Aalto University
School of Engineering

Participatory planning

SPT-E3010
27.2.2023-20.4.2023
FINAL SESSION

Marketta Kyttä

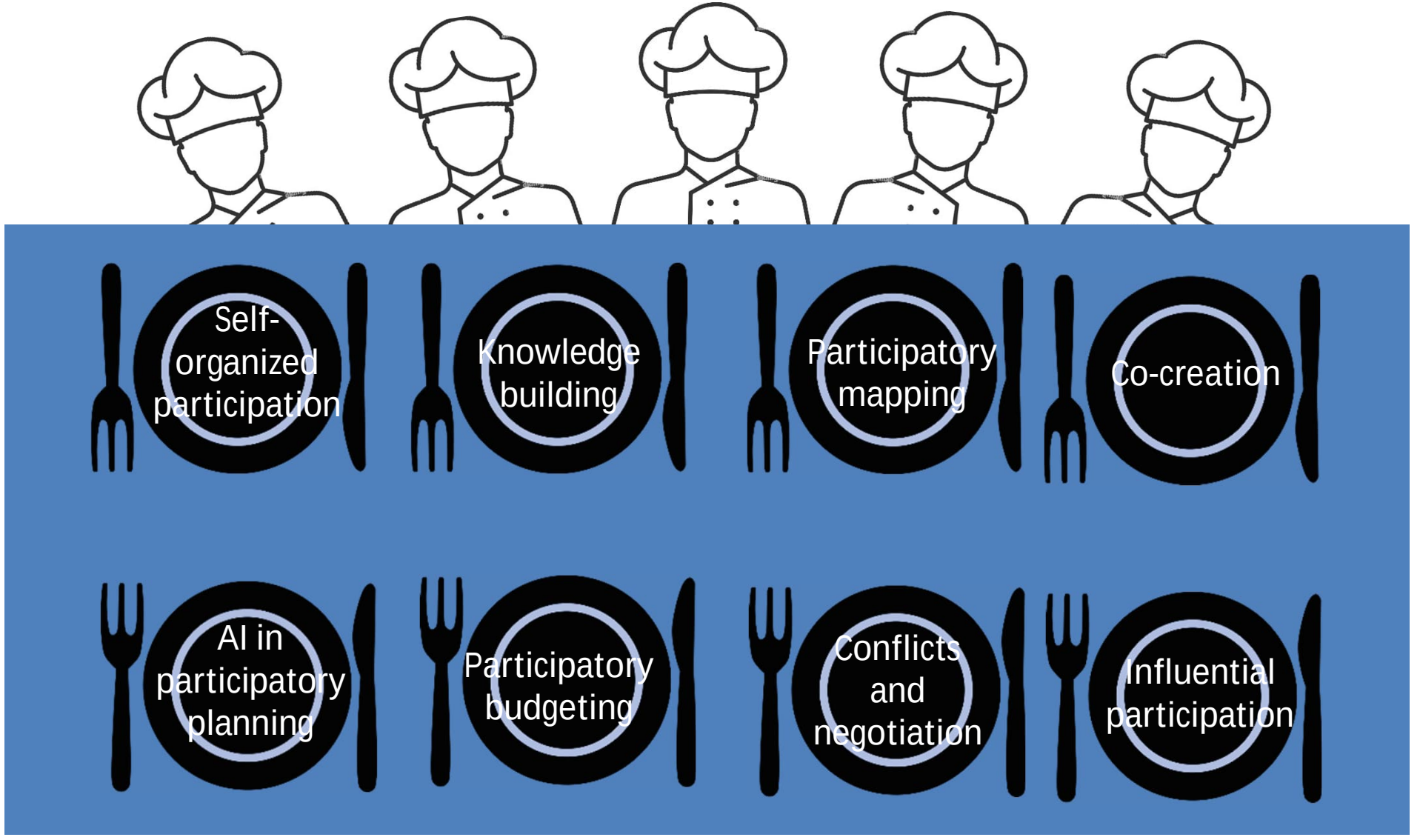
Let’s present the course works in groups

- max 5 persons/ group
- 5 min per person
- choose one course work to be presented to all

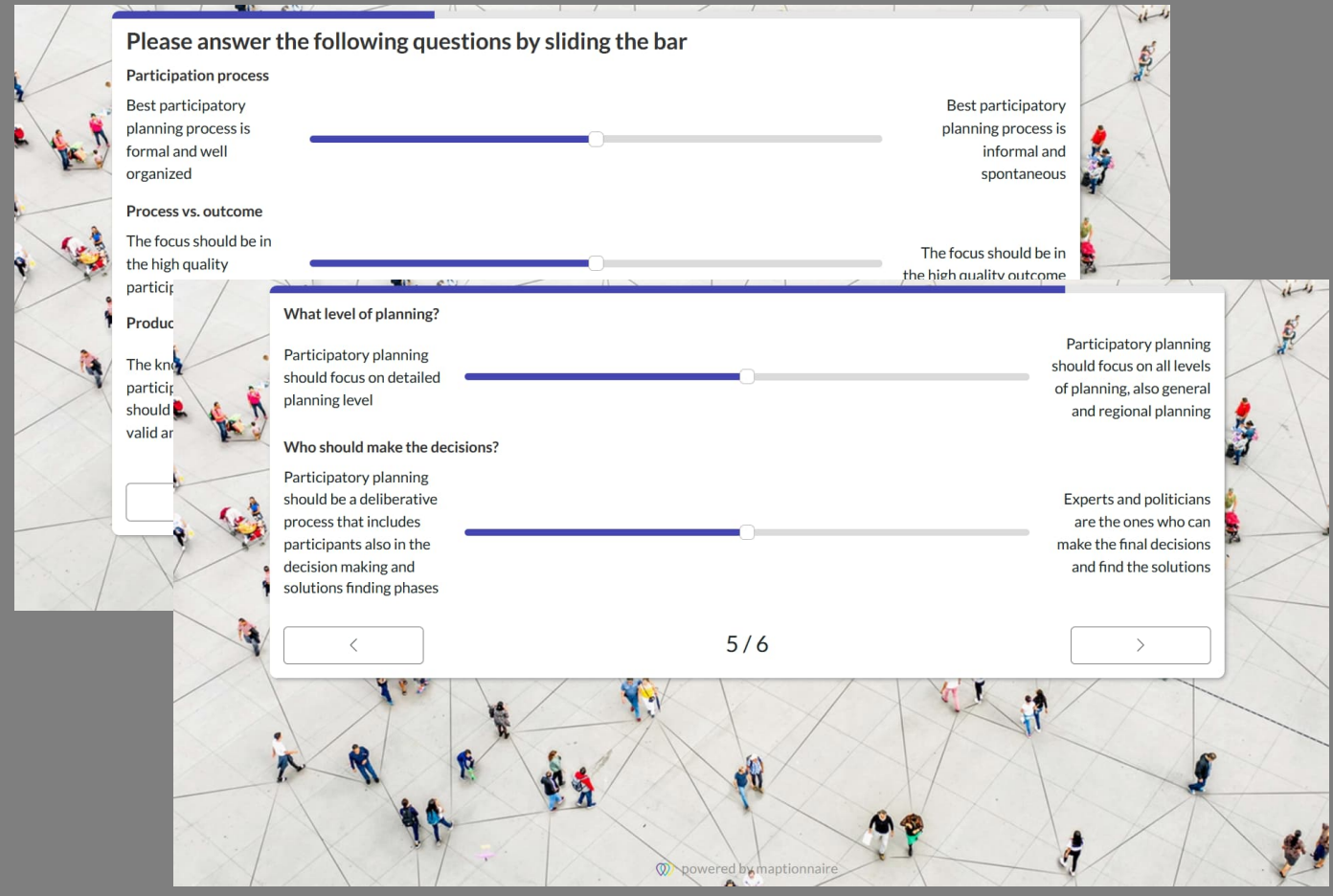
The chosen presentations

- 5 min per presentation

A dinner table with several courses and cooks ...

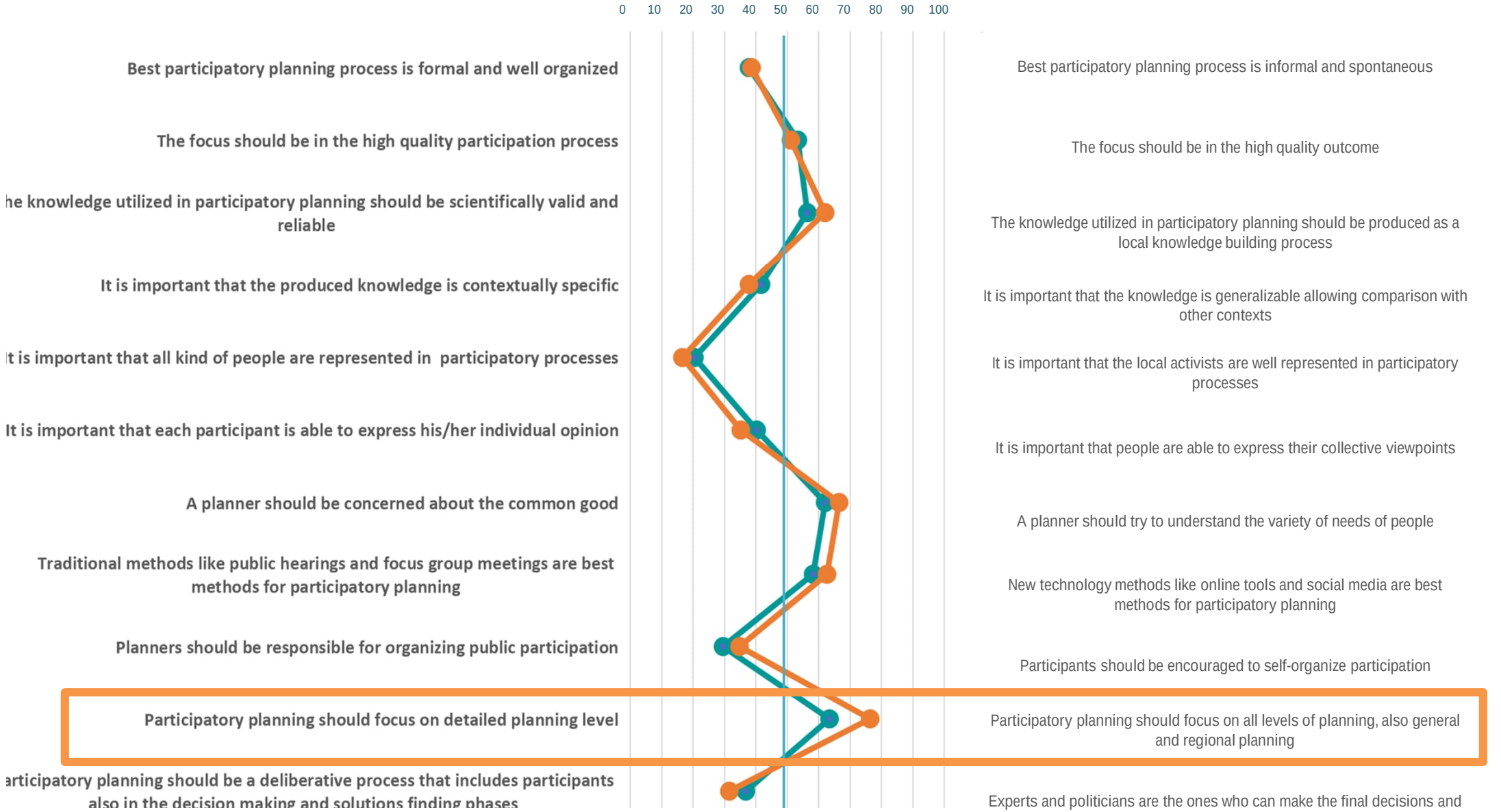


Your post-course reflections



Your personal attitudes towards public participation – SURVEY RESULTS

= BEFORE
= AFTER



Reflections: what I had learned before the course

Before the course I had a strong bond to public participation, and I think it got even sturdier throughout the course. My background was somewhat that I got partly to this field through the public participation and information shared about the development of Helsinki. My preconception about public participation was that it is an integral part of a proper planning process. I think that thought really got stronger throughout the course.

I have always believed public participation to be important and it didn't change that much but I think I see more opportunities to use the public knowledge in the decision making and I will be trying to enforce that whenever possible in my humble life.

The moment we abandoned the pride of being a planner, we're even more sure about what we're doing. Most importantly, we're really helping a place getting better, trying to solve problems for locals, these simple things are what make this career wonderful.

Before this course I did not give much thoughts towards public participation and how much power in can carry in terms of change in spatial and transport planning. I definitely gained a lot from this course! It was very interesting and dynamic and diverse. I am grateful for all the lecturers who participated in this year course of Participatory Planning. I will definitely continue to read more about public participation since I believe it will help planning to develop and grow!

Reflections: what I realized during the course

In modern life, where everyone is busy and distracted with everyday tasks, participation should evoke trust and a sense of belonging to make people think about larger-scale problems such as city planning. At the same time, trust and a sense of belonging are achieved through transparent decision-making and open communication. People should feel that their voices matter and can lead to positive changes. That is why communicating back to the citizens should be prompt after implementation changes.

One very practical tip was golden too, which was from the example of Puhos. Going to the site to the physical local business premises seemed so simple, but so smart. It reminded me, that often the answer to problems are simple, if just given time to think about them.

In general, most of my views are less strict than before. The question formation makes it difficult to choose sides. For reflection, it might be a good thing. I also learned valuable tools for future participation projects – from the website participatory.tools, to collaborative tools like VGP and Urbanist AI. Planning the optimal participation process as a course work will hopefully collect and deepen the information gathered from this course.

Public participatory planning can lead to improved project outcomes, as community members are directly involved in the planning and implementation process. This can help to ensure that projects are more responsive to the needs and priorities of the community, and that they are more likely to be successful and sustainable over the long term.

While comparing my personal survey results before and after the course. My new thoughts are; the best participatory planning process should be formal and well organized, and its focus should be a high quality participation process. Also, its knowledge utilized in planning should be produced as a local knowledge building process. In addition, participants should be encouraged to self-organize participation.

Reflections: how my views changed – or did not change?

My view on what level of planning participatory planning should focus on has now completely changed. Lectures and discussions have convinced me that public participation at all levels is possible and necessary.

I thought I would write this reflection about how this class has made me more pessimistic about participatory planning practices. Over the last few months, I began to see participatory planning as more complex, time-consuming, and not even worth the effort in some situations. However, the final lecture by Johanna Palomäki changed my mind and was a great culmination of the course.

While my opinions have not changed significantly, I feel that the course has given me a more nuanced and informed perspective on public participation. I am now more aware of the challenges involved in implementing effective public participation processes and the need for ongoing commitment to ensuring that public participation is integrated into decision-making processes in a meaningful way.

The concept of self-organizing participation wasn't familiar for me before this course, but the lecture of Sirkku Wallin offered a totally new perspective for me to look at the urban planning and understand the capabilities of local people better. That changed my view towards organizing PP and made me understand that instead of only organizing participation, planners should also encourage local people to be more active and decrease hierarchy in urban planning.

Reflections concerning various methods and approaches

I understand that several mechanisms can be used to get the public to participate in a project. For example, using Maptionnaire for online participation is a modern, functional, and informative mechanism. Likewise, public hearings and focus group meetings are still helpful for getting each stakeholder's opinion on any planned project in a particular location. However, it was also observed during the course that using the conventional (public hearing and focus group meeting) approach may be severe and fruitless when dealing with some people who are not cooperative.

It was also nice to learn that there in fact has been more inclusive and well thought out planning 'experiments' such as Kontula mall -process. This gives hope for an even better participatory society

My knowledge towards public participation has increased remarkably as the course progressed. Especially the use of different methods has given me a great deal of understanding towards the subject.

The Public Participation Plan was one very concrete example of things that I now understand better, especially due to the individual course work in which I worked to build one for an imaginary planning situation.

But now after the course I also understand that even though new digital participation tools can reach more people, it doesn't directly mean that the answers would be utilized efficiently, so the benefit of just reaching more people is not enough in itself.

Reflections concerning various methods and approaches

During the course I red few PPP and I was sad how short and boring thay were. Maybe because I didn't read Lahtis or Espoos PPP, there was only what law requires. What I read, there was only what have to be and nothing more.

My major takeaway from the course was the different ways in which people find it difficult to engage in the planning process and methods by which to make it easier for people to participate. The first example that comes to mind is the use of AI image generation technologies (Urbanist AI) to help people visualize what a plan might look like.

Before the course I was an advocate of the traditional participation tools. Although I am still convinced of the importance of these methods, I also believe that beyond this, it is important to adapt traditional participative tools and to be open to new technologies as they can bring a whole new value into the planning process and reach out to population groups that would otherwise be hard to reach.

I was delighted when public participation was criticized on the course too, as this would open eyes better. Taking in consideration what I was taught on "Urban challenges Studio 2" – course, that when trying to engage some communities in planning the participation does not actually increase by much

Reflections: learning from the guest lecturers

Overall, I believe that participatory planning is a topic that you never stop learning about. There are always new approaches, new experiences, or new insights. During the discussions at the end of the lectures, it often became clear that many questions in this area cannot be answered definitively. They are often case-dependent and very individual. Therefore, I think that an important prerequisite for successful participatory processes is the possibility of reflection. What went well, what didn't? What do I wish for, what do you wish for?

I noticed that the experts in this field are laid back, seeking new solutions with multiple perspectives and even a little crazy and fun way. Public participation don't necessarily need to be a grey, boring process.

I was inspired by all the professionals who took out time to share their knowledge and experience with us and also all the peers who had such good quality questions. I was deeply moved by the works of Aija Staffans, Pilvi Nummi and team, Lasse Peltonen, and Johanna Palomaki.

I think it is important to ponder what is the citizen role and power in decision-making. Do they really know what is the best for them? Is their information given relevant to the planning process? These questions were posed in one classroom session, and they resonated with my experiences strongly.

I have come to realize that effective public participation is especially crucial in the face of the climate crisis. Good public participation will lead to more equitable, sustainable, and livable urban environments that meet the needs of all members of the community and environment. Without it, we risk inadequate urban development that does not satisfy the drastic changes needed to reduce climate change and meet climate targets.

Reflections: final lessons

It can be concluded that participation in planning is crucial, but also very challenging. This has also been acknowledged during the lessons throughout the course. Despite the difficulties of participation, I believe that it's still important not to be afraid of the process. We should recognize that the most difficult part is already done - acknowledging that planning deals with complex problems that don't have simple solutions. Therefore, we should keep moving forward by being open to discussion.

Overall, this course provided a good platform for discussion on various topics in planning and participatory planning, and it mostly confirmed that the survey questions are difficult topics to grapple with and that there's no one right answer. The most difficult questions to answer are still: how do we integrate the aspects of public participation and how do we make that process transparent so that everyone can better expect how to contribute and how to improve the process

All in all I've got a bright new impact what is possible in relation to participatory planning. Before this course I thought that this theme is more boring and I thought that I'm not really interested in it. But now, after this course I'm impressed how multifaced and varied participation can be.

I also liked the human centered aspect of public participation. After the course and all the discussions I have a feeling that a hint of human centred sciences and humanism would be a way to make public participation practices more effective and inclusive. Most of the time the planning agencies in municipalities tend to be filled fit engineers instead of experts of human sciences who could have a different view to ways to participate and to the final response data.

Reflections: final lessons

I used to believe that public participation would only benefit privileged groups that had the resources and skills to participate actively in planning. However, I now think that public participation could actually empower a variety of groups and give them a voice in decision-making. By involving a diverse range of stakeholders in planning, public participation can lead to more inclusive and equitable outcomes. And the continuous development of technology is making the process increasingly easier.

It takes time and effort to interact with varied people, but it's worthwhile. Members of the community possess significant information and abilities that should be utilized to make wise judgements. It's crucial to understand, nevertheless, that consensus or agreement may not always result from public participation, which can make decision-making more difficult.

As a final takeaway, I learned that participation could have a profound impact even if we only involve a few people. Through the sharing of these experiences and knowledge, a ripple effect of trust and engagement forms, paving the way for meaningful change over time.

I have started to wonder that there are not enough resources, expertise and money, in the planning department of the municipalities at the moment. There is a need to participate the people in an efficient way, but the results may be unsatisfactory. Therefore, new (better) experts, methods and processes are needed.

The world today is certainly a lot different than it used to be. We use digital tools and have access to real-time information regarding pretty much everything and we can voice our opinions instantly with only one click. As the world is changing so are the ways of participation. After this course I realized that the ways have changed and improved the participation process a lot more than I had thought, leaving me a lot more positive mindset about the state of participatory planning than what I had before the course.

Reflections: final lessons

One of the first things I noticed when I did the Maptionnaire the second time was that it took much longer for me to answer the questions now after the course than before the course. It makes sense, as I have probably acquired more nuanced opinions during the course. In that light it was surprising to see how much my answers have changed; there were multiple sliders, where my opinion had jumped from one side to the other

The participatory planning course has been a transformative experience for me. It has equipped me with the skills, knowledge, and understanding to approach planning processes in a more participatory and community-centred way. I am excited to apply what I have learned in my future work and contribute to creating more inclusive, equitable, and sustainable communities.

Cities are created by everybody for everybody. People come first, and participatory planning is helping to creating more equitable cities and urban environments. It is thus important to shift power dynamics towards the citizen and shift to citizen led co-production.

Reflections: critical notions & future development of PP

I am still on the fence and not fully convene cocreation can work. However. I also understand that this is the trend as the rise of social media and civic organization is occurring more organically so being ignorant is also against a planner's intuition of finding knowledge from its citizens.

I still Improvements are needed all the way from the resources of planners, their acquirements to conduct participation in their work, to the models planners use for implementing participatory actions. Participatory planning has multiple moving parts, and tackling them is far from simple. So, the question that remains is that where and how should the first adjustments be done in order for the processes to shift to a more efficient and beneficial pathway?

I can't help but recognize many barriers in participatory planning. As planners, we always deal with issues which are also known as "wicked problems". I personally also see participatory planning already a "wicked problem" itself: it is difficult to get all members to participate, to ensure underrepresented groups be heard, to try giving those affected what they need, to come to a consensus by compromising certain matters, and still it is impossible to make everyone happy or achieve the optimal solutions.

This course also had a huge role in me enrolling to the SPT special course, negotiation in planning, which is currently going on. I think I will place a much bigger emphasis on participation in the future as well, as this course explored some really interesting topics

I still have many questions about public participation. Why is so little attention being paid to different language groups? Who should be involved? What to do with loud specified groups who have their own strong agendas? What is told to the public at what point?

Kurssilla nousseita ajatuksia

Kurssin aikana pidetyistä luennoista sain käsityksen, että muutkin suunnittelijat haluavat oikeasti ymmärtää asukkaiden näkemyksiä ja ottaa ne huomioon. Vierasluennoitsijat olivat selvästi vuorovaikutteisen suunnittelun asiantuntijoita, ja myös iältään vanhemmat suunnittelijat huomioivat asukkaiden näkemyksiä. Ennen kurssia minulla oli ymmärrys, että etenkin vanhemmat suunnittelijat eivät hirveästi piittaisi muista kuin omista näkemyksistään.

Odotin kurssilta syvempää perehtymistä vuorovaikutteisen suunnittelun filosofiaan, prosessiin ja konkreettisiin toteutustapoihin. Tässä mielessä kurssi oli hyvinkin antoisa, sillä luennoilla esiteltiin erilaisia lähestymistapoja ja konkreettisia esimerkkejä vuorovaikutteiseen suunnitteluun. Toisaalta olisin toivonut enemmän perehtymistä lainsäädännön ja kaupunkien asettamiin vaatimuksiin vuorovaikutteiseen suunnitteluun liittyen.

Kurssi selkeytti minulle paljon osallistavan suunnittelun vaikeuksia entisestään. Olin aiemmilta kursseilta oppinut, että mitä osallistavassa suunnittelussa on otettava huomioon pääpiirteittäin, mutta tämä kurssi avasi hyvin paljon, kuinka paljon ongelmia oikeasti on. Kurssi myös opetti, kuinka suunnittelijana tulisi ajatella, mutta koen sen hankalaksi, koska ihmiset helposti takertuvat ajattelemaan tietyllä tavalla. Siksi yhteistyö muiden suunnittelijoiden kanssa on erittäin tärkeää, jotta asioita ajateltaisiin mahdollisimman laajasti kaikista näkökulmista. Itselleni jäi kuitenkin hieman epävarma olo osallistamisesta, sillä kurssi myös samalla ikään kuin valaisi, että vaikka kuinka hyvin yrittäisi tehdä suunnitteluprosessin ja osallistaa ihmisiä, aina jää jokin asia huomioimatta, puutteelliseksi tai että se ei miellytä kaikkia

Kurssilla nousseita ajatuksia

Merkittävä pohdinnan paikka suunnittelijoilla onkin siinä, mitä osallistavassa suunnittelussa halutaan saada irti. Mikä on osallistamisen tavoite? Miksi suunnittelijoina haluamme tietää kaupunkilaisten näkemyksiä? Miksi hyödynnämme metodia X juuri kohdassa Y? Nämä kysymykset pitäisi mielestäni kysyä jokaisen osallistavan suunnitteluprosessin alussa, jotta ymmärtäisimme, mihin suunnittelulla oikein pyrimme.

Vahvimpina ilmiöinä ainakin omaan mieleeni jäivät teknologian kehittyminen ja sen mahdollistamat uudet osallistamisen muodot (kuten pehmo GIS kyselyt, tekoälyn hyödyntäminen ja kehittyvät mallinnusmenetelmät) sekä huomion kiinnittäminen ruohonkuuritasolla yksittäisten ihmisten näkemyksiin ja tarpeisiin.

Tämä kurssi on ollut teemaltaan erilainen verrattuna moniin muihin opintojeni kursseihin, joista monet ovat olleet selvästi enemmän tekniikka- tai systeemikeskeistä siinä missä tämä kurssi on melko ihmiskeskeinen. Tunnistan itseni enemmän asiakeskeiseksi, joten on hyvä, että olen tällä kurssilla saanut myös erilaista näkökulmaa. Minulle tärkeä anti kurssista on ollut sen selkeytyminen, ettei vuorovaikutteisuus suunnittelussa ole vain lakiin kirjattu asia, joka pitää tehdä ihmisten oikeuksien täyttämiseksi (mikä sekin on tärkeää), vaan siitä saadut tiedot ja näkökulmat voivat myös helpottaa suunnittelijoita työnsä tekemisessä sekä auttaa heitä paremman suunnittelutuloksen aikaansaamisessa, jossa tulee huomioonotetuksi sekä yksittäisen ihmisen huolenaiheet että laajemman yleisön edut.

Kurssilla nousseita ajatuksia

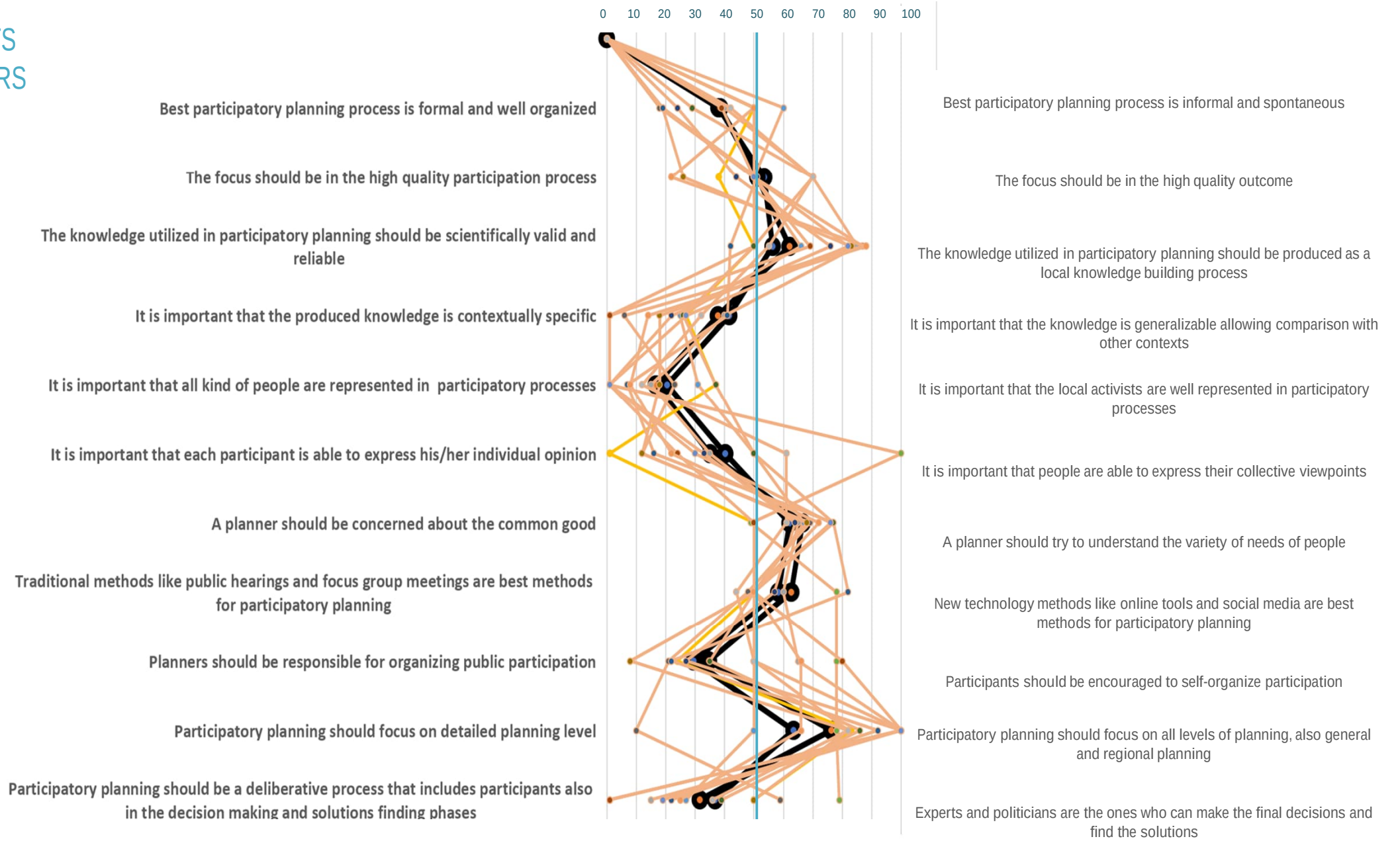
Kurssi puhutteli minua eniten siinä, kuinka tärkeässä roolissa tavallinen ihminen on suunnitteluprosessissa, ja kuinka aktiivisuuden lisääminen kansalaisissa saisi aikaan suuria muutoksia suunnitteluprosesseissa. Kansalaisten aktivoituminen edesauttaisi saamaan jo suunnittelun alkuvaiheissa kuvan, mitä ihmiset haluavat alueelle tehtävän. Tämä toimisi tehokkaana riitojen ja ylimääräisten selvitysten/suunnitelmaiteraatioiden ehkäisijänä.

Kurssin myötä oma mielipiteeni teknologian tärkeydestä osana osallistamista on vahvistunut. Koen edelleen kasvotusten järjestettävät työpajat erittäin tärkeinä, mutta usealla luennolla kävi ilmi se, että aktiivisimmat osallistujat livenä järjestettäviin tilaisuuksiin ovat vanhat ihmiset. Osallistavan suunnittelun on tärkeä ottaa huomioon monesta eri taustasta ja väestöryhmistä tulevia mielipiteitä ja näkökulmia.

Johanna Palomäki kiteytti hyvin asukkaiden osallistamisen olevan suunnittelijan tuki ja turva monien intressien toimintaympäristössä, sekä toi esiin kuinka osallistaminen taipuu sujuvasti eri mittakaavoihin. Jos aikaisemmin aavistelin osallistamisen olevan tärkeä osa tulevaisuuden työnkuvaani, niin nyt tiedän sen olevan.

A comparison of the attitudes of teachers vs. those of the students

= STUDENTS
= LECTURERS



Final discussion

Final course work

Deadline for submission:
After two weeks
5.5 (midnight)

Course evaluation

- 80 % course work
- 10 % active participation in classes
- 10 % individual reflections

Course work evaluation criteria

- Integration to theoretical literature
- How your approach improves public participation
- Creativity/ novelty

Please remember

- To give feedback!

https://link.webropolsurveys.com/S/0A4A381C4E01F56C

- Do it right now!

Now: thank you for participating the course...
Have an enjoyable spring time ☺