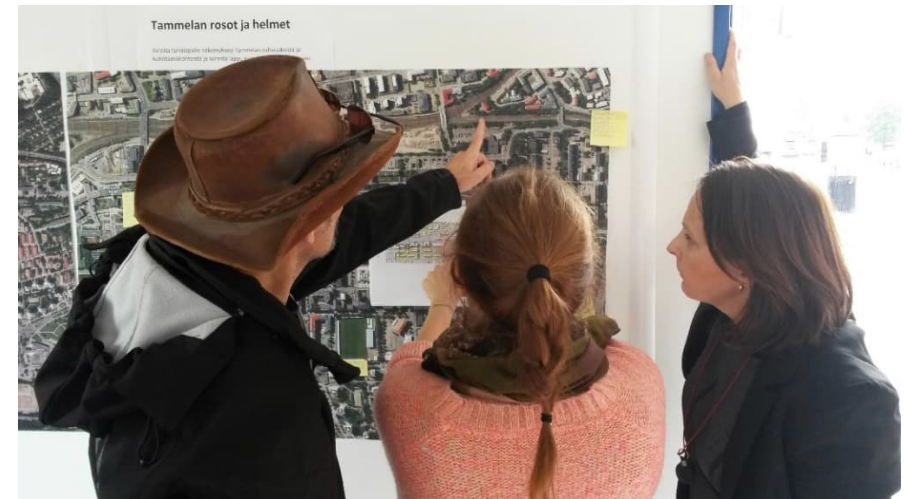
# CONTAINER EVENT IN NUMBERS

- 500 visitors in ten days
- 290 written feedback notes on PostIts and in a mailbox
- Topics of feedback: 1) infill in general 61  
2) traffic 50  
3) market square 41  
4) football stadium 40  
5) parks and green areas 36  
6) underground parking 24,  
7) public services 11,  
8) other 18



# DOES CO-CREATION FIT WITH PLANNING?

- Lowers the threshold for participation, brings the discussion on infill on the site. BUT: People's understanding of their own capacity to participate can be highly self-critical.
- After the event, the level of enthusiasm among the involved city departments dropped, especially when the collectively co-created knowledge suggested revisiting existing policies. *Co-created knowledge did not produce easily digestible findings for the official planning process.*
- Co-creation requires novel way of thinking and further work after citizen involvement. Currently *co-creation is ill-suited for strictly outlined planning processes that have pre-determined objectives.*

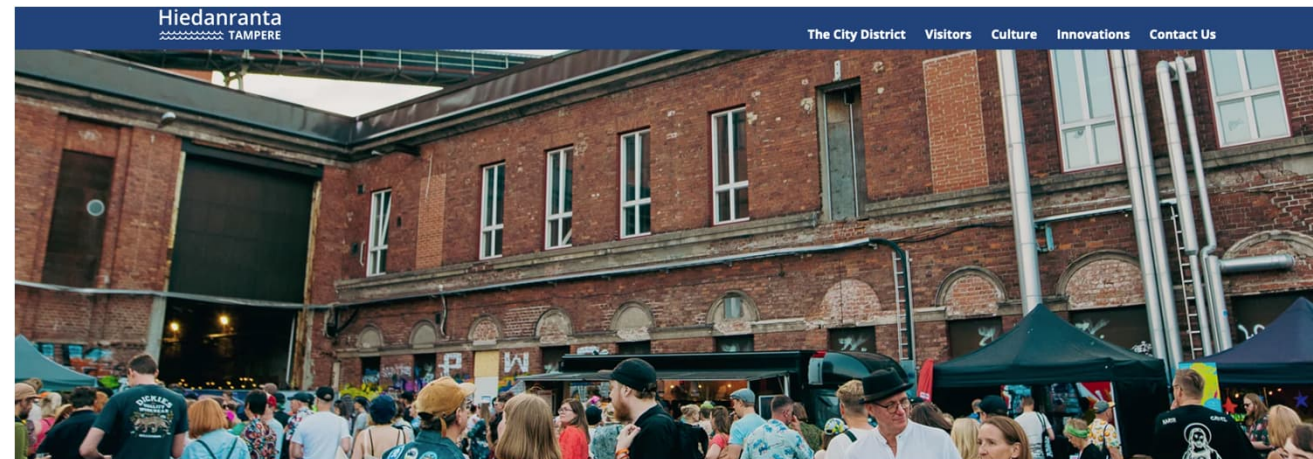




# HIEDANRANTA, TAMPERE



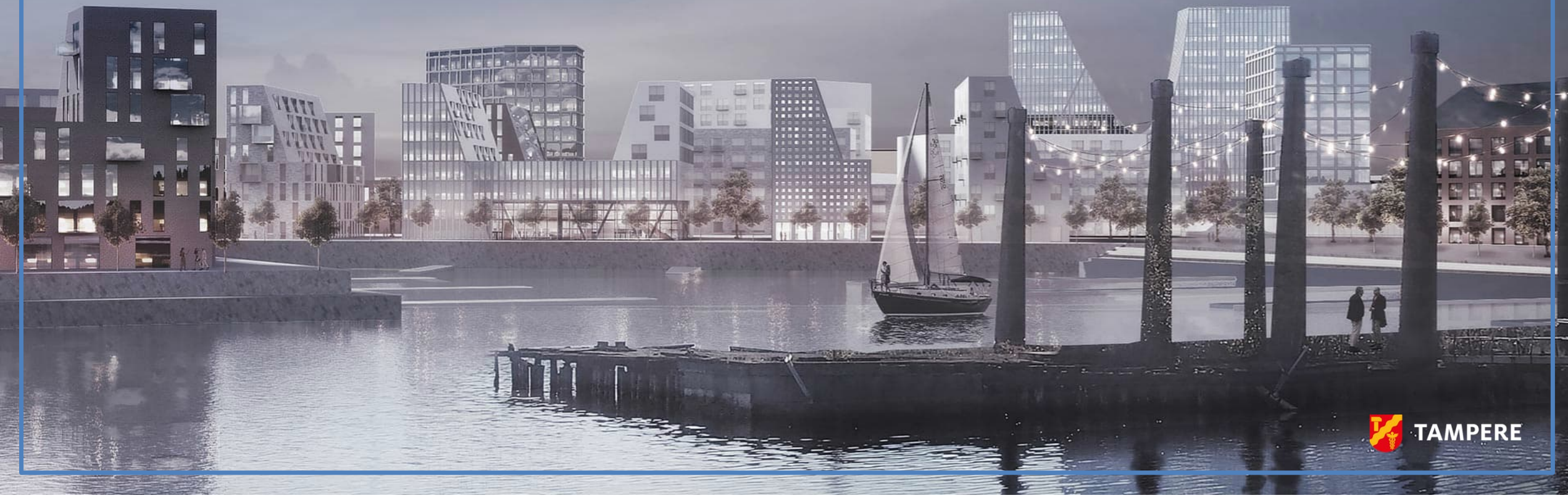
- New housing for 25 000 dwellers
- An area of pulp and paper industry until the city bought it 2014
- Active experimental platform for the city: urban gardening, open cultural spaces for everyone, skateboarding, small entrepreneurs, happenings





# Hiedanranta

From an old industrial area to a new housing district





# HIEDANRANTA FUTURE





# KNOWLEDGE PRODUCED WITH THE CITIZENS

Citizens' visions:

- City is the home
- Superblock
- Factory of new work
- Lively streetscape





# CO-CREATION IN ACTION: PUBLIC SAUNA

2.7.2017 - 09.00 | PAIKALLISET

Tähän nousee todellinen maisemasauuna – "Kuka tahansa voi käydä lämmittämässä"



Sauna yhdistää Daniel Preiss, Francesca Allievi, Katja Hynninen, Harri Tuominen ja Kaisa Mattila ovat tutustuneen Mäjän Sauna -hankkeen kautta. Kaikille auki oleva ei-kaupallinen sauna on nousemassa komean kaupunkimaiseman äärelle.

Many elements of the co-creation paradigm actualized in the process. The interaction created value for the area. The actors jointly harnessed participants' open and social resources and utilized the resources of multiple private, public, and social sector enterprises. The city proclaimed the area as a platform for open, experimental innovations.

## AAMULEHTI

Uutiset 100 tuoreinta Klippi Näköislehti Moro Lisää Asiakaspalvelu

### Tampereella etsitään väkeä rakentamaan kelluvaa saunaa – Sen jälkeen saa käydä ilmaiseksi löylyissä

KOTIMAA 16.05. 08.00 Päivitetty 07.58





# HIEDANRANTA SAUNA



Hankkeen tutkija **Elina Alatalon** mukaan kaupunki ei voisi rakentaa yhteisöllisen saunan kaltaisia paikkoja ottamatta huomioon paikalliskulttuuria ja alueella jo toimivia yhteisöjä.

-On paljon hiljaista tietoa, jota ei saa muualta kuin ihmisiltä, jotka elävät arkeaan paikan ympärillä, Alatalo sanoo.



Meiju Mertanen hoitaa saunaprojektissa yhteyksiä kaupunkiin ja paikallisiin yhteisöihin, tutkija Elina Alatalolla taas on kontaktit vapaaehtoisin. KATJA PAJULA



Alatalo, E., Leino H., Laine M., Turku, V. (2023). "Heating up the sauna: analogue model unraveling the creativity of public participation" *Planning Theory* (out April 2023)<sup>21</sup>

# CRITICAL POINTS

- *The general hype around co-creation.* In the sauna process several private companies showed interested in joining the process and the majority of the participants were young professionals and artists, who used social media in a skillful manner. Sauna gained publicity in national newspapers and travel magazines already before anything concrete was built.
- This development meets the critique presented towards smart urbanism and co-creation via digital technology: citizen participation and co-creation in social media inarguably increases awareness of and marketed the urban area to be developed. *Yet, the co-creative process neither changed existing institutional environment, nor impacted governmental practices in the city.*



# SOME BARRIERS TO BE SOLVED

- *Equitable and inclusive participation is not achieved by saying that all citizens irrespective of their socio-economic status can participate*
- Facilitating co-creation in an inclusive and participatory manner is *a time-consuming activity* that neither conforms to pre-set schedules, nor can be based on predetermined activities.
- The process should take note of *participants' previous knowledge and resources that can either encourage or discourage participation.*
- Participation for participation's sake is never enough: *participants expect results* that can either materialise as outputs that address the relevant theme or have direct impact, i.e. change in policy or practices.

# WHAT TO EXPECT? (+)

- Co-creation and interactive governance, the ability of the citizens to address their own needs, increases.
- Mainstreaming citizens as co-creators enhances the possibilities for citizens to develop their own initiatives.
- Mainstreaming co-creation might contribute to tailor-made services. These services might be seen as more legitimate than conventional services as their existence is broadly agreed upon. (Voorberg & Bekkers, 2016)

# WHAT TO EXPECT? (-)

- Citizens who initiate co-creation projects are white, well-educated and prosperous (Jakobsen 2013, Wise et al. 2012).
- As a consequence, co-creation projects exclude people. It may result to arbitrariness about service diversity. (Voorberg & Bekkers, 2016)
- Co-creation becomes a service that consulting companies sell and provide for the cities – tool for arranging the necessary public participation.



# Planning process does not fit in the society it is planning for

It is necessary to change our approach of these (bottom-up) initiatives and no longer start from the framework or government, and see how these initiatives could be fitted in, but take these initiatives as valuable objects of learning themselves and see what kind of practices on a larger scale can be distilled from them."

*Boonstra & Specht, 2016*

# REHEARSING CO-CREATION

- Rehearsal spaces for working together, cooperating and collaborating and finding new ways of organising urban society as rehearsal spaces for future governance. (Boonstra & Specht 2016; Sennett 2012)
- Cities as a platforms - enabling the action to emerge
- Complexity: no easy way to generalize the practices developed, they are situational and contextual
- "There is no recipe, model or formula -> invent on the job" Patsy Healey 16.8.2017

# PLANNING NEEDS TO CHANGE?

Xavier Damman: "For me, a city is like the internet: a public infrastructure to which citizens are invited to contribute with content. Today, contributing to your city feels like creating a website in 1990: it requires a lot of work and specialised knowledge not related to the content. These are ultimately distractions and barriers blocking innovation".

"What we need to do to reinvent our cities is to do the same we did with the internet. Year after year, we made it easier and easier for people to contribute and be a part of it."

[Xavier Damman](#), the founder of [Open Collective](#)



# BE CRITICAL!

- The problem is not failure in knowledge transfer, but rather the gap is a normative one: co-created knowledge can be uncomfortable. It challenges and questions existing ways of working, structures, and policies.
- Co-creation has a multifaceted relationship to knowledge: it implies knowledge-production, knowledge-transfer, and knowledge-use within a single process. Hence, co-creation must not be adopted only as a participatory administrative practice

# THANK YOU!

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