OmaStadi Budgeting Game

An evaluation framework for working towards more inclusive participation through design games

—

Andreas Wiberg Sode
Thesis Presentation
Monday, 12.10.2020

A? **Aalto University
School of Arts, Design
and Architecture**

contents

I.

Introduction

co-creation and service-design in public sector organisations

Service design has become a very strong paradigm in Finnish governance activity.

With service design practices, public organisations can offer more effective and user-centred services (tailored to the needs of the residents).

Shift towards citizens playing a much greater role in the development of the city and its services.

The city has become a host to new co-creation processes and activities.

The organisation needs tools on how to organise and support these activities.

Participatory budgeting & design games.

(Jaatinen, 2015; Torfing & Triantafillou, 2013; Torfing et al., 2016)

II.

Theoretical background

what is **participatory budgeting?**

...participatory budgeting allow non-elected citizens to participate in planning and allocating public finances.

(Sintomer et al., 2012)

five principles of participatory budgeting

1. Focuses on the discussion of how "a limited budget should be used".

2. Implemented at the city level by institutions with power over administrative resources.

3. Needs to be repeated yearly.

4. Public deliberation has to be included in the process.

5. Accountability on the results of the process is required.
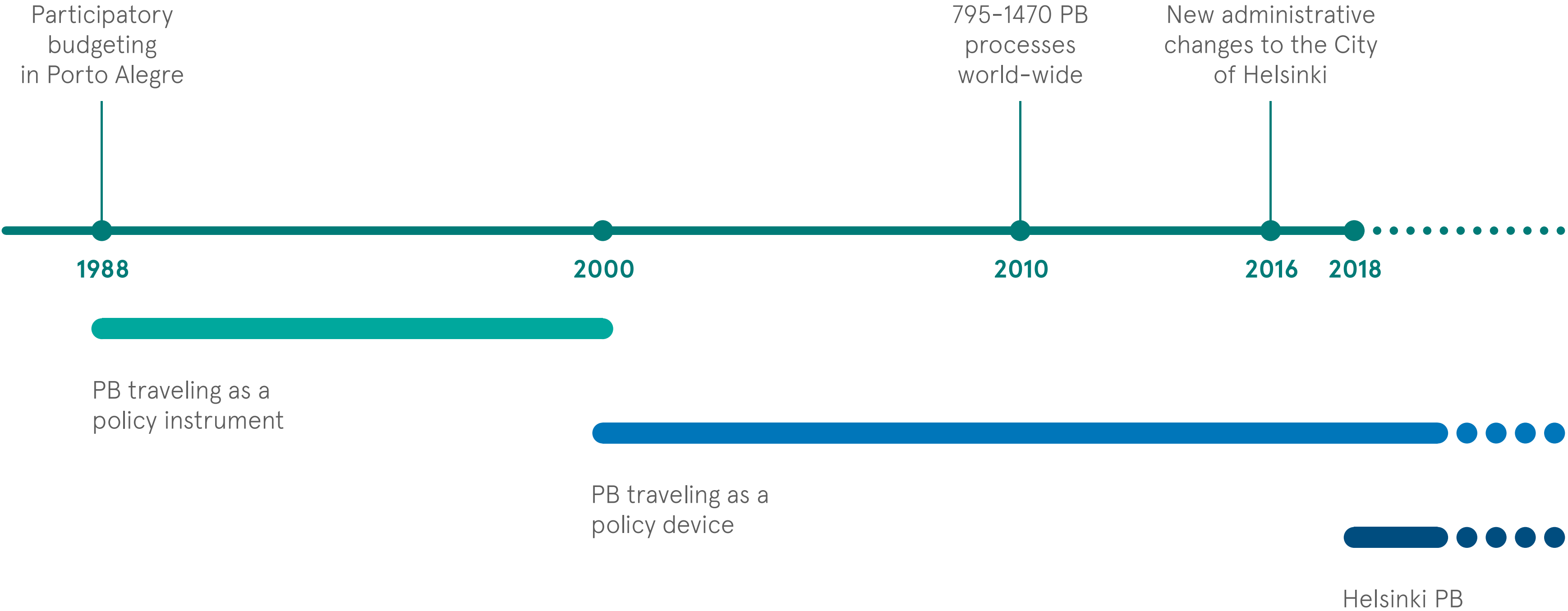
(Sintomer et al., 2012)

the origins of participatory budgeting

Emerged in Porto Alegre, Brazil, in the late 1980s, following the dictatorship in 1964.

Broader sets of institutional reforms away from clientelism and capitalist (neoliberalist) institutions.

Typically seen as a democratic innovation, but this has changed as it gained international attention.

(Abers, 2000; Pateman, 2012; Sintomer et al., 2012)

what travels as participatory budgeting?

Participatory
budgeting
in Porto Alegre

795–1470 PB
processes
world-wide

New administrative
changes to the City
of Helsinki

1988   **2000**   **2010**   **2016** **2018**

PB traveling as a
policy instrument

PB traveling as a
policy device

Helsinki PB

(Baiocchi & Ganuza, 2012; Sintomer et al., 2012)

OmaStadi, Helsinki's participatory budgeting

4.4 million euro of the city budget.

Funds are reserved for projects at city level and for each major district.

Funds allocated according to the number of residents in each district.

Investments and operational expenses.

Anyone can suggest ideas. Anyone aged 12 and above living in Helsinki can vote.
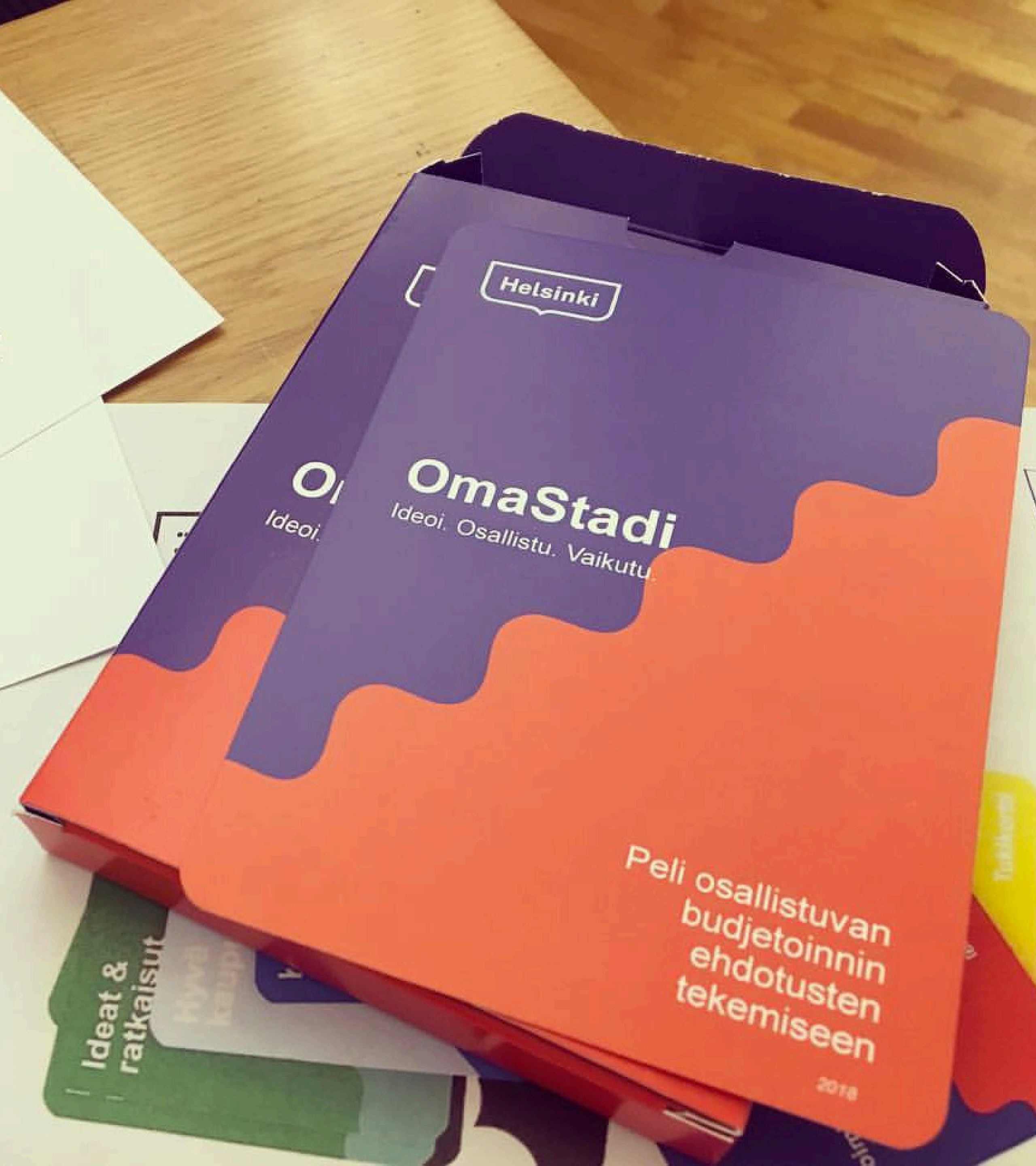
Helsinki

supporting the citizens in understanding participatory budgeting

OmaStadi can be very complex for citizens.

Coming up with proposals for 4.4 million euros can be very intimidating for citizens.

Make the process of proposing budget ideas less daunting and overwhelming.

Supporting citizens in creating proposals using design games.

Helsinki

OmaStadi
participatory
budgeting game

the **OmaStadi** participatory budgeting process

Autumn 2018

Ideate

Winter 2019

Participate

Autumn 2019

Vote

OmaStadi game idea sessions and submitting ideas online

OmaStadi Raksa workshops to develop ideas into plans

Vote for plans online or at voting stations

what are design games?

"tools for codesign that purposefully emphasise play-qualities such as playful mindset and structure, which are supported by tangible game materials and rules"

(Vaajakallio & Mattelmäki, 2014, p. 64)

four purposes of **design games**

1. Explore design decisions in a controllable environment that resembles real life.

2. Scaffold and support design competences through play and creativity.

3. Empowering people affected by the potential design decisions, allowing them to participatite in the design process.

4. Facilitate the engagement of numerous stakeholders using a tangible structure (common language).

(Vaajakallio & Mattelmäki, 2014, p. 64)

the potential of the OmaStadi game

Facilitating creativity and adding playfulness to a complex budgeting process.

Supporting the quality of discussion between citizens.

Increasing the inclusiveness of the overall participatory budgeting process.

III.

Research objectives

first **research objective**

RQ1.
What impact has the participatory budgeting game (OmaStadi) had on the inclusiveness of citizen participation in the City of Helsinki (organisation) and the actual participation of the city's citizens?

Improve direct democracy and equal opportunities for participation?

Enhance communication and open discussion among citizens?

Boost citizen creativity and the quality of their budget proposals?

Support learning and citizen empowerment?

Change the citizens' perceptions of the city?

three criteria for evaluating participatory processes

Participation (inclusion)
Everyone is able to take part in making decisions, as many citizens as possible can participate, no skill level or previous experience is required to take part,...

Political equality
Equal say in the decision-making process, equal vote when making decisions, everyone's voice is heard,...

Quality of deliberation
The quality of political discussion between citizens, citizen creativity, development of new and innovative ideas,...

(Fishkin, 2011)

second research objective

RQ2.
How can a framework be developed for continuously evaluating the impact of the OmaStadi game in Helsinki's yearly participatory budgeting process?

A guide for the City of Helsinki for assessing the impact of their OmaStadi game.

Highly adaptable and easy to update, allowing continuous (iterative) evaluation of the game.

Useful methods and tools for collecting citizen feedback, analysing findings, identifying impact, and reflecting on the evaluation results.

IV.
Research design

research approach

Case study of the OmaStadi participatory budgeting game.

Qualitative research (interviews) as main approach.

Measuring design practice (design games) is a challenging process as they are often intangible and hard to quantify.

Focus on the qualitative aspects of the game using design research practices.

conducted research...
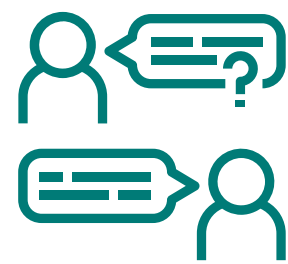
6 interviews with members from the PB unit.

Observations at 2 OmaStadi Raksa events
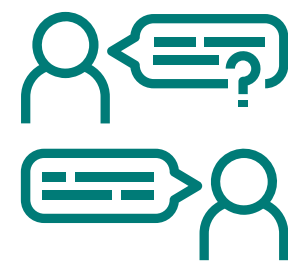
1 interview with lead designer of the game.
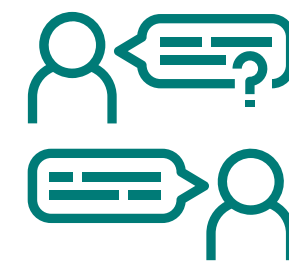
4 interviews with citizens from Helsinki.

150 pages of interview transcriptions.
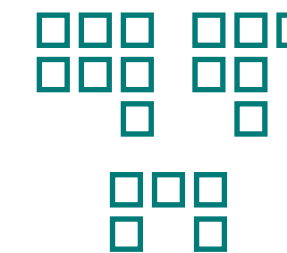
Many weeks of data sorting and grouping.

data sorting process

Organising, clustering and bundling the data into themes.
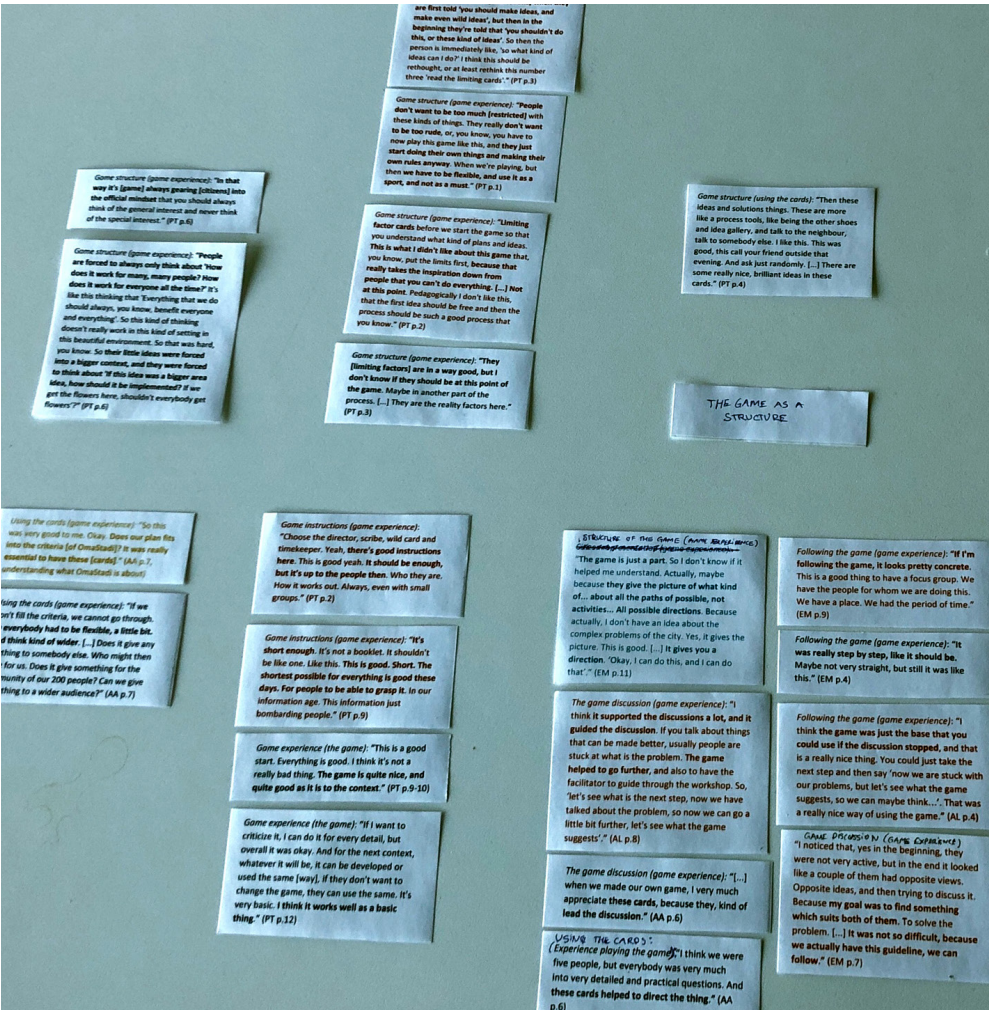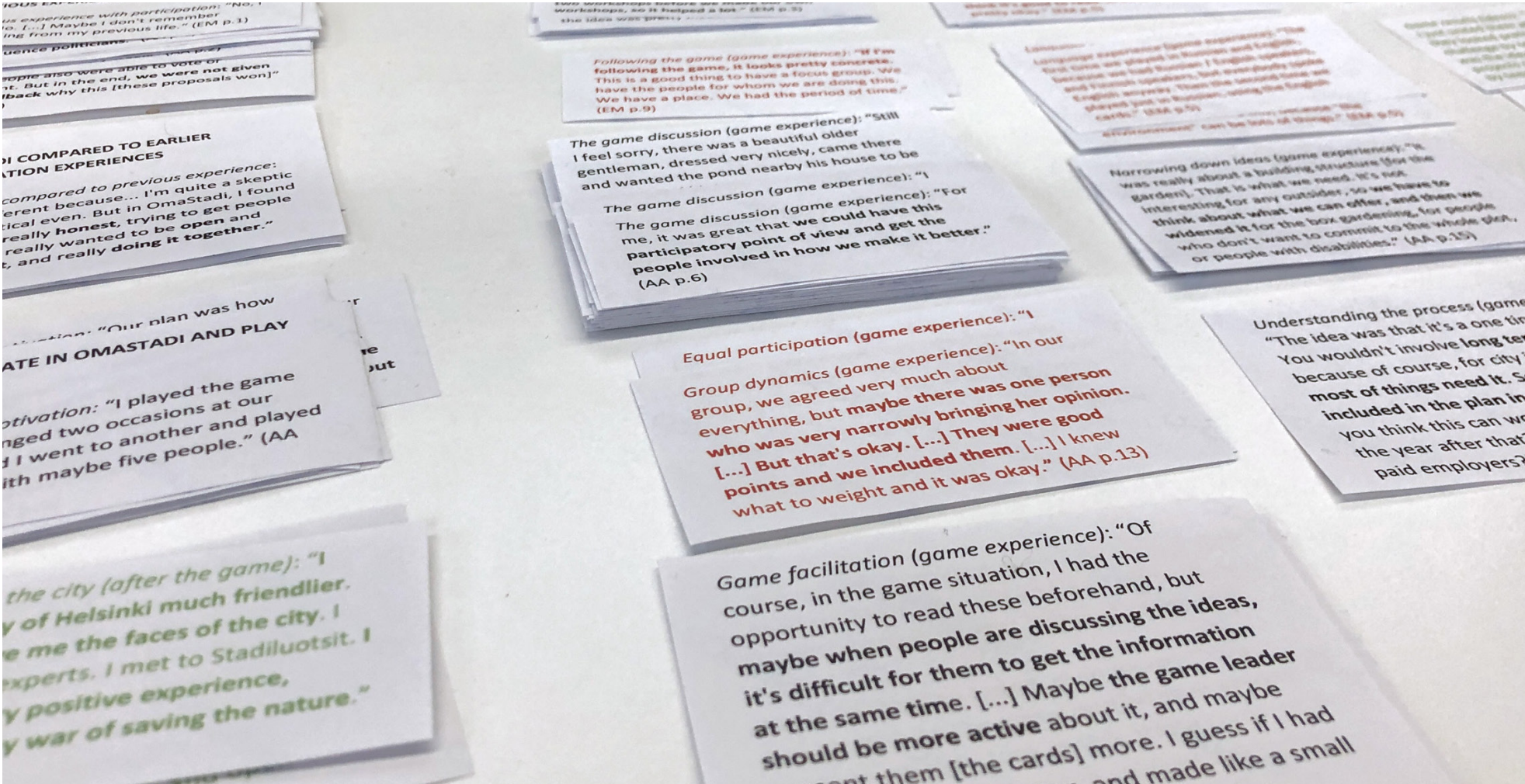
three **research stages**

Stage 1. Civil servants from City of Helsinki's Participation Unit
Examine Helsinki's participatory budgeting process (expectations, benefits or shortcomings, and preferred outcome).

Stage 2. Service designer and development manager
Understanding the aims, goals, and desired impact of the game + its role within the city's strategy.

Stage 3. Helsinki citizens
Evaluating the use of the game and its impact on inclusiveness from the perspective of the citizens.

V.
Findings

the findings in two parts

Part 1.
Examines the main evaluation findings, and in doing so explores how the OmaStadi game has impacted the first year of Helsinki's Participatory Budgeting process.

1. Goals and objectives

2. Enabling and limiting factors

3. Impact outcomes

Part 2.
Presents the evaluation framework designed and developed based on the results of the evaluation.

Part 1.
Evaluation

1. IMPROVE DIRECT DEMOCRACY BY PROVIDING EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARTICIPATION

Provide the possibility for everyone to have a say in making decisions

Treat everyone the same way

Support the participation of marginalised groups of citizens

Provide the feeling of being heard and having an influence on decision-making

MAKE PARTICIPATION MORE INCLUSIVE TO EVERYONE

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MAKE PARTICIPATION MORE INCLUSIVE TO EVERYONE

2. IMPROVE COMMUNICATION BY PROVIDING A PLATFORM FOR OPEN DISCUSSION

Provide a game that is attractive, fun, and inviting to play

Provide a game flow that is understandable, clear, and easy to follow

Improve the culture and quality of discussion between citizens

Improve the interaction between citizens and city officials

Create a mutual understanding between people

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3. IMPROVE QUALITY & EFFICIENCY BY SUPPORTING THE CREATIVITY OF THE CITIZENS

Support the creativity of the citizens when developing and building ideas

Bring new and innovative ideas forward

Provide a structure to the discussion between citizens

Support citizens in developing a shared proposal that can be uploaded to the OmaStadi platform

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4. SUPPORT LEARNING & EMPOWERMENT OF THE CITIZENS

Improve the citizens' ability to think of others with different needs, goals, and situations in life

improve the citizens' understanding of their own local network and community

Increase the citizens' knowledge of the overall participatory budgeting process

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Increase the citizens' knowledge of the overall participatory budgeting process

5. IMPROVE CITY PERCEPTION BY MODERNISING THE WAY THE CITY INVOLVES CITIZENS

Present Helsinki as livable and modern, rather than stiff, bureaucratic, and old-fashioned

Make participatory budgeting familiar to every citizen

Better understand the needs of the rapidly changing city

participation (inclusion) and the OmaStadi game

PARTICIPATION (INCLUSION)

Improve direct democracy by providing equal opportunities for participation.

- Lowers the resources and time required to be able to influence.

- The game gives the players a sense of belonging as they feel represented in the cards.

Improve communication by providing a platform for open discussion.

- The game makes it easier to grasp the concept of participatory budgeting.

Improve quality & efficiency by supporting the creativity of the citizens.

- The players are able to consider their ideas from many different perspectives.

political equality and the OmaStadi game

**POLITICAL
EQUALITY**

Improve direct democracy by providing equal opportunities for participation.

✱ The game makes the discussion in a game session more equal.

✱ The game creates a feeling of being able to do something for or together with the city.

Improve quality & efficiency by supporting the creativity of the citizens.

✱ The game makes it easier to reach a compromise between different ideas.

✱ The players are able to consider their ideas from many different perspectives.

Improve city perception by modernising the way the city involves citizens.

✱ The game makes the faces of the city more visible to the citizens.

quality of deliberation and the OmaStadi game

QUALITY OF DELIBERATION

Improve communication by providing a platform for open discussion.

- The game helps the players better understand each other's point of view.

Improve quality & efficiency by supporting the creativity of the citizens.

- The game encourages people to go through with their budget proposals.
- The game helps players invent new ways of doing things and involving people.
- The game supports the widening of ideas, rather than only narrowing them down.
- The players are able to consider their ideas from many different perspectives.

Support learning & empowerment of the citizens.

- The game makes it easier to consider what the citizen proposals have to offer to a wider audience.
- The game helps the citizens in getting to know their own organisation better, and open up a discussion within it.
- The players have been able to speak about prejudice, stereotypes, and bubbles.
- The game helps build new friendships and cooperation.
- The game teaches how to accumulate voices.

quality of deliberation and the OmaStadi game

In terms of the actual quality of deliberation, the research findings are less revealing.

The merits of the conflicting arguments might not be fully recognised.

Players' strong attachment to their own ideas.

The game might favour potentially resourceful and active citizens.

Part 2.

Evaluation Framework

REFINE AND ENHANCE

ACTIVITIES AND EVALUATION PLANNING

IMPACT GOALS & OBJECTIVES

UPDATE FRAMEWORK & GAME

EVALUATION TOOLS & METHODS

EVALUATION REPORT

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

OMASTADI PELI EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

EVALUATION REFLECTION

OMASTADI

OMASTADI GAME SESSIONS

IDENTIFY IMPACT

ANALYSE EVALUATION

EVALUATION ACTIVITIES

ANALYSIS AND REFLECTION

EVALUATION

VI.
Conclusions

evaluation of the OmaStadi game

Lowers the time and resources required to participate, allowing more citizens to take part in the process.

Makes the gameplay, discussion, and idea development more equal for the citizens.

Strengthens the discussion between citizens, improves creativity, and enhances the overall quality of their proposals.

High deliberative quality might be hindered by some players' strong attachment to their own ideas.

Not everyone may see or experience the game's elements of gamification as a helpful, appealing, or necessary part of the process.

OmaStadi Game Evaluation Framework

Framework for how to plan, implement, and analyse further evaluation of the OmaStadi game.

Introduces evaluation into a continuous cycle.

Establishes formative and constructive practices for reflecting on, learning from, and improving upon the broader use of the game.

Not necessarily exclusive to the game, and can be applied to other public participatory processes.

A more integral, constructive, and iterative-led approach to evaluation can help identify potential challenges.

credits

Some of the pictograms contained in this presentation were released by Noun Project, in particular...

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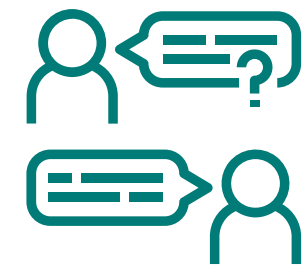
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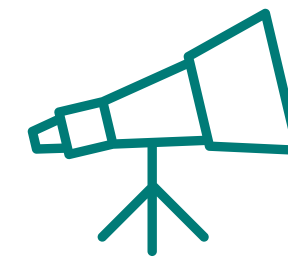
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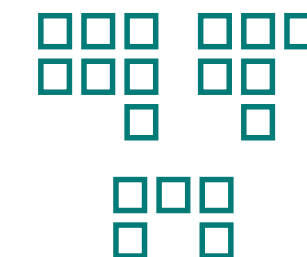
Created by Jennifer

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learn and read more

The official OmaStadi Platform: https://omastadi.hel.fi/?locale=en

Download the OmaStadi Game: https://omastadi.hel.fi/assemblies/omastadi-materiaalit?locale=en

Read Bloombergs article on the OmaStadi Game: https://medium.com/@BloombergCities/how-a-card-game-can-help-city-residents-suggest-new-ideas-b1da60bb112b

Andreas Wiberg Sode

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Supervisor: Teemu Leinonen

Advisors: Maria Jaatinen & Mikko Rask

New Media Design and Production programme Department of Media

School of Arts, Design and Architecture

Aalto University, 2020

Aalto University
School of Arts, Design and Architecture

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hellon

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impact outcomes

**IMPACT
GOAL**

1. Improve direct democracy by providing equal opportunities for participation.

**HOW CAN
THIS BE ACHIEVED?**

Impact objectives

■ Provide the possibility for everyone to have a say in making decisions.

■ Treat everyone the same way.

■ Support the participation of marginalised groups of citizens.

■ Provide the feeling of being heard and having an influence on decision-making.

**WHAT HAS
BEEN ACHIEVED?**

Impact outcomes

✱ The game makes the discussion in a game session more equal.

✱ Lowers the resources and time required to be able to influence.

✱ The game creates a feeling of being able to do something for or together with the city.

✱ The game gives the players a sense of belonging as they feel represented in the cards.

impact outcomes

**IMPACT
GOAL**

2. Improve communication by providing a platform for open discussion.

**HOW CAN
THIS BE ACHIEVED?**

Impact objectives

▪ Provide a game that is attractive, fun, and inviting to play.

▪ Provide a game flow that is understandable, clear, and easy to follow.

▪ Improve the culture and quality of discussion between citizens.

▪ Improve the interaction between citizens and city officials.

▪ Create a mutual understanding between people.

**WHAT HAS
BEEN ACHIEVED?**

Impact outcomes

✿ The game helps the players better understand each other's point of view.

✿ The game makes it easier to grasp the concept of participatory budgeting.

impact outcomes

**IMPACT
GOAL**

**3. Improve quality &
efficiency by supporting the
creativity of the citizens.**

**HOW CAN
THIS BE ACHIEVED?**

Impact objectives

- Support the creativity of the citizens when developing and building ideas.

- Support the citizens in developing new and innovative ideas.

- Provide a structure to the discussion between citizens.

- Support citizens in developing a shared proposal that can be uploaded to the OmaStadi platform.

**WHAT HAS
BEEN ACHIEVED?**

Impact outcomes

- The game encourages people to go through with their budget proposals.

- The game helps players invent new ways of doing things and involving people.

- The game supports the widening of ideas, rather than only narrowing them down.

- The game makes it easier to reach a compromise between different ideas.

- The players are able to consider their ideas from many different perspectives.

impact outcomes

**IMPACT
GOAL**

4. Support learning &
empowerment of the
citizens.

**HOW CAN
THIS BE ACHIEVED?**

Impact objectives

■ Improve the citizens' ability to think of
others with different needs, goals, and
situations in life.

■ improve the citizens' understanding of
their own local network and community.

■ Increase the citizens' knowledge of the
overall participatory budgeting process.

**WHAT HAS
BEEN ACHIEVED?**

Impact outcomes

✺ The game makes it easier to consider what
the citizen proposals have to offer to a wider
audience.

✺ The game helps the citizens in getting to know
their own organisation better, and open up a
discussion within it.

✺ The players have been able to speak about
prejudice, stereotypes, and bubbles.

✺ The game helps build new friendships and
cooperation partners.

✺ The game teaches how to accumulate voices.

impact outcomes

**IMPACT
GOAL**

5. Improve city perception by modernising the way the city involves citizens.

**HOW CAN
THIS BE ACHIEVED?**

Impact objectives

- Present Helsinki as livable and modern, rather than stiff, bureaucratic, and old-fashioned.

- Better understand the needs of the rapidly changing city.

- Make participatory budgeting familiar to every citizen.

**WHAT HAS
BEEN ACHIEVED?**

Impact outcomes

- The game makes the faces of the city more visible to the citizens.

the trilemma of democratic reform

Participation
(inclusion)

(+) mass participation
& political equality

(-) lack of high quality
reflection

Political
Equality

Quality of
Deliberation

(Fishkin, 2011)